PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2005–06

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7 November 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 7 November 2005

TREASURY

ECOFIN

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): I will chair the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) on 8 November 2005. The Paymaster General, right hon. Dawn Primarolo MP, will represent the UK. Items on the agenda are as follows:

EC Budget Roadmap: Roadmap to an integrated internal control framework; ECOFIN will discuss how to take forward the Commission's proposed roadmap towards a positive Statement of Assurance for the EC's annual budget.

Better Regulation: Ministers will be asked to agree conclusions on a common methodology for measuring the administrative burden that EU legislation would place on businesses.

EU Statistical Governance: ECOFIN will consider a package of measures to improve EU statistical governance.

Implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact: ECOFIN will consider a decision under Article 104 (8) on Hungary's Excessive Deficit Procedure.

Fiscal issues: VAT. ECOFIN will be updated on progress towards a "one stop scheme" designed to minimise compliance burdens on businesses, and will discuss reduced-rate proposals introduced by the Luxembourg Presidency.

Financial services: Cross-border consolidation in the EU financial sector. ECOFIN will note progress and agree conclusions on the supervisory approvals process for cross-border mergers and acquisitions in financial services.

Financial consequences of the Sugar Regime Reform: ECOFIN will discuss the budgetary aspects of ongoing negotiations around the reform of the sugar regime.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Magistrates Courts

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor (Lord Falconer of Thoroton) has made the following written statement in the other place today:

"I am pleased to announce that today I have laid before this House a paper entitled 'Supporting Magistrates Courts to Provide Justice'. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Magistrates courts play an essential role in the justice system. Each and every day they sit, the courts help to make our communities safer and more secure. They deal with over 95 per cent. of all criminal cases. They respond quickly and effectively to childcare cases. And they help people resolve their disputes as fairly as possible.

But the courts have not always received the support that they deserve and I wanted to know what we, the Government, can do to make magistrates courts even more efficient and effective. This is why, last year, I launched the Supporting Magistrates to Provide Justice programme.

The programme has looked at how the Government can help make improvements to the way magistrates courts operate. To inform us, we asked the experts: magistrates, district judges, justices' clerks and other court staff. They responded in their thousands with a range of suggestions and ideas that I set out in a Response Paper that was laid before this House on 1 April 2005.

There were clearly areas where we could—and must—improve. This paper sets out where we have already taken action and where we will be taking forward further reforms.

It is focused on four main areas:

Helping to ensure magistrates are connected to their communities. Magistrates must be able to keep abreast of the changing issues facing their evolving and increasingly diverse communities. We will support magistrates in understanding the current priorities and concerns faced by the local people they serve.

Ensuring magistrates courts are respected and valued, with court orders obeyed—courts are respected when the services and facilities they provide meet the needs of those that use and rely on the court, particularly victims and witnesses. This Government are committed to improving court facilities, providing efficient court processes and giving magistrates the authority to ensure their orders are obeyed.

Making sure the magistrates courts are effective in dealing fairly and efficiently with the cases before them. Our courts have a very important role to play in the lives of every citizen. For the community to feel truly confident in the justice system and to genuinely respect the work of the magistrates courts, it is critical that the courts deliver effective court services.

Improving the recruitment and retention of magistrates. The benefit of a volunteer magistracy is that they are able to represent the views of their community while providing a highly professional approach to discharging their responsibilities. In order that the magistracy is able to continue this critical role we propose a series of reforms and new initiatives which will see the development of a re-invigorated magistracy, attractive to the next generation of civic minded citizens willing to commit a portion of their time to building safe and secure communities.

This paper represents the next step in a continuous drive to provide the public with the service they expect from a modern magistrates courts system.

We will continue to look for further improvements so that our services are as efficient and effective as possible, making best use of the capacity of the courts, and of the talent and expertise of those working in them.

We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the work that led to this paper."

Burial Law Reform Report

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): I intend to publish shortly a summary of the responses to the consultation paper "Burial Law and Policy in the 21st Century: The Need for a Sensitive and Sustainable Approach", which the Home Office issued last year. I am today placing pre-publication copies of that summary in the Libraries of both Houses.

We were grateful for the many detailed and thoughtful comments that were submitted. The responses indicated general support for modernisation of our burial laws, including more uniform legislation, the need to ensure adequate burial facilities, and the ability to make the best use of old burial grounds. Arrangements are now in hand to discuss with burial practitioners and others the practical details of the changes needed to give effect to law reform in this area. In doing so, we will consider sympathetically

the case for enabling the re-use of old burial grounds, seeking a balance between the interests of relatives and descendants and the wider needs of the local community.

The further work now initiated is expected to be completed next spring. Thereafter the Government will inform the House of their plans to bring forward proposals for burial law reform.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Housing Revenue Account Subsidy

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): We have today issued for consultation the drafts of the HRA subsidy and item 8 determinations for 2006–07, which set out proposed figures for subsidy allocations for individual housing authorities. Copies of the draft determinations and supporting material have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will also be available on my office's website from 4.30pm this afternoon at the following location:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/housing/consult.

These allocations are based on the most up-to-date information available to us from authorities, and may change as that information is refined. Authorities have until 10am, 12 December to comment on the draft determinations, and 2 December to comment on the data.

For 2006–07, we will increase the average resources per dwelling available at the national level for management and maintenance allowances by 2.7 per cent. compared with 2005–06.

The Major Repairs Allowance will on average increase by 2.9 per cent. per dwelling in cash terms at the national level.

In addition, the draft determinations propose to continue the reforms in the calculation and allocation of management and maintenance allowances, which began in last year's determination round. The proposals for the management and maintenance allowances in 2006–07 take account of better and more representative data.

Data for the maintenance formula have been expanded to take account of both criminal damage to dwellings and burglary, a decision taken after consultation with stakeholders. Most local authorities will gain from the changes proposed in the draft determinations, and some will benefit substantially.

It is Government policy that social rents should be restructured and that over time tenants in social housing should pay similar rents for similar properties regardless of landlord.

We have carried out a three-year review of this policy which reported in 2004. We will introduce in full the recommendations made in this review in 2006–07, reinforcing the steps already taken to create a fair and transparent rent setting system in the social rented sector. In addition we will provide more protection for council tenants by capping at 5 per cent. the average cash increase in rents in any local authority for each of the next two years.

HEALTH

NHS Financial Management

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I am today announcing that we will be rolling out across the national health service a new programme of financial diagnostic checks and providing the opportunity for two-star acute specialist and mental health trusts to apply for NHS foundation trust status. The concerns about financial management in some parts of the NHS have encouraged us to work with Monitor (the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts) to develop these new financial diagnostic tools and pilot them in two strategic health authority areas. These new financial tools will help trusts prepare for foundation trust status. Bringing two-star rated organisations into the applications process for foundation status will give a greater number of trusts the opportunity to put forward their proposals for foundation status.

The Whole Health Community Diagnostic Project will drive a culture of improved financial management across the NHS and give acute trusts a clear indication of any areas for improvement before they embark upon the NHS foundation trust application process. It will assess the financial robustness and viability of all trusts that have not yet applied to become NHS foundation trusts, in the context of their wider health economies, as well as looking at other authorisation requirements such as management and governance arrangements. The project will provide an assessment of what needs to be done to get NHS acute trusts in England ready to apply for NHS foundation trust status.

To be authorised as an NHS foundation trust by Monitor, applicants have to be able to demonstrate their clinical and financial viability and sustainability as well as their overall capacity and capability to take on the additional freedoms and flexibilities. Monitor's authorisation process is a disciplined and very challenging process. It ensures that NHS foundation trusts are clinically and financially sustainable, effectively governed, locally representative, legally constituted and well managed. This is important if they are to operate with sufficient autonomy, achieve and exceed national healthcare standards and become increasingly responsive to their communities. In allowing two-star acute, specialised and mental health trusts to apply to Monitor in addition to three-star organisations, there is no question of lowering standards for authorisation as an NHS foundation trust. Monitor will continue to be a rigorous as before in determining whether applicants can be authorised for foundation trust status.

NHS performance ratings have so far only been used as a way of identifying which trusts could be invited to apply for foundation status, but they are not part of the formal authorisation criteria. In 2006, the Healthcare Commission (the statutory name of which is the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection) will replace the NHS performance ratings with an annual healthcheck performance rating system. It is therefore an appropriate time for the Government to revisit the entry requirements for foundation status and to broaden the base for applicants because the three-star requirement is too restrictive.

There are currently 32 NHS foundation trusts in operation. They are sustaining the core NHS principles of universality and equity, and collectively serving more than a quarter of the population in England. The continued rollout of NHS foundation trusts across the NHS is giving the public, patients and staff a louder voice in how their local healthcare services are designed and run. The Healthcare Commission's independent review of NHS foundation trusts and other reports have highlighted the significant benefits and opportunities presented by foundation status. We know that independence from central Government control and greater freedoms are giving NHS foundation trusts the opportunity to innovate new approaches to healthcare and healthcare services, for the benefit of NHS patients.

The Government remain committed to providing all NHS trusts with the opportunity to apply for NHS foundation trust status within the next three years. The decision on when to apply remains one to be taken locally.

National Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Surveillance Unit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): The National Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease Surveillance Unit's (NCJDSU) 13th annual report has been published today. The report documents the unit's findings in relation to sporadic, familial and iatrogenic Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, and also variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease up to 31 December 2004. Copies have been placed in the House Library, and the report is also available on the NCJDSU's website at www.cjd.ed.ac.uk.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Bichard Inquiry

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Hon. Members will recall I made a statement to the House on 11 January 2005 updating them on progress in implementing Sir Michael Richard's recommendations arising from his inquiry into issues surrounding the Soham murders. I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses copies of the Government's second progress report on the on-going work. Although Sir Michael has now taken a step back from this work, it is in response to his suggestion that the six-monthly cycle of reporting be sustained that I have chosen to report now and I will offer a further update to the House in March 2006.

It is now clear that the inquiry has been a catalyst which has concentrated both the Government and the public services on improving the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. We are making good progress across the 31 recommendations, with a number already achieved and others nearing completion. We remain fully committed to implementation of the whole programme and to ensuring all the necessary resources are available. Beyond that, we will ensure that safeguarding remains a key priority as our broader work to improve delivery continues. For example, within the "Every Child Matters" initiative and as part of the development of the new National Policing Improvement Agency.

Sir Michael's recommendations have forced us to take a long hard look at the ways in which the police manage and share information. As a result, the IMPACT programme (Information Management, Prioritisation, Analysis, Co-ordination and Tasking) which is now in place will deliver huge changes to working practices and technology. These will greatly reduce the risk of the kind of failings in information sharing which formed part of the background to the Soham murders. A comprehensive code of practice on police information management will come into force on 14 November and will be backed up by extensive training and operational guidance. New technology to enable information sharing between forces will begin rolling out to their Child Abuse Investigation Units by the end of this year. This new capacity for sharing will be progressively extended as systems develop through to 2009 and beyond.

Equally crucial are arrangements for sharing information between the police and other agencies such as social services. Key improvements are being developed as part of the current work to revise the Working Together framework which will be completed by the end of this year.

The development of a central vetting and barring scheme covering all those wishing to work with children or vulnerable adults is well underway. It will provide a comprehensive, centralised and integrated system to prevent unsuitable people from gaining access to vulnerable groups through paid or voluntary work. It will be implemented via the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill which will be introduced during this session.

New on-line training for head teachers and school governors covering the need to emphasise safeguarding as part of staff recruitment procedures has been developed. It was successfully launched in July and the scope to extend this training beyond the education sector is being considered.

Existing vetting procedures are also being strengthened. A Quality Assurance Framework to assist police forces in carrying out their roles in the vetting process has been finalised and is being rolled out.

Sir Michael was very supportive of the governance and co-ordination arrangement put in place and we have maintained the programme structure based on effective joined-up working across the Government Departments and delivery agencies involved. We are working closely with all stakeholders and agencies to ensure the interdependencies are properly managed and the projected benefits realised. At the point of delivery, training arrangements are being put in place to support implementation, together with targeted inspection and performance measurement regimes to ensure compliance with new and improved systems.

It is vital to ensure the same level of protection for all children and other vulnerable people, wherever they are in the United Kingdom. The Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Office have therefore been closely involved in this programme of work. For some of the recommendations, the route to implementation will differ between jurisdictions, but the objective of effective, integrated systems is the same. The arrangements in different jurisdictions are set out in more detail in the report.

There are no shortcuts to delivering on the letter and the spirit of the Bichard inquiry, but the achievements and plans set out in the latest progress report are evidence of our commitment. The momentum must be maintained and I will provide a further update to this House in March 2006.

Young Adult Offenders

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): The National Offender Management Service is to establish a project to develop a strategy and standard for the management of younger adult offenders in custody and the community.

The purpose of the project will be to identify how the special needs of young adults can best be met in the context of the new approach to offender management, and taking account of the new custodial and community sentences in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Among other matters the project will consider the appropriate age range for those to be treated as young adult offenders, the use of the prison estate for this age group, and the regimes and interventions required in prison and in the community. It will also consider the commencement of Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000 (which abolishes the sentence of detention in a young offender institution) and the consequent safeguards which will be required for this age group.

The project will be led by the National Offender Management Service, and will involve operational interests from prisons and probation, and other Government Departments. Representatives from the voluntary and community sector will be invited to participate.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Tourism Ireland Limited

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): Tourism Ireland Ltd. annual report and accounts 2004 were deposited in the Houses of Parliament today.

Copies have been placed in the Library.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 8 November 2005

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Sanctions Regimes

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): The Government have committed themselves to informing Parliament on an annual basis of the sanctions regimes being implemented by the United Kingdom. Currently the United Kingdom implements mandatory United Nations sanctions, imposed by the UN Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in relation to Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Somalia. The UK also implements sanctions regimes imposed autonomously by the EU in relation to Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burma, China, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (in connection with individuals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), Moldova, Sudan and Zimbabwe. In accordance with a decision of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Kingdom implements arms embargoes on Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Government also take full account of the Economic Community of West African States moratorium on certain exports of small arms and light weapons to the Economic Community of West African States members. A full list of sanctions regimes and restrictive measures implemented by the UK has been published on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at: www.fco.gov.uk/sanctions.

Syria/Lebanon: UN Sanctions

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, the United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2005 adopted UNSCR 1636 (2005) which calls on Syria to comply with the UN International Independent Investigation Commission inquiry into events surrounding the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri.

UNSCR 1636 (2005) warns Syria that if it does not co-operate with the UN inquiry then the Security Council will consider what further action is appropriate. The resolution also establishes sanctions against individuals suspected of involvement in the planning, sponsoring, organisation or perpetration of the assassination. The individual sanctions imposed comprise an assets freeze and a travel ban, with individuals being proposed by the UN Commission or Lebanese Government with the agreement of a UN Sanctions Committee established by UNSCR 1636 (2005). The Sanctions Committee will also be responsible for making decisions on permissible exemptions to the application of the individual measures. Such exemptions are defined by the resolution as including travel for humanitarian purposes (including in connection with religious obligation) and funds for basic expenses such as medical treatment, food and accommodation.

The measures will remain in place until the Sanctions Committee reports to the Security Council that all investigative and judicial proceedings relating to the assassination have been completed, unless the Security Council decides otherwise.

HEALTH

NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): In August 2003, the Department consulted on a package of proposals to reform the regulatory system governing national health service community pharmacy services. It also put forward possible options for further reform which, if pursued, would require primary legislation. When announcing the programme to implement the reforms in autumn 2004, Ministers said they would consider introducing new primary legislation:

(a) to enable reasonable charges, but not full cost recovery, to be introduced for applications concerning a chemist's inclusion on a NHS primary care trust list; and

(b) to allow NHS primary care trusts to take into account, when assessing applications, the improvements they would bring to the provision of, or access to, over-the-counter medicines and other healthcare products.

Ministers committed to consult further on such legislation. This consultation started on 25 July 2005 and ended on 20 September 2005.

These proposals are included in the Health Bill published on 27 October 2005. In relation to the second proposal, this will only apply where a primary care trust is assessing competing applications together.

A paper summarising the 29 responses received has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration: Electronic Monitoring

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): Section 36 of the Immigration and Asylum (treatment of claimants etc) Act 2004 allows for the electronic monitoring of those liable to be detained under the Immigration Acts. This includes asylum seekers, illegal entrants, those found working in breach of their conditions of stay, overstayers, people subject to further examination at a port of entry, and those refused leave to enter.

Electronic monitoring takes three forms: telephone reporting using voice recognition techniques, tagging and tracking. These are being used, in combination with face to face contact at immigration reporting centres, to improve compliance with the requirements we place on people to remain in contact with us. Contact Management, including electronic monitoring is a key aspect of the New Asylum Model as described in the five year plan.

During the passage of the 2004 Act, the then Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, my right hon. Friend the Member for Stretford and Urmston (Beverley Hughes) stated that an electronic monitoring requirement would be imposed only with the consent of the individual. This commitment was re-iterated when her successor my right hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. Browne) wrote to the Joint Committee on Human Rights. Consent is not a statutory requirement but was introduced as a matter of policy in recognition of the novel use of electronic monitoring in the immigration context.

The electronic monitoring pilots have generally been a success, but asking for the subject's consent is inconsistent with any other area of contact management. It hampered our ability to manage contact with people flexibly because the need for consent left us with very little recourse if the individual failed to give it or where, having initially agreed to be monitored electronically, they subsequently failed to comply. That is why I agreed a change in the policy before the summer recess to allow the Immigration Service to draw up contact management plans without first seeking the consent of the individual. The consideration of whether the individual will comply with specific requirements will be part of the process of deciding how best to manage contact and this change places us in a stronger position by enabling us to consider what action to take where someone fails to comply with an electronic monitoring requirements.

The impact on compliance in the short period since the change in policy has been positive. Between July and September of 53 people who failed initially to comply with telephone reporting, 47 began to do so after one written warning that their continued failure may lead to their re-detention. Since the start of the pilot in October 2004, we have tagged 49 people, 23 of them since the policy on consent was changed, but we have seen no adverse impact on the level of compliance notwithstanding that we have tagged a larger proportion of high risk cases without seeking their consent.

This is a promising start, but we shall continue to monitor the situation as electronic tagging is applied in increasing numbers. I will update the House on the progress we are making in a further statement early in the New Year.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Debt Relief

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Excellent progress has been made on implementing the two key commitments on debt relief made by G8 leaders at the Gleneagles summit in July. In addition, the UK has granted further bilateral debt relief over the summer, and I take this opportunity to provide an update on the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

At Gleneagles, the G8 proposed 100 per cent. cancellation of the debts owed by qualifying countries to the International Monetary Fund, the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank, and the African Development Fund (AfDF) of the African Development Bank. Since then, the proposal has been discussed by the Board of Directors of each institution and received broad support, including from African countries. The IDA and IMF components were agreed at the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and IMF. The approval process is underway at the African Development Bank. We are working with others to resolve outstanding technical issues, and are confident that implementation of the new debt relief will begin in 2006. Up to $55 billion will be cancelled for the current 38 HIPCs, and we estimate that about $1 billion a year will be freed up for spending on poverty reduction in 2007, rising to $1.7 billion by 2010.

Countries will receive this 100 per cent. irrevocable debt cancellation when they complete the HIPC Initiative. There will be no further conditions attached. Countries that have already completed HIPC will need to demonstrate that they have maintained their commitment to poverty reduction and good macro-economic and public expenditure management. The allocation of additional donor resources through the existing Performance Based Allocation systems will then maintain a strong incentive for good policy and performance. In addition, Bank and Fund staff will continue to monitor and report on the overall efficiency of public expenditure as well as on progress in reducing corruption and enhancing transparency in recipient countries.

To ensure that the financing capacity of the World Bank and African Development Bank is not reduced, we and other G8 partners have committed to cover our share of the cost of the debt cancellation for IDA and the AFDF. We will make funds available ahead of the debt cancellation to cover the costs to the World Bank and African Development Bank for the next three years. We have committed to meet our share of ongoing costs for the duration of the loans, which in some cases is 40 years. These funds will be additional to the resources we had already agreed for these institutions as part of the recent replenishments of the concessional funds of the World Bank and the African Development Bank. G8 Finance Ministers have agreed that in future replenishment rounds the costs of the debt relief initiative be reported separately to ensure that they are clearly distinguishable. Debt relief at the IMF will be funded through internal resources as far as possible, but donors will provide additional resources if needed to ensure that the IMF's financing capacity is maintained.

The G8 also made a commitment to the achievement of a fair and sustainable solution to Nigeria's debt problems with Paris Club of Government creditors. I am able to report that a deal was formally agreed at the Paris Club on Thursday 20 October. This deal sees approximately $18 billion of Nigeria's debt cancelled, the remainder being repaid by Nigeria using part of its oil windfall. The UK's share of the debt cancellation is approximately $5.1 billion. The deal will be implemented in two phases over the next six months, after which Nigeria's entire debt to Paris Club creditors will have been resolved. This is the largest single debt deal ever reached with an African country. The Government of Nigeria have committed to ring fence the debt savings of about $1 billion a year to tackle poverty, and has invited national and international monitoring of all the spending, including by representatives of UK NGOs.

Steady progress is being made in implementing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This targets the poorest, most indebted countries, reducing their debt burdens to sustainable levels, alongside reforms that help ensure that resources freed up are spent on poverty reduction. Rwanda, Zambia and Honduras all completed the HIPC process earlier this year and received irrevocable debt stock reductions. Most recently Burundi completed the first stage of HIPC by reaching Decision Point and so qualified for relief on its debt service payments. We expect other countries to qualify or complete the process early next year. The IMF and World Bank have stated that several more countries will be considered for the exceptional debt relief under HIPC. This is a result of the extended "Sunset Clause" which now gives countries until the end of 2006 to meet the criteria for being considered under HIPC—an extension that the UK was instrumental in lobbying for. A final list of countries is expected in early 2006. Both creditors and debtors need to maintain their efforts to ensure the full financing of the HIPC Initiative, and the full participation of all creditors. The UK is the second largest bilateral contributor to the HIPC Trust Fund, which helps multilateral organisations deliver their HIPC assistance in a timely manner. The UK has committed $436 million to date (including our share of the EC contribution) and in August made our latest payment—$20 million to cover the costs to the African Development Bank of debt stock write-off for Rwanda.

Once implemented, the G8 multilateral debt cancellation deal will supersede the UK's Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) for HIPC countries. For other qualifying countries, we will continue to cover 10 per cent. of their debt service to IDA and the AfDF.

In addition, the UK will give debt relief on about £42 million of development loans granted via the EU in the 1970s to 40 less developed countries. In 1978 the (then nine) EU Member States provided the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) with $428.5 million to be lent on concessional terms. Earlier this year it was agreed that these should be treated as bilateral rather than joint funds. Consequently we will manage the UK share of these loans in line with international and UK policy on debt relief. All the nine Member States involved have agreed to cancel the loans to countries that have completed HIPC. In line with our policies, the UK will forgo payments from Decision Point and hold in trust payments between December 2000 and Decision Point; these monies will then be repaid when countries reach Completion Point. The total cost to the UK of cancellation for the HIPC countries will be about £22 million. In addition, I have decided to provide relief on our share (about £20 million) of the loans to the poorest non-HIPC countries, provided they are committed to poverty reduction, human rights and sound public financial management.

I have decided to grant assistance to the Government of Belize for a further year under the Commonwealth Debt Initiative (GDI). This decision will mean that Belize will not repay £1.458 million worth of official debt to the UK (representing payments that were due in the financial year 2003–04). The Government of Belize will put the money towards agreed poverty reduction initiatives and associated economic reform.

Darfur

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): On 17 October the World Health Organisation and Sudanese Ministry of Health published the report of the second Darfur mortality survey. This was a six-month retrospective mortality survey, covering the period from Bid el Fater in November 2004 to the start of the survey in May. The first survey was undertaken in August 2004, and covered deaths over a two-month period.

The report showed that while mortality rates in Darfur are still above baseline levels, they are significantly lower than the first survey and are below the international crisis threshold of one death per 10,000 people per day. In North and South Darfur, the average mortality rate was found to be 0.8 deaths per 10,000 people per day, and in West Darfur it was measured at 0.6 deaths per 10,000 people per day. The Red Cross/NGO "Sphere" project on minimum standards in disaster response puts the baseline mortality rate for Sub-Saharan Africa at 0.44 deaths per 10,000 people per day.

Due to poor security, the survey teams were unable to access some parts of Darfur especially South Darfur where the results apply only to internally displaced people in camps. The report also notes that there are times when mortality rates rise because of temporary increases in violence, seasonal disease outbreaks or breakdowns in food supply. Applying these mortality rates to the entire region for the entire year would therefore be misleading.

I am placing a copy of the report in the Library of the House of Commons.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Payment Performance 2004–05

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): The overall payment performance of Government is 97.09 per cent. Figures for the financial year 2004–05 show that there has been a continuing improvement on last year's figure of 96.68 per cent. There has also been a continued improvement in the payment performance of a number of Departments and agencies, with 65 per cent. achieving the average or above, and 54 per cent. improving on their performance of last year.

Government Departments and their agencies are required to monitor their payment performance and to publish the results in their departmental or annual reports. The table lists, by Department, the proportion of bills paid within 30 days, or other agreed credit period, on receipt of a valid invoice.

The Government take this issue very seriously, and is committed to improving the payment culture in the UK, in order to create fair and stable business transactions. The Government's own payment performance is an important element in this policy.

Main Departments 2004–05	Paid on Time %
Defence Bills Agency (Ministry of Defence)	100.00
Privy Council Office	100.00
Office for Government Commerce	99.86
Office of Gas and Electricity Mkts (OFGEM)	99.42
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	99.41
Health and Safety Executive	99.37
The National Archives (Public Records Office)	99.30
Intelligence Agencies (GCHQ)	99.07
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	98.77
Department for Transport	98.75
Scotland Office (Department for Constitutional Affairs)	98.75
Office of Fair Trading	98.56
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	98.56
HM Revenue and Customs	98.50
Wales Office (Department for Constitutional Affairs)	98.45
Charity Commission	98.12
Office for National Statistics	97.95
Export Credit Guarantee Department	97.85
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)	97.43
Cabinet Office (OPS)	97.13
Forestry Commission	96.96
Electoral Commission	96.58
Department for Education and Skills	96.54
Department for National Savings and Investments	96.51
Food Standards Agency	96.43
Postal Services Commission (PostCom)	96.43
Department of Work and Pensions	96.28
Department for International Development	95.86
Ordnance Survey	95.68
Office of the Rail Regulator	95.33
Treasury Solicitors Department	94.91
Central Office of Information	94.82
Serious Fraud Office	93.58
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	92.97
Land Registry	92.79
Department of Health	92.49
Royal Mint	92.05
UK Trade and Investment	90.65
HM Treasury	90.23
Crown Prosecution Service	89.67
Department for Constitutional Affairs (Lord Chancellor's Department)	89.51
Government Actuary's Department	87.47
Department of Trade and Industry	87.33
Home Office	86.59
Northern Ireland Office	85.33
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	68.22
Overall Total	97.09

TRANSPORT

Office of Rail Regulation (Health and Safety Enforcement)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): The Railways Act 2005 provided for the transfer of certain health and safety functions on the railway (and other guided transport systems) from the Health and Safety Commission to the Office of Rail Regulation. In addition, regulations are required to transfer responsibility for the enforcement of health and safety legislation relating to such transport systems from the Health and Safety Executive to the Office of Rail Regulation. Draft regulations will also make clear that the Office of Rail Regulation will not have health and safety responsibilities for fairground equipment, guided buses or trolley buses. I have today published a consultation document on the draft regulations. The consultation will close on 5 December.

At the same time I have launched a consultation document on draft regulations under which the rail industry would fund the health and safety functions of the Office of Rail Regulation by means of a levy. The consultation on that document closes on 16 December.

Copies of both documents have been placed in the Library of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Boston Borough Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Boston Borough Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, Boston Borough Council administered some £13 million in housing benefits, about 44 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

In 2004–05 the council reported that it was taking 57 days on average to process new claims to housing benefits. At the time of the inspection in July 2005 the majority of the management team had only been in post for a few months but performance was beginning to improve as the backlog of claims had been cut. Allowing for some misreporting of performance the council was taking an average of 47 days to process new claims in the first quarter of 2005–06. However, significant further improvement is needed to meet the Standard of 36 days.

BFI found significant delays at each stage of the new claims process and in processing changes of circumstances. The longest delays were in the time taken to obtain all required information from customers. No monitoring of the throughput or clearance of work meant there was a lack of control over the flow of work. A limited management checking regime meant the council did not have reliable feedback on the quality of work done or the ability to identify areas were performance needed to be improved.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 9 November 2005

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Culture and Audiovisual Council Agenda

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): The Education, Youth and Culture Council will be held on 14–15 November in Brussels. Culture and Audiovisual issues will be taken on 14 November. As current President, I will chair the Council and Patricia Ferguson MSP, Scottish Executive Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, will represent the UK. Education and Youth issues will be taken on 15 November.

The agenda items for 14 November on which agreement is expected are as follows:

Partial political agreement on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the implementation of a programme of support for the European audiovisual sector (MEDIA 2007)—that is finalising First Reading on the content of the programme but not the funding.

Partial political agreement on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Culture 2007 Programme (2007–13)—that is finalising First Reading on the content of the programme but not the funding.

General approach on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007–19—agreement is subject to the receipt of the views of the European Parliament.

Adoption of a Council Decision designating Linz and Vilnius as the Capitals of Culture for 2009.

Adoption of a Council Decision appointing two members of the selection panel looking at cities being nominated as European Capital of Culture for 2010.

Other items on the agenda are:

An exchange of views on the digitisation of cultural heritage and the proposal for a European digital library.

Information and updates from the Presidency and the Commission regarding:

(a) UNESCO Convention on the protection of cultural contents and artistic expressions;

(b) Council work plan in the field of culture 2005–06;

(c) Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Citizens for Europe Programme;

(d) Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

Over lunch audiovisual Ministers will have an informal discussion on digital switchover.

HEALTH

National Health Service Dentistry

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): We are committed to reforming National Health Service dentistry and improving access for patients. In the written statement of 16 July 2004, *Official Report*, cols 89–91WS, the Government announced the twin targets of recruiting 1,000 additional whole time dentists and funding 170 extra dental training places to address access issues. Both targets have now been achieved. Overall, over 1,400 dentists were recruited through a mixture of domestic and international recruitment. This contributed to a net increase of 1,100 dentists[1] in the last year, more than twice the average increase over the previous seven years.

The recruitment drive included (whole time equivalent dentists): 216 from Poland via the central Department of Health recruitment initiative; 297 from local international recruitment; 230 via expansion of the International Qualifying Exam; 88 from domestic returners to practice, supported by the Keeping in Touch scheme; and 622 reported by primary care trusts from local NHS activity to expand capacity in existing dental practices.

Some 189 additional dental students have now started their studies at dental school, 19 more than the original target. This brings the total number of dental undergraduates to 859, reflecting the popularity of dentistry as a career. This 29 per cent. increase is being supported by capital investment of £80 million over the four years from 2005–06, and revenue costs reaching £29 million by 2010–11.

Some 91 of the new dental training places have been allocated to the existing dental schools on a temporary basis while the Higher Education Funding Council for England conducts a bidding exercise to determine the permanent allocation of these places. This exercise will be completed by the end of January 2006.

This Government are committed to NHS dentistry and improving access for patients. The immediate benefits of the recruitment of 1,400 dentists are already clear to patients. The undergraduate expansion will stabilise the supply of dentists in the longer term and by 2010, there will be 850 extra dentistry students in training. These achievements will support the move to local commissioning of dental services from next April and the accompanying changes to contractual arrangements for NHS dentists. These reforms, when taken together with the healthy position on recruitment, will enable primary care trusts to replace capacity much more readily when other dentists leave the local area, the profession or increase their private work. The reforms will also improve the quality of dentists' working lives in the NHS and support improvements in access for NHS patients.

Quarter	*Dentists*
September 1997	16,815
September 1998	17,338
September 1999	17,863
September 2000	18,241
September 2001	18,758
September 2002	18,979
September 2003	19,295
September 2004	19,754
September 2005	20,857

[1] Number of dentists in contract at September each year 1997–2005

HOME DEPARTMENT

Identity Cards

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): Today I have published an extract of an independent review by KPMG of the cost methodology and cost assumptions used by the Identity Cards Scheme. KPMG concluded that the costing methodology is robust and appropriate for this stage of development. Copies of the extract will be placed in the House Library together with copies of the Home Office's summary of its work in progress on the areas of the Identity Cards Scheme highlighted by the review.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 10 November 2005

DEFENCE

Battle Honour Awards (Operation Telic)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): In June 2005 Her Majesty The Queen graciously approved the award of a theatre honour ("Iraq 2003") and the battle honour ("Al Basrah") for units of the British Army. Subsequently, individual regiments and corps applied to the Army Honours and Distinctions Committee for the award of these Honours. Following receipt of the committee's recommendations, the Executive Committee of the Army Board has sought, and obtained, Her Majesty's gracious approval for the following awards to be made.

The following Regiments and Corps are to be awarded the Theatre Honour ("Iraq 2003"):

The Life Guards

The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons)

1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys)

The Queen's Royal Lancers

Royal Tank Regiment

Irish Guards (*already awarded*[1])

The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

The Light Infantry

The Royal Irish Regiment (27th (Inniskilling), 83rd, 87th and The Ulster Defence Regiment)

The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding)

The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)

The Parachute Regiment

Army Air Corps

The Royal Yeomanry

The following Regiments and Corps are to be awarded the battle honour "Al Basrah":

The Life Guards

The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons)

1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers and Greys)

The Queen's Royal Lancers

Royal Tank Regiment

Irish Guards (*already awarded*)

The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

The Light Infantry

The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)

The Parachute Regiment

Army Air Corps

[1] Her Majesty gave early approval, in June 2005, for the Irish Guards to be awarded the theatre honour "Iraq 2003" and the battle honour "Al Basrah". This early award allowed the Irish Guards to troop their colour, with their new theatre honour emblazoned upon it, at the Queen's birthday parade.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Student Finance

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): The regulatory impact assessment that was published alongside the Higher Education Act 2004 contained estimates of the fee income for the Higher Education sector and the costs of student grants and loans. These estimates were updated on 23 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 71WS. The figures below are a further update of the March statement. This latest update takes account of latest RAB charges, devolution of student support to Wales from academic year 06/07, updated student numbers and decisions about household income thresholds for the new maintenance grant for 2006–07, announced on 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 35WS. The latest RAB charges from 06/07 are 21 per cent. for maintenance loans and 33 per cent. for fee loans.

Table 1: Fee income for higher education providers

	Cost
Fee income from standard fee (based on standard fee 2006–07 fee of £1,200)	£900 million
Additional fee income from variable fees (based on 91 per cent. of universities charging full £3,000 fee)	£1,350 million
Total	£2,250 million

Table 2: Cost of student support

	Cost
New grant of £2,700	£860 million
Maintenance loans	£510 million
Fee Loans	£600 million

Table 3: Level of support to individual students: full-time students in Academic Year 06/07

Maintenance Loans	**Loan rate**
Full Year rates	
Students living at home	£3,415
Students living away from home in London	£6,170
Students living away from home outside London	£4,405
Final year rates	
Students living at home	£3,085
Students living away from home in London	£5,620
Students living away from home outside London	£4,080
Maintenance Grant	**Grant rate**
New Students with household income of £17,500 or less	£2,700
New Students with household income between £17,501–£37,425	Partial grant
Loans for Tuition Fees	**Loan rate**
New students	Up to £3,000
Continuing students	Up to £1,200

Notes:

1. Fee income figures rounded to the nearest £50 million. Remaining costs have been rounded to the nearest £10 million. Both are given in steady state 2006–07 terms.
2. The forecasts are based on RAB charges under a 2.2 per cent. discount rate of 21 per cent. for maintenance loans and 33 per cent. for fee loans. The RAB charge is an estimate of the percentage of

the face value of loans issued in a given year which reflects the resource cost over the expected life of the loan to the Government of making the loans. The RAB charge is made up of a) the face value of loans issued that are not expected to be repaid due to low income, death of the borrower, etc, and b) the net present value of the interest subsidy on loans that are repaid. There is an interest subsidy as borrowers pay zero real interest and the Government's current published discount rate in resource accounts is 2.2 per cent. Changes to the discount rate therefore cause changes to the RAB charges, and to the resource costs of student loans.

3. The maintenance loan forecast assumes an 82 per cent. take-up.

4. Fee loan forecasts are based on the assumption that 9 per cent. of students are charged a fee of £2,000 and 91 per cent. of students are charged a fee of £3,000. Average fee for new students will be £2,910. The forecasts also assume 80 per cent. take-up of fee deferral.

5. New grant forecasts reflect policy announcements on 14 July 2005.

6. Forecasts now exclude costs of student support for Welsh domicile students, following decisions about devolution of student support to Wales.

7. Table 3 refers to full-time, undergraduate students only. Means-testing arrangements for the Maintenance Grant and Student Loan Rates for 2006-07 were announced in a written statement, placed in the House on 14 July. Maintenance Loan entitlement will be reduced by a £1 for every £1 of Maintenance Grant payable up to a maximum of £1,200. Maintenance loan entitlement will continue to be reduced by a £1 for every £9.50 of household income in excess of £37,900 until 75 per cent. of loan maximum loan rate is left.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Sanctions (Revised)

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): The Government have committed itself to informing Parliament on an annual basis of the sanctions regimes being implemented by the United Kingdom. Currently the United Kingdom implements mandatory United Nations sanctions, imposed by the UN Security Council acting under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in relation to al-Qaeda and the Taliban, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Somalia. The UK also implements sanctions regimes imposed autonomously by the EU in relation to Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burma, China, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (in connection with individuals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), Iran (for nuclear rated dual use goods), Moldova, Sudan and Zimbabwe. In accordance with a decision of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Kingdom implements arms embargoes on Armenia and Azerbaijan. The UK also imposes an arms embargo against Iran. The Government also take full account of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on certain exports of small arms and light weapons to ECOWAS member states. A full list of sanctions regimes and restrictive measures implemented by the UK has been published on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at www.fco.gov.uk/sanctions.

Iraq: Export Licence System

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): On 11 October 2004, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs announced in a written ministerial statement, *Official Report*, column 3WS, that, upon receipt of an application to export arms or related materiel to an end user not explicitly exempt from the embargo, the Government will seek certification on a case-by-case basis from the Government of Iraq or the multinational force. The certification is to ensure that the proposed export is required by the Government of Iraq or the multinational force to serve the purposes of Resolution 1546 and is therefore exempted from the embargo. A certification process has been established with the Government of Iraq.

Following consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Trade and Industry recently made four exceptions to this procedure and issued licences in advance of receipt of certification from the Government of Iraq. All licences were for equipment to be used by a private security company to protect election monitors and ballot boxes for the Iraqi referendum. Equipment concerned included: armoured vehicles, body armour, military helmets, smoke grenades, mini signal flares, stun grenades and six machine guns. The Government received certification for the licences after they were issued.

HEALTH

Independent Nurse Pharmacist Prescribing

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Two public consultations were carried out earlier this year on the future of independent prescribing by nurses and on the introduction of independent prescribing by pharmacists. The responses were overwhelmingly in favour of allowing appropriately qualified nurses and pharmacists to prescribe any licensed medicine for any medical condition. As a result, the Committee on Safety of Medicines has recommended to me that appropriately qualified nurses should be able to prescribe any licensed medicine for any medical condition within their professional competence—with the exception of Controlled Drugs. It has also recommended to me that a new category of non-medical prescriber—pharmacist independent prescribers—be introduced. They will have similar powers. I am announcing today that I am accepting these recommendations and that regulations will be amended to enable this from spring 2006.

We will be working with the relevant bodies across the United Kingdom—the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland and the Nursing and Midwifery Council—to consider the training implications for their members who wish to take up these responsibilities.

This is very good news for patients who will benefit from quicker and more accessible service. It also demonstrates our confidence in nurses and pharmacists, and our wish to use their skills and professionalism to the full.

Patient safety remains paramount and strong safeguards are currently in place to regulate existing prescribing activity by nurses and pharmacists. We will work with professionals and the regulatory bodies to look at what, if any, additional measures are needed to ensure the right safeguards are in place. These extra prescribing flexibilities will only be available to nurses and pharmacists who have undertaken specific training, approved by the relevant professional and regulatory

bodies. Once trained, individuals will be required to keep their skills up to date. Nurse and pharmacist prescribers will need to work within their employers' clinical governance frameworks and they will be accountable to both their employers and their regulatory bodies for their actions.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Procedures Committee

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): I am pleased to announce the appointment of four new members to the Animal Procedures Committee. They were appointed with effect from 1 February 2005.

Dr. John Doe is a Director of the Central Toxicology Laboratory and Global Head of Health Assessment at Syngenta. Mr Robert Kemp retired recently from AstraZeneca. He has over 20 years' experience of working as an animal care technician, and is the current Chairman of the Institute of Animal Technology. Professor Keith Kendrick is Head of Neuroscience at the Babraham Institute. Professor John Pickard holds senior neurosurgical/neuroscience clinical and academic posts in Cambridge.

Each has been appointed for a four year term. I am pleased that they have agreed to serve on this important committee.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): I would like to inform the House that Mr. David Jessel and Dr. James MacKeith have been re-appointed as Commissioners to the Criminal Cases Review Commission. Copies of the press release relating to these appointments are available in the House Library.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): I have today received copies of the annual report of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland for the financial year 2004–05. The report outlines the Board's performance against targets during that year.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

North/South Implementation Bodies/Tourism Ireland Limited

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses papers relating to decisions that have been taken during the period 1 October 2004 to 12 September 2005 which relate to the North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Limited under the terms of the Exchange of Notes of 19 November 2002 (Cmnd 5708).

Decisions that have been taken during the period 1 October 2004 to 12 September 2005 which relate to the North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland under the terms of the Exchange of Notes of 19 November 2002 (Cmnd 5708).

FOYLE CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS SECTOR

IP/FCILC 14 - Loughs Agency's Corporate Plan 2005–07, Business Plan for 2005 and Budgets 2005–07.

IP/FCILC 15 - Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Licensing of Fishing Engines) (Amendment) Regulations 2004.

IP/FCILC 16 - Foyle and Carlingford Area Advisory Forum.

IP/FCILC 17 - Loughs Agency's Financial Statements and Annual Report periods ending 31 December 2001 and 31 December 2002.

IP/FCILC 18 - Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Close Seasons for Angling) (Amendment) Regulations 2005.

FOOD SAFETY SECTOR

IP/FS 10 - Food Safety Promotion Board. Corporate Plan 2005–07, Business Plan for 2005, Budgets 2005–07 and 2003 Business Plan.

IP/FS 11 - Food Safety Promotion Board. North/South Pension Scheme.

IP/FS 12 - Food Safety Promotion Board. Appointment of a new Scientific Advisory Committee.

IP/FS 13 - Food Safety Promotion Board—Annual Report 2003 incorporating Financial Statements for 2002 and 2003 and a review of activities for 2001.

LANGUAGE SECTOR

IP/LAN 13 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency) Remuneration of staff and conditions of service for the Ulster-Scots Agency.

IP/LAN 14 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Code of conduct for staff of the Ulster-Scots Agency.

IP/LAN 17 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Remuneration of staff and conditions of service for Foras Na Gaeilge.

IP/LAN 18 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Staffing for Tha Boord O Ulster-Scotch (Ulster-Scots Agency).

IP/LAN 19 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency) Corporate Plans 2005–07 Business Plans and Budgets 2005 for Foras Na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

IP/LAN 20 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Financial Assistance Schemes.

IP/LAN 21 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Annual Report and Accounts for period ended 31 December 2000.

IP/LAN 22 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Redeployment of two staff of Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann to Foras na Gaeilge.

IP/LAN 23 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Remuneration and other conditions of Service of the Chief Executive of Foras Na Gaeilge.

IP/LAN 24 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). North/South Pension Scheme (Ulster-Scots Agency)

IP/LAN 25 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). North/South Pension Scheme (Foras na Gaeilge).

IP/LAN 26 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency and Ulster-Scots Agency). Appointment of Board member to the North/South Language Body.

IP/LAN 28 - North/South Language Body (Irish Language Agency/Foras Na Gaeilge and Ulster-Scots Agency). Ulster-Scots Agency in-year bid for additional Funding.

TRADE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

IP/TB 9 - Inter*Trade*Ireland. Corporate Plan 2005–07, Business Plan for 2005 and Budgets 2005–07.

IP/TB 10 - Inter*Trade*Ireland. Business Plan for 2005.

IP/TB 11 - Inter*Trade*Ireland. North/South Pension Scheme.

TOURISM SECTOR

IP/TOU 15 - Tourism Ireland Limited. Annual Report and Accounts for 2003.

IP/TOU 16 - Membership of Board of Tourism Ireland Limited.

IP/TOU 17 - Tourism Ireland Limited. Corporate Plan 2005–07, Business Plan for 2005 and Budget 2005–07.

IP/TOU 18 - Tourism Ireland Limited. North/South Pension Scheme.

IP/TOU 19 - Tourism Ireland Limited. Annual Report and Accounts for 2004.

INLAND WATERWAYS SECTOR

IP/WI 8 - Waterways Ireland. Corporate Plan 2005–07, Business Plan for 2005 and Budgets 2005–07.

IP/WI 9 - Proposal to make a compulsory purchase order at Webb's Bridge, Abbeyshrule, Co Longford.

IP/WI 10 - Waterways Ireland. Remuneration and other conditions of service of the Chief Executive.

IP/WI 11 - Waterways Ireland. Capital Funding 2004–05.

IP/WI 12 - Waterways Ireland. North/South Pension Scheme.

IP/WI 13 - Waterways Ireland. Annual Report and Accounts for 2003.

IP/WI 14 - Proposal to make a compulsory purchase order at Longford Bridge, Ballymahon, Co Longford.

IP/WI 15 - Waterways Ireland. Pay awards for staff based in Northern Ireland.

IP/WI 16 - Electricity Generation project, Tarmonbarry, River Shannon.

IP/WI 17 - 900 year lease on the River Shannon at Jolly Mariner, Athlone, Co Westmeath to Mr John Lally.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES SECTOR

IP/SEU 12 - Special EU Programmes Body. Remuneration of staff and conditions of service.

IP/SEU 13 - Approval of Interreg IIIA Programme Complement.

IP/SEU 14 - Special EU Programmes Body. Corporate Plan 2005–07 Business Plan and Budget 2005.

IP/SEU 15 - Special EU Programmes Body. Annual Report and Accounts for 2003.

IP/SEU 16 - Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) staffing.

IP/SEU 17 - Extension of Peace II Operational programme amendments.

IP/SEU18 - Special EU Programmes Body. North/ South Pension Scheme.

IP/SEU 19 - Special EU Programmes Body. Business Plan 2006 and Budget 2006.

TRANSPORT

Renewable Tramport Fuel

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): We announced last year that we would conduct a feasibility study into the prospects for an obligation on transport fuel suppliers to ensure that a proportion of their sales were from a renewable source.

In the light of the completed study, the Government will introduce a renewable transport fuel obligation. The level of obligation will be 5 per cent. in 2010.

An obligation will ensure a cost effective transition to a renewably fuelled transport system over the long term, saving around 1 million tonnes of carbon emissions a year by 2010. Carbon savings could increase in future years, depending on how the level of obligation changes. This will help to reduce the impact of transport on climate change, and increase the United Kingdom's fuel security and diversity of supply.

To ensure that biofuels are sourced sustainably, obligated companies will be required to report on the level of carbon savings achieved and on the sustainability of their supplies.

The Government will consult widely on precisely how the obligation will operate.

A copy of the study and accompanying regulatory impact assessment have been placed in the Library of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

The Minister for Pensions Reform (Mr. Stephen Timms): From January 2004, following the Employment Act 2002 which introduced new data sharing provisions, the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study has linked benefit and programme information held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on its customers, with employment records from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

To promote and facilitate retirement planning, section 234 of the Pensions Act 2004 provides new functions for the Secretary of State. To aid these functions sections 235 and 236 of and schedule 10 to the Act provide for information to be supplied to the Secretary of State for such purposes.

To enable the Secretary of State to carry out his function of promoting and facilitating retirement planning and the development of private pensions policies, DWP has expanded the database through the linking of financial data relating to PEPs, ISAs, TESSAs, private pension pots and savings accounts for all aged 60 and over. At the same time, in order to better support evaluations of welfare-to-work activity DWP has added earnings information for people aged 16 and over who have been a DWP client.

DWP and HMRC have been working together to enable this data sharing to take place and to develop safeguards for the initiative.

It is the Department's intention to link housing benefit/council tax benefit to this database. Initially housing benefit and council tax benefit information will only be linked for present and historic data to DWP benefits data. It is also the intention to link housing benefit and council tax benefit information to HMRC data, however this aspect of linking needs further investigation.

The extension to the scope of the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study will be used to perform a range of new statistical and research analyses, as well as being used for some limited operational purposes, and will give DWP further opportunities to improve and evaluate the effectiveness of its businesses. It will, for example for those aged 60 and over:

improve data matching to support the Pension Credit take-up campaign;

enable better segmentation of the population in support of this activity;

enable better understanding and research with regard to people who work beyond state pension age; and

enable DWP to understand the links between savings held and the benefits system in retirement and how people are using or accumulating savings in retirement.

And for those of both working and pension age, it will:

enable DWP to evaluate its policies more effectively and to understand better the links between Housing Benefit and the rest of the welfare system to assist in future policy planning; and

use earnings data to better support evaluations of welfare-to-work programmes and further develop policies.

DWP has a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure that the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study is used appropriately. We have, therefore, developed a set of safeguards around access rights, system monitoring, storage retention of the information and vetting of new uses (these are attached to this statement). Information on this, and a full range of the study's uses, has been placed in the Library and on the Department's website at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/longitudinal_study/ic_longitudinal_study.asp.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 11 November 2005

TREASURY

Pensions Tax Simplification

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): The new simplified regime for the taxation of pensions begins on 6 April 2006. I can today announce that registered pension schemes will be permitted to submit reports and returns in paper form for at least six months before the requirement to submit information online becomes mandatory.

HMRC's Pension Schemes Online service will become available over a number of releases throughout 2006–07. Pension Scheme administrators and practitioners will be able to meet most of their statutory filing requirements online at the time that they are required, but paper returns and reporting will also be offered as a supplementary means of filing for a limited period.

HMRC will continue to work closely with the industry over the forthcoming months to support the implementation of the new regime. HMRC will be holding discussions with the pensions industry and software suppliers to establish what issues this delay may present and how best to address them, before moving to a mandatory online filing regime.

This delay will not affect HMRC's ability to deliver Pensions Tax Simplification on 6th April 2006. The vast majority of pension schemes and their members will also not be affected by this delay. The new pensions regime heralds greater opportunities for 15 million pension savers to save more into a pension scheme and enjoy the associated flexibilities around contributions and the taking of retirement benefits.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Association of British Insurers

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): I am pleased to report to the House that the Association of British Insurers (ABI) has agreed a revised Statement of Principles on flood insurance taking into account commitments made by the Government on our programme to manage flood risk. It updates the existing Statement introduced in January 2003. The revised Statement, which is attached, will come into effect on 1 January 2006, and reflects the continued partnership between the industry and the Government.

In relation to the commitments made under the Statement of Principles, Government have significantly increased investment in flood management since 1997 and is committed to levels of spend of £570 million a year throughout the 2004 spending period to 2007–08. This is over £250 million a year more than in 1997. The Environment Agency is committed to delivering a programme of efficiencies that will be re-invested in flood management so as to maintain outputs in real terms. We are on target to deliver increased protection to over 80,000 houses since April 2003 and Operating Authorities have a forward programme of works which is planned to deliver the reduction in risk agreed with the ABI.

The Environment Agency has published on their internet site an interactive flood map for England and Wales which shows the areas of land that could be at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. The Agency is continually working to improve and update the information on flood defences and its flood mapping, and is committed to sharing this with all stakeholders.

Water and sewerage company plans to reduce public sewer flooding problems formed an important part of OfWat's price review for the period 2005–10. Over the next five years, almost £1 billion will be invested in the public sewer network to reduce significantly the risk of properties being flooded by sewage.

The Government have published its first response to the 'Making space for water' consultation including commitments to review and strengthen the planning process in flood risk locations, initiate pilot projects to develop integrated drainage partnerships in urban areas, encourage the uptake of property level resilience measures and to give the Environment Agency a strategic overview role for all types of flooding.

ABI UPDATED STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

General policy

It is the intention of ABI members that flood insurance for existing domestic properties and small businesses should continue to be available for as many customers as possible. The premiums charged and other terms—such as excesses—will reflect the risk of flooding but will be offered in a competitive market. There is separate ABI guidance on flood risk and new development.

This revised Statement of Principles will apply from 1 January 2006 but is subject to review in the event of significant external shocks such as withdrawal of flood reinsurance. Successfuloperation of the Statement is dependent on action by the Government to manage flood risk effectively.

Current position

The majority of the 2.2 million properties in flood risk areas are already protected to a minimum standard of 1.3 per cent. annual probability (one in 75 years) or better. However, around 15 per cent. of properties in the floodplain have a significant chance of flooding (greater than 1.3 per cent. annual probability). In some of these areas there are planned improvements to flood defences to reduce the risk, but there are other areas where there are no plans for improvement.

Despite these risks, insurers have continued to provide flood cover for the vast majority of customers in the UK.

Insurers' renewed commitment

Areas where flood risk is 1.3 per cent. annual probability (or one in 75 years) or less:

Flood cover will be available as a standard feature of household and small business policies. The level to which properties are defended above this standard will vary considerably and premiums will reflect different degrees of risk. Highly populated coastal areas, in particular, should be protected to a higher standard because of the potential consequences should a flood occur.

Areas of significant flood risk (greater than 1.3 per cent. annual probability or one in 75 years) where improved defences are planned:

Insurers will maintain flood cover for domestic properties and small businesses that they already insure where improvements in flood protection schemes sufficient to reduce the likelihood of flooding to 1.3 per cent. annual probability or less are scheduled for completion within the next five years. This will operate as a rolling five-year commitment provided the Statement of Principles remains in force. Delays or disruptions could take a scheme beyond the five-year commitment. The premiums charged and other policy terms—such as excesses—will reflect the risk.

If a domestic property in this category is sold the current insurer will continue to provide cover, subject to satisfactory information about the new owners of the property, especially their previous claims record. Where a small business is sold the current insurer will consider whether to continue to provide cover; this will depend heavily on the proposed new use of the premises and the previous claims record of the new owner.

Areas of significant flood risk (greater than 1.3 per cent. annual probability or one in 75 years) where no improvements in defences are planned:

In these areas, insurers cannot guarantee to maintain cover, but will examine the risks on a case-by-case basis. Insurers will use their best efforts to continue to provide cover and will work with the owners of domestic properties and small businesses which they currently insure to see what action could be taken by the property owner, the Environment Agency and the local authority to make the property insurable in some form. This action might include the use of accredited products, flood resilient materials and temporary defences to defend the property.

Action from Government

Continued operation of this Statement will depend on Government progress on the five key actions set out below, with an annual review of progress against specific performance targets, and a more comprehensive assessment after three years:

Reducing the annual probability of flooding each year for a substantial number of properties in the UK, a proportion of which currently have a significant chance of flooding (greater than 1.3 per cent. annual probability).

At least maintaining investment in flood management each year, so that outputs can be sustained in real terms, with a commitment to evidence-based discussions on future funding needs, taking account of climate change and other factors affecting risk.

Implementing reforms to the land-use planning system to ensure that new developments do not lead to an increase in national or local flood risk.

Communicating flood risk effectively, including providing higher quality and more detailed information on flood risk, and on existing, new and upcoming flood protection schemes.

Developing an integrated approach to urban drainage that alleviates the risks of sewer flooding and flash-flooding.

Levy Board Report

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): Rosemary Radcliffe has completed her independent review of UK agricultural and horticultural levy bodies, and her report is published today. Copies are being placed in the Libraries of both Houses. My ministerial colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and I wish to offer our thanks to the Reviewer for the thorough and inclusive way in which she has carried out her work.

In summary, the Reviewer finds that there is still a case for statutory levies to address issues of market failure in the sectors in question, and she makes recommendations for a new structure to meet the sectors' needs in future. This includes proposed arrangements for improving governance, flexibility, focus inactivities undertaken, levy collection arrangements, and operations and service delivery, to increase overall value for money for, and accountability to the levy payer.

My noble Friend Lord Bach is today launching a full consultation on the report so that the views of stakeholders, and in particular levy payers, can be taken into account before formal policy proposals are developed. This consultation will run for 12 weeks, and a further statement will be made thereafter.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

UK Presidency: General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): A General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) was held on 7 November in Brussels. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Jack Straw) and I chaired the Council as Presidency. I also represented the UK on certain agenda items.

The agenda items were covered as follows:

Report on Informal Heads of State/Government meeting (Hampton Court, 27 October 2005)

The Presidency presented the six remits from Hampton Court: Research and Development, Universities, Demographic challenge, Energy, Migration, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy/European Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/ESDP). The Commission said they would take forward the first five remits, in consultation with the current and future Presidencies. The High Representative, in association, where appropriate, with the Presidency, the future Presidency and the European Commission, agreed to take forward work in the area of CFSP/ESDP.

World Trade Organisation (WTO)/Doha Development Agenda (DDA)

Following up the extensive GAERC discussion and agreed Conclusions of 18 October, Commissioner Mandelson updated the Council on the state of play in the DDA negotiations in the light of its recent conditional offer and forthcoming meetings among WTO members. The Commission confirmed that it was continuing to act within its mandate, and would continue to ensure that the Council was fully informed of developments in the negotiations. The Council also agreed, as an A point, Conclusions noting support for Saudi accession to the WTO.

Financial Perspectives 2007–13

The Council exchanged views on the EU's budget for 2007–13 and identified the areas that will need to be addressed in order for the Presidency to reach an agreement at the 15/16 December European Council: (i) the structure of EU spending; (ii) modernising the budget, including a timetable for review; and (iii) the system of EU own resources. The Presidency concluded that work on these areas should continue and that it would return to the issue at the 21/22 November GAERC.

Belarus

The Presidency introduced the item noting the deteriorating situation on human rights and political freedoms in Belarus. High Representative Solana underlined the difficulty faced by the EU in trying to bring about reform. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner agreed noting their efforts to realign aid towards support for civil society. A large number of delegations spoke expressing concern at the deteriorating situation and highlighting the need to intensify contact and support to civil society. The Council also noted the importance of free and fair Presidential elections in 2006 and called for the Belarusian Government to issue an early invitation to an OSCE/ODIHR monitoring mission. The Council expressed willingness to take appropriate restrictive measures against responsible individuals in the event of a failure to uphold international standards. Council Conclusions were agreed which committed the Council to a further GAERC discussion in January 2006.

Kosovo

Over lunch the Council held a discussion with Martti Ahtisaari, the UN Secretary General's future Kosovo Status Envoy. Ahtisaari welcomed EU involvement in the Status process and gave an initial indication of how he intended to take forward his mandate. He also flagged the importance of addressing Kosovo's poor economic situation. High Representative Solana nominated Stefan Lehne as EU Representative to the Kosovo Status Process. The Council expressed strong support for Ahtisaari's appointment and endorsement of Stefan Lehne as EU representative. Council Conclusions were agreed.

Iran

The Council reviewed the EU's overall relations with Iran. They condemned President Ahmadinejad's reported remarks calling for Israel to be wiped from the map. They agreed that recent developments had been discouraging in the EU's main areas of concern, including Iran's approach to WMD and terrorism, the human rights situation, and Iran's policies towards the Middle East Peace Process and regional issues. They noted the importance of the EU/Iran Comprehensive Dialogue, and urged Iran to take steps to resume substantive discussions under the EU/Iran Human Rights Dialogue and to demonstrate by its actions that it is willing to improve respect for human rights.They agreed to keep the EU's relations with Iran under close review. Council Conclusions were agreed.

Syria/Lebanon

The Council underlined the significance of the unanimity achieved on UN Security Council Resolution 1636 on Syrian and reviewed progress on the implementation of UNSCR 1559. Council Conclusions were agreed.

MEPP

The Council discussed an invitation from James Wolfensohn, Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement, on behalf of Israel and the Palestinian Authority for the EU to play a monitoring role at Rafah on the Egypt-Gaza border. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner and High Representative Solana highlighted that an EU role in this area would help build confidence. In discussion Member States supported the idea of EU involvement in a non-executive monitoring role. This was the fruit of a continuous effort on the ground, which would reinforce the EU's political role. The Presidency concluded that there was a general endorsement for the proposals by the High Representative and the Commission. Council Conclusions were agreed.

Iraq

The Council agreed Conclusions that welcomed the 15 October referendum on the Iraqi Constitution.

UN World Summit follow-up

The Presidency introduced this item, noting that effective follow-up to the UN Summit was a priority for the EU. Member States highlighted certain aspects such as the Peacebuilding Commission, Human Rights Council, and Counter-Terrorism as key areas for urgent action. The Council agreed extensive Conclusions that set out the agreed EU position on all the key areas of Summit implementation.

Avian Flu

The Presidency introduced the item, noting the earlier discussion at the GAERC on 18 October. The Commission noted that work within the EU was well advanced. The Council agreed Conclusions that detailed the range of work under way, including a comprehensive action plan.

AoB—Colombia

Dutch Foreign Minister Bot highlighted the importance of EU support for the peace process in Colombia. The Presidency noted that the 3 October GAERC had agreed Conclusions on support for the peace process in Colombia, which set the framework for EU policy.

AoB—Cuba

The Czech Republic highlighted the problems faced by their Embassy in Havana in celebrating their national day.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Force Structures Review

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) report, "Closing the Gap", published in September 2005 concluded that the current 43 force structure in England and Wales was no longer "fit for purpose". The report recommended that the best business solution was for the police service to reconfigure based on strategic forces of sufficient size to provide both effective neighbourhood policing and protective services to combat serious organised crime and terrorism.

Following the publication of the HMIC report, the Home Secretary asked all police forces and authorities to consider the best options for their region and to submit them to him by 23 December 2005. The first stage in this process was for police forces and police authorities to develop by the end of October short listed options for each region. This stage has now been completed and feedback has been provided to all chief officers and chairs of police authorities indicating which proposals appear to be most favourable for each of the nine Government Office regions in England and for Wales. The options identified for further development are set out below, although authorities are still free to develop alternative options alongside these.

In recommending particular options, the arguments put forward by forces and authorities have been carefully considered along with the need to create a balanced and resilient policing landscape across the whole of England and Wales. Neighbourhood and Basic Command Unit (BCU) level policing remain the essential local face of the police service, and by ensuring greater resilience and capability in our police service we will help maintain this service, whilst at the same time

strengthening the capacity to deal with serious and organised crimes, major incidents and counter-terrorism.

Forces and authorities are now being asked to complete a cost benefit analysis for all of their short listed options. They will then develop a business case and initial implementation plans for their recommended option to be submitted to the Home Secretary.

The Secretary of State for Transport announced in a written statement on 11 October that, in the context of this review, he would be reviewing separately the role of the British Transport Police (BTP) Proposals for the British Transport Police will be brought forward, if appropriate, once the outcome of that review is known.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears) has written to all Parliamentary colleagues on this matter inviting them to join the consultation process.

Options assessed at this stage as suitable for progression

South East	1. Two strategic forces: Kent, Surrey and Sussex; Thames Valley and Hampshire 2. Three strategic forces: Kent; Thames Valley; Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire 3. Three strategic forces: Kent, Surrey and Sussex; Thames Valley; Hampshire 4. Three strategic forces: Kent and Sussex; Thames Valley; Hampshire and Surrey 5. Four strategic forces: Kent; Thames Valley; Surrey and Sussex; Hampshire
South West	1. Regional South West force 2. Two strategic forces: Devon and Cornwall; Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Dorset
West Midlands	1. Regional West Midlands force 2. Two strategic forces: Staffordshire and West Mercia; Warwickshire and West Midlands
East Midlands	1. Regional East Midlands force 2. Two strategic forces: Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire; Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire
Eastern	1. Regional Eastern force 2. Two strategic forces: Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex; Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire 3. Two strategic forces: Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex; Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire
Yorkshire and Humberside	1. Regional Yorkshire and Humberside force 2. Two strategic forces: West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire; South Yorkshire and Humberside
North East	1. Regional North East force
North West	1. Three strategic forces: Lancashire and Cumbria; Cheshire and Merseyside; Greater Manchester Police 2. Two strategic forces: Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside; Cheshire and Greater Manchester Police
Wales	1. National Wales force
London	1. Strategic force: Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London 2. Collaboration between the Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London
BTP	1. Proposals for the British Transport Police will be brought forward, if appropriate, once the outcome of the current DfT review is known

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 14 November 2005

TREASURY

National Insurance Contributions Bill 2005

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): To assist in further consideration of the National Insurance Bill, introduced to Parliament on 27 October, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs is today publishing draft regulations in respect of:

The first use of the powers in the Bill to backdate National Insurance liability to reflect the provisions in Schedule 2 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 2005.

To prescribe an additional statement to be contained in future forms of National Insurance elections that will make clear the election cannot transfer backdated employers National Insurance liabilities to their employees. This regulation is to be made using existing powers in the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992.

Extending the tax avoidance disclosure rules to National Insurance.

Copies of the draft regulations have been placed in the Library of the House and will also be available on the HMRC website.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Objects of Cultural Interest (Export Controls)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Mr. David Lammy): I have today laid before both Houses of Parliament the revised Statutory Guidance on the Criteria to be taken into consideration when making a decision about whether or not to grant an export licence, as required under the Export Control Act 2002.

DEFENCE

International Security Assistance Force

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): As previously announced by the Prime Minister, *Official Report*, 30 June 2004, column 286, the United Kingdom is committed to deploy the Headquarters Group of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps to lead the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from May 2006 to February 2007. In addition, the Secretary of State for Defence has previously informed the House, *Official Report*, 7 July 2005, column 479, of preliminary plans to support the expansion of ISAF by establishing a British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in the province of Helmand, in Southern Afghanistan. The aim of both would be to help restore Afghanistan as a secure and stable state, and prevent the country again becoming a haven for global terrorists.

The ISAF is led by NATO, which is currently planning the expansion of the ISAF into the South and East of Afghanistan. Once these plans mature, individual Allies, including the United Kingdom, will be able to take final decisions on deployment and on the nature of the capabilities that may be required.

In advance of this, however, it is sensible to begin British preparations for a potential deployment. These are necessarily based upon national planning assumptions which may need to be adapted in the light of NATO's conclusions and the final positions taken by individual allies and partners, including the UK.

In the first instance, the tempo of work to prepare the ground in Helmand for a possible British deployment is being increased. These activities are initially likely to involve some 250 troops.

Preparations are also underway in the United Kingdom. Some units, predominantly drawn from 16 Air Assault Brigade and the Joint Helicopter Command, will shortly commence collective training on a contingency basis. Similarly, the procurement of certain equipment enhancements that may be needed for a deployment of this nature is underway.

These necessary measures are prudent military preparations for a possible future deployment. They do not mean that these units or capabilities will be committed to Southern Afghanistan in 2006. No final decisions have yet been made. Should the United Kingdom decide to commit additional forces to the ISAF in 2006, a full statement will then be made to the House as soon as possible.

Operations in Afghanistan

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): With the expiry of the call-out order made last October, a new order has been made under Section 54 of the Reserve forces Act 1996 to enable Reservists to continue to be called out into service to support operations in Afghanistan. The new order is effective until 31 October 2006. Reservists have made a valuable contribution to operations in that country and some 63 Reservists were called out under the order made last year.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education and Youth Council

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): The Secretary of State for Education and Skills will be chairing the Education and Youth Council which will be held in Brussels on 15 November. I will represent the UK during the Education Council and Peter Peacock, Scottish Minister for Children and Young People, will represent the UK during the Youth Council.

There are four substantive items on the education agenda in the morning.

Ministers are expected to endorse a partial political agreement on the Lifelong Learning Programme. This will involve agreement on all parts of the programme without budgetary implications.

Ministers will be asked to adopt a resolution on enabling higher education to make its full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy. There will also be an informal discussion over lunch

of issues relating to higher education based around questions relating to making more higher education institutions world class; stimulating more public/private partnerships; university-business links and postgraduate study.

Ministers are also expected to adopt conclusions on the role of the development of skills and competences in taking forward the Lisbon agenda. These conclusions build on discussions at the Informal meeting of Education Ministers in London on 12–13 July and are a Presidency initiative but fit within the ongoing Education and Training 2010 work programme.

There will be an exchange of views on the "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme—Joint Interim Report 2006. The discussion will focus on the following question, 'What priorities, in relation to both economic and social objectives, should the 2006 Joint Report set for the next phase of the "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme?'

The Youth Council will take place after lunch and Ministers will be asked to:

Endorse partial political agreement on the Youth in Action programme. As with the Lifelong Learning programme this will involve agreeing on all sections of the text without budgetary implications.

Adopt a resolution on implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship.

Take part in an exchange of views on 'Bringing Europe closer to its young citizens.'

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EU Development Ministers (Informal Meeting)

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): On 23 and 24 October I chaired a meeting as Presidency of EU Development Ministers in Leeds. The agenda items were as follows:

South Asian Earthquake:

Jan Egeland, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, briefed Ministers on the urgent need to respond to the South Asian earthquake. He called for more aid, particularly for shelter and helicopters. Ministers agreed that more money and help needs to be given and reiterated that coordination is vital both in the humanitarian phase and as reconstruction begins. Commissioner Louis Michel announced that the Commission had asked the European Parliament to approve the release of an additional €80 million of EC funds in 2005–06 of which €30 million would be for humanitarian aid and the remainder for reconstruction. This would be in addition to the €110 million of support already committed by Member States and the Commission. Further pledges were expected at a UN meeting in Geneva on 26 October. Ministers also agreed to work to strengthen the EU and UN's capacity to respond to future disasters.

Reform of the International Architecture:

Ministers discussed the need to ensure that the international development architecture is fully equipped to respond to the challenge of delivering more and better aid to help maximise progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. There was recognition of the EU's leading role in the international development system and therefore the leading role it should play in shaping its future—particularly as the EU will account for two-thirds of DAC aid by 2010.

Mark Malloch Brown, the UN Secretary General's Chief of Staff confirmed that the UN Secretary General would appoint a team of experts to develop a proposal, in consultation with development partners and donors including the EU, for the reform of the UN development and operational architecture. This could include proposals for more tightly managed development, humanitarian and environmental entities. Ministers strongly supported the need to signal a high level of interest in, and political support for, reform to the international development system.

Ministers noted the paper circulated by the Netherlands on UN reform, but agreed that engagement should not be limited to the core group of EU and non-EU countries, referred to in the paper as the "G13". Instead, the EU as a whole should actively support UN reform, including the strengthening of country level Resident Coordinators. Austria confirmed its intention to take forward work on UN reform during its Presidency of the EU.

Ministers also discussed EU aid effectiveness, noting the importance of providing sustainable and predictable funding and the need to address issues of aid distribution. The Presidency confirmed that the 21–22 November General Affairs and External Relations Council would include the annual Orientation Debate on how to improve and monitor the effectiveness of European aid.

Putting Trade at the Service of Development:

Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for External Trade, emphasised the importance of achieving a good outcome for developing countries from the Doha Development Round: He urged Development Ministers to help demonstrate that the EU is ready to put trade at the service of development, reinforcing Europe's role as a force for good in the world. That meant we needed to deliver on the obligations stemming from last year's Framework Agreement, including providing our partners significantly improved agricultural market access. He highlighted the need to push hard for a development "down payment" for Hong Kong. This should include other OECD countries following the EU's lead in giving Everything But Arms (EBA) access to all Least Developed Countries; achieving the right degree of differentiation in trade rules; and commitment to dedicate significantly increased resources—at EU and national levels—to help poorer countries build their capacity to trade.

Development ministers agreed that whilst the negotiating specifics are clearly a matter for trade colleagues, they have an important role to play in ensuring priority concerns of developing countries are addressed both before and after the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong.

Ministers agreed on: the importance of increased market access for products in which developing countries have comparative advantage, especially agricultural products; the need for all agreements to reflect the different levels of development of developing countries and that there are millions of poor people working in middle income developing countries, especially in agriculture; and that South—South trade has to be part of the solution for development in least developed countries, but recognised that this is no substitute for action by the EU. Ministers highlighted

the importance of an urgent WTO response to the plight of West African cotton producers, as set out in a paper circulated by France.

Ministers emphasised the importance of ensuring Economic Partnership Agreements are successful development tools and that an effective mechanism for monitoring implementation is needed as soon as possible. Ministers agreed that increasing support to help developing countries build their capacity to trade is a high priority and called for the Presidency and Commission to bring forward a proposal on the EU's possible contribution to an enhanced aid for trade package ahead of Hong Kong. Ministers also noted that many developing countries will look at sugar as a test of EU support for their concerns and that transitional assistance for sugar producers needed to be made available in 2006.

Development Policy Statement (DPS):

Discussions on the Development Policy Statement clarified some important issues. There was consensus that poverty eradication remains the primary objective, while globalisation provides the context within which development is pursued. There was broad agreement that whilst our development objectives for working in both Low Income Countries and Middle Income Countries are the same, the way in which we implement and approach development assistance will be different, according to partner countries' situations and needs.

There was agreement on the need for a shared EU vision for development and for the EU to work together more effectively and more coherently, in line with the Paris Declaration. Doubts were expressed on the need for, and feasibility of, a single thematic framework for all EU development activities. However, it was important to indicate in a comprehensive way common objectives and principles, and a shared understanding of the breadth of activities needed to eradicate poverty.

There was broad support for the EC to underline its areas of excellence; building on its strengths and experiences and to identify where at Community level we need to further develop expertise. However, there was recognition that this should not restrict the Commission from working in other areas. What is needed is a balance between the need to concentrate efforts in country, whilst retaining the flexibility to respond to a range of partner countries' priorities.

Discussions on the Development Policy Statement will continue at working level, with the aim of reaching consensus on a tripartite statement between the Council, Commission and Parliament by November.

EU-Africa Partnership:

Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank emphasized the need for the EU Strategy to identify the comparative advantage of EU institutions within the international donor community; to recognise the importance of anchor countries because of their influence on low-income countries; and, to work through and build capacity in existing African institutions. Ministers agreed that strengthening African institutions was particularly important.

Ministers welcomed the Commission's Africa Communication, which will form an integral part of the overall EU Strategy for Africa to be agreed at the December European Council. Ministers agreed that the November GAERC should adopt positive Conclusions—broadly in line with the outline discussed by COREPER the previous week—on the Communication. Ministers highlighted the importance of peace, security and migration and other issues, and the need to ensure we get the right balance between the different elements. Ministers noted that enhancing political dialogue was a key element, including participation of civil society and parliamentarians in Africa. Ministers also agreed on the need to follow up and effectively monitor implementation of EU commitments on more and better aid.

European Development Fund (EDF):

There was agreement that the Council should consider the non-financial elements, of a possible EDF 10, especially in relation to effectiveness, without prejudice to the outcome of discussions about the 2007–13 Financial Perspective (EC Budget).

Sudan /Darfur:

There was agreement that both the UN presence in Southern Sudan and the African Union force (AMIS) in Darfur need strengthening and that capacity building of the African Union to manage peacekeeping operations was essential. Delegations agreed that the benefits of the comprehensive peace agreement were not yet being felt in Sudan, which threatened hopes for long-term peace. All atrocities were unacceptable. Member States agreed to give any evidence of specific atrocities to the Sanctions Committee and the International Criminal Court.

Food Crisis in Southern Africa:

Delegations agreed that the EU should continue to provide significant support to countries affected by food shortages in Southern Africa. Zimbabwe was highlighted as a particularly difficult case following the misreporting of harvest figures. Commissioner Louis Michel suggested that future EDF allocation criteria should reflect food security levels.

Ethiopia/Eritrea:

Delegations noted with regret that relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea remained difficult, as did the situation in Ethiopia following the elections.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Social Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be making a number of minor changes to the discretionary social fund, with effect from 14 November 2005. The changes to the fund are minor clarifications of guidance and directions, and, in the main, are consequential to legislative changes made in respect of other social security benefits.

Details of the changes have been placed in the Library.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 15 November 2005

TREASURY

Economic Reform

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): On 8 November I chaired the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) in Brussels. The Paymaster General represented the UK.

Ahead of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) qualified report on the EU's 2004 Budget, published today, the Council agreed Conclusions in response to the European Commission's 'roadmap to an integrated internal control framework'. This is the eleventh successive year in which the ECA has been unable to give a positive opinion on the EU's annual budget reflecting long-term, systemic problems with financial management and control systems. It is unacceptable that European taxpayers cannot have confidence in the way in which public money is managed and spent. The Council, led by the UK Presidency, has for the first time taken action, agreeing conclusions that will contribute to bringing about a step change in financial management and control.

The Council agreed conclusions on a common methodology for measuring the administrative burden that existing and proposed EU legislation place on businesses. In line with the better regulation priorities of our Presidency, the methodology will ensure that such costs are fully accounted for in impact assessments and, over time, reduced through simplification initiatives with quantitative targets.

The Council agreed Conclusions on a package of statistical measures including political agreement to an amended Regulation on the quality of statistics for excessive deficit monitoring and evaluation and improvement in the governance of Eurostat.

The Council adopted a decision under article 104(8) of the Treaty, with regard to Hungary's Excessive Deficit Procedure.

The Council noted progress on developing a One Stop Scheme for simplifying cross-border business relating to Value-Added Tax obligations (VAT), and discussed existing proposals to extend reduced rates of VAT.

The Council was briefed by the Commission on work underway to improve the regulatory framework for cross-border mergers and acquisitions in the financial services industry. Presidency conclusions welcoming the Commission's work were adopted.

The Council discussed the financial consequences of ongoing negotiations to reform the EU's sugar regime.

DEFENCE

Housing Prime Contract

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): I am pleased to announce that a contract has been awarded for the MOD's Housing Prime Contract covering England and Wales. The seven year contract is worth in the region of £690 million, and has been awarded to Modern Housing Solutions—a joint venture company between Carillion, Atkins and Enterprise. This follows the successful conclusion of discussions with the company, which was appointed as Designated Contractor in April 2005.

This contract will provide for full property maintenance, including facilities management services encompassing initially around 45,000 properties. The award of the Housing Prime Contract represents the continuation of the MOD's initiative to modernise its estate and coincides with the completion of the awards for the Department's five Regional Prime Contracts across the estate in Great Britain.

Prime Contracting is a key initiative that aims to improve the value for money MOD obtains from its expenditure on both the construction and maintenance of the estate, by encouraging innovation and efficiency through suitably incentivised contracts and conforming with the principles of 'Smart Acquisition'.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza (Epidemiology Report)

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): In my statement on 26 October regarding the incident of H5N1 avian influenza in the quarantine facility in Essex I made clear my intention to bring to the attention of the House as early as possible the findings of my Department's investigations. I have today placed in the House Libraries copies of the epidemiology report which make clear the virological examination results and conclusions which experts have drawn.

The main findings of the report are:

> Within the species documented as coming from Taiwan only the Mesias were infected with H5N1 and 53 out of 101 birds had died. This is consistent with DEFRA's working hypothesis of 23 October that the likeliest origin of the infection was the birds from Taiwan.
>
> Infection with H5N1 was transmitted between the Mesias, but there is no evidence of transmittion to other species in the facility including the sentinel birds.

The report will be fed into the independent review of avian quarantine procedures I announced on 31 October led by Professor Dimmock, and to Essex County Council who are conducting an investigation into events at the quarantine facility.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service (Sickness Absence)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): The report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Home Civil Service 2004" prepared for my Department by RED Scientific Ltd.

shows that the headline figure for the average level of sickness absence was 9.1 days per staff year. This represents a 0.9 days per staff year decrease over the equivalent figure of 10.0 days set out in the report for 2003. The report contains a comprehensive analysis of the 2004 figures by Department/agency. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

The Cabinet Office is continuing to work with other Departments and agencies as they take forward their plans to reduce sickness absence and implement the recommendations of the Managing Attendance in the Public Sector report published by the Ministerial Task Force on Health, Safety and Productivity.

PRIME MINISTER

Chief Surveillance Commissioner

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce that I have approved the appointment of the right hon. Lord Justice Rose as the Chief Surveillance Commissioner under the terms of Section 91 of the Police Act 1997.

The appointment will commence on 1 July 2006. However, in advance of that, Lord Justice Rose will become a Surveillance Commissioner on 1 May 2006.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 16 November 2005

TREASURY

Civil Registration Reform

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (John Healey): Following the publication last year of the Regulatory Reform Committee's reports on civil registration reform, the Government announced that they would actively consider other ways of delivering the key elements of civil registration modernisation.

The Government remain committed to the modernisation of the local registration service in England and Wales, and are pressing ahead with their plans to reform the structure and delivery of civil registration. The consultation paper "Registration Modernisation", published today, sets out how local authorities are to be given greater responsibility and accountability for the delivery of the local registration service, and gives details of other important changes to be introduced to modernise civil registration.

Under these proposals local authorities would have more control to decide, within a national standards framework, how best to meet the needs of local people. Systems are also to be overhauled to speed up the registration process and deliver improved customer service. The details of the proposals have been developed by the Registrar General together with LACORS (Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services) and local registration managers.

A copy of the consultation paper has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Deposits (Eligible Liabilities)

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Des Browne): Under the Cash Ratio Deposit (CRD) scheme, banks and building societies place non-interest bearing deposits at the Bank of England. The Bank invests the deposits and uses the income earned to fund the costs of the Bank's sterling liquidity, monetary policy and financial stability operations, which benefit sterling deposit-takers. With the effect of 1 June 1998 the Bank of England Act 1998 placed the scheme on a statutory footing.

From next year the Bank of England will be making significant changes to its operations in sterling money markets, in particular the introduction of remunerated voluntary deposits which banks and building societies will be able to place with the Bank. As a result, my written Ministerial Statement of 13 July 2005 announced that (as required by the Bank of England Act 1998) the Treasury would begin consultation on its proposal to amend the definition of Eligible Liabilities (ELs) for CRDs.

The consultation ended in September and the Treasury published its response. The responses to the consultation recognised and understood the rationale for making the change and accepted that including voluntary deposits in the definition of ELs would have a net neutral effect on the overall levels of CRDs.

As the proposal requires a change to secondary legislation made under the Bank of England Act 1998, tomorrow I will be laying before Parliament a Statutory Instrument scheduled to come into force on 1 March 2006. Principally the Statutory Instrument will ensure that voluntary deposits do not count as an offset within the calculation of ELs on which CRDs are based.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EU General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) will be held on 21–22 November in Brussels. My right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, and the International Development Secretary will represent the presidency.

The agenda items are as follows:

Defence Ministers

Capabilities

The Council is expected to approve the Requirements Catalogue, which is part of the EU's Headline Goal 2010 capability process. The catalogue has used NATO-sourced operational analysis to identify the military capabilities and force requirements needed for the EU to fulfil its level of ambition. The Council should also note the Single Progress Report on military capabilities, and discuss progress on the battlegroups concept and the work of the European Defence Agency. As presidency, we aim to focus discussion on the identified need for rapidly deployable, highly interoperable capability and the importance of filling qualitative capability shortfalls.

Civil-military co-ordination

The Council will discuss progress on bringing together the EU's civilian and military instruments in a comprehensive approach to EU crisis management. Ministers are likely to note work on EU concepts for comprehensive planning and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) support to security sector reform, and underline the need for these principles to be taken forward in future reviews and for planning for holistic EU engagement in particular regions.

Defence and Foreign Ministers

Western Balkans (Bosnia)

The GAERC falls on the 10th Anniversary of the initialling of the Dayton Peace Agreement, and both Defence and Foreign Ministers will hold discussions on progress in Bosnia and the evolving nature of the EU's engagement. The Council will review both the military mission Operation Althea, following its first year of operation, and the EU Police Mission (EUPM). It should agree the Joint Action to launch a follow-on mission to EUPM and is also expected to agree the Joint Action modifying the mandate of the EUSR in Bosnia to give him a greater role in coordinating EU instruments in the overall rule of law effort.

Foreign Ministers

Preparation for the 15–16 December European Council

The presidency will update the Council on preparation for the December European Council. This will be on the basis of the

traditional annotated agenda setting out the issues, with an indication of likely Conclusions. Substantive discussion will take place at the 12 December GAERC.

Financial Perspectives 2007–13

The Council will have a further substantive discussion of the issues as a follow-up to the 7 November GAERC.

Post Tsunami follow-up

The Council will have a discussion on an updated post-tsunami action plan, which will task work to be taken forward in key areas on disaster response.

WTO/DDA

The Commission will update Member States on the current status of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations in preparation for the 13–18 December Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting.

MEPP

The Council is expected to discuss EU involvement in a possible non-executive monitoring role at Rafah on the Egypt-Gaza border. The Council is also expected to discuss the 25 January 2006 Palestinian Legislative Elections and Commission support to the electoral process. Council conclusions are expected.

Iraq

The Council is expected to discuss how the international community (including the EU) can provide further support to Iraq in relation to a broader platform of international partnership to support political, economic, governance and security development.

Iran

The Council will have a further stocktake of EU-Iran relations following the 7 November GAERC. We can expect the nuclear portfolio also to be discussed given the proximity of the 24 November International Atomic Energy Agenda (IAEA) Board meeting.

Euro Med Summit

The presidency will debrief the Council on the state of play of the main Summit texts and overall preparation.

EU/Canada and EU-Ukraine Summit Preparations

The presidency will debrief the Council on the state of play of the main Summit texts and overall preparations.

Migration in External Relations

The Council will discuss how the EU can work more closely in partnership with source and transit countries on migration issues to develop a balanced approach to migration, which harnesses the benefits of migration and also focuses on combating illegal immigration.

Development Ministers

EU Strategy for Africa

The Council is expected to agree Conclusions on the Commission Communication on the EU-Africa Strategy: Towards a Euro-African Pact to Accelerate Africa's Development. The Communication will form an integral part of the overall EU Strategy for Africa, which is expected to be agreed at the European Council on 16–17 December.

Development Policy Statement

The Council is expected to agree the Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the "European Consensus for Development". This is a successor to the 2000 EC Development Policy Statement. The Declaration is divided into two parts: the first provides a common vision that will guide the EU and its 25 Member States in development co-operation; and the second sets out the EC Development Policy to guide Community development assistance and implementation of the commitments in the common vision. The European Parliament is due to adopt its report on the proposal for a Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union Development Policy "The European Consensus" in Plenary on 17 November.

Orientation Debate: EU Aid Effectiveness

The Council will hold its annual Orientation Debate on the basis of a presidency paper looking at how the quality of aid and the effectiveness of aid delivery can be improved, building on EU commitments taken in the context of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Paris in March 2005. The Council is expected to agree Conclusions on the Orientation Debate.

Post Tsunami follow-up

Development Ministers will have a discussion on the humanitarian response, reconstruction and disaster preparedness aspects of a revised post-Tsunami Action Plan.

Aid for Trade

The presidency is proposing that the Council discuss and agree a comprehensive and credible EU aid for trade package in advance of the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong on 12 December.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Community Safety Plan

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library of the House a copy of the National Community Safety Plan which incorporates the National Policing Plan 2006–09.

The National Community Safety Plan is the first of its kind. It sets out central Government's key community safety priorities for the next three years and our minimum expectations of each of our partners, to underline the very broadly based nature of community safety work. Its aim is to join up the approach to community safety across central Government, to instil a new relationship between public services and the communities they serve in the community safety field and to encourage a deeper and more mature relationship between central Government and its partners in this area.

The delivery of community safety requires a multi-agency approach and the police are key players, so the National Policing Plan is now embedded within the National Community Safety Plan. This, the fourth National Policing Plan, sets the framework and context for policing in England and Wales for the next three years. It will inform local police planning and help to ensure that all communities know what they should expect from their local police force.

The National Community Safety Plan is available on the web at www.crimereduction.gov.uk/ncsp.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): I have today published a consultation paper on the Government's proposals for the powers of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The Government strongly believe in the importance of human rights and are committed to ensuring that the Commission has the right powers to enable it to carry out its duties effectively.

The consultation paper sets out the Government's conclusions on each of the recommendations put forward by the Commission in its own review of its powers. In total, the Commission has recommended 29 amendments to the Northern Ireland Act 1998, although following a House of Lords ruling the Commission withdrew eight of the recommendations.

In assessing these recommendations, the Government have concluded that it is satisfied that the Northern Ireland Act 1998 already broadly provides the Commission with the right powers to carry out its duties efficiently. In a number of cases, we agree with the recommendations put forward but believe that these changes do not require any additional legislative provision but should be made administratively, in co-operation with the Commission.

However in two important areas, namely, the right of access to places of detention and the power to compel evidence and witnesses, we agree that it is right to amend the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in order to grant the Commission the necessary powers to allow it to fulfil its existing functions properly.

While the Government believe that it is right for the Commission to be granted these powers, we also believe that there must be proper safeguards in place to ensure that they are used appropriately.

The consultation, which will run until 8 February 2006, invites views on all aspects of the paper, but I have asked specifically for views on how these two powers should be implemented and how we can make sure that the right safeguards are in place.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council administered some £25.1 million housing benefits, about 37 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. The council was selected for inspection because it was taking 46 days on average to process new claims for housing benefit in the quarter ended 31 December 2004 and it had operated with a backlog of claims for several years. The inability to clear the backlog was mainly due to a high turnover of Benefits service staff and managers and time lost to the introduction of new technology. Several initiatives to reduce the backlog were tried, including the introduction of a twilight shift, overtime working and the use of a dedicated backlog team. The backlog was eventually cleared in September 2004.

The overall performance of the Benefits service has improved considerably over the past 12 months. A variety of initiatives and changes to procedures have been introduced, including the fast tracking of claims and the prioritisation of changes of circumstances. BFI's sampling confirmed that processing times for new claims had improved considerably with the time taken to process new claims for the quarter ended 31 March 2005 now at the Department's standard of 36 days. The sampling also confirmed that performance in respect of changes of circumstances had followed a similar pattern of steady improvement. In 2003–04, the average time taken to process changes of circumstances was 43 days but this had reduced to an average of 17 days in 2004–05.

The overall standard of verification was good with only one area of weakness. The claim form currently used by the council does not meet the design and content principles of the Department's model claim form but the council is in the process of revising the form and will ensure that best practice is taken into account in the new version.

The council has good working relationships with many stakeholders, including landlords, housing associations, The Pensions Service and Jobcentre Plus. The council has an effective performance management framework in place to report the benefits service statistics to members but current performance targets are not challenging enough. Targets need to be reviewed to ensure that they remain up to date and challenging. This will help the council drive forward further improvements to performance and help it achieve its aim of top quartile performance by 2006.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Great Yarmouth Borough Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Great Yarmouth Borough Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05 Great Yarmouth Borough Council administered some £27.7 million in housing benefits, about 31 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. Overall, the inspection found that Great Yarmouth Borough Council was performing to a Fair standard.

The council has had a backlog of work for many years. This, together with problems recruiting and retaining processing staff and an outdated benefits IT system have made it difficult for the council to provide an effective benefits service. The council reported that it

had taken an average of 89 days to process new claims in 2004–05. However, BFI's inspection revealed that a combination of errors meant that its reported performance was understated and the real average was nearer 49 days, compared to the Standard of 36 days. Inefficient practices were creating unnecessary delays at each stage of the claims process and the council's checking regime was not identifying some of the errors that were resulting in inaccurate reporting. Only limited analysis was carried out by the council to establish the reason for failure to meet targets. Insufficient internal audit resources had been allocated to audit the benefits service.

The council has demonstrated a commitment to improving its benefit service by allocating funds to clear the backlog, implementing a new benefits IT system and seeking to enter into a partnership with consultants to help improve performance.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 17 November 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Cabinet Office DEL will be increased by £1,735,000 from £224,409,000 to £226,144,000. There is no movement in the administration costs limits. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	1,735	226,144	0	226,144
Capital	0	25,000	0	25,000
Depreciation*	0	-37,338	0	-37,338
Total	1,735	213,806	0	213,806

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from drawdown of EYF of £550,000 and a transfer of £1,185,000 from various Government Departments to fund protective security measures relating to State and Government assets in central London.

There is no change to the capital element of the DEL.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Departmental Expenditure Limits for 2005–06 will change as follows:

(1) **The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Main Programmes DEL** will be increased by £231,906,000 from £9,236,594,000 to £9,468,500,000 and the administration costs limit will also be increased by £48,107,000 from £287,251,000 to £335,358,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	-279,336	4,166,666	1,815,013	5,981,679
Capital	511,242	1,210,027	2,276,794	3,486,821
Depreciation*	-1,956	-12,722	-2,000	-14,722
Total	229,950	5,363,971	4,089,807	9,453,778

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

I. Take up of End Year Flexibility of £60,885,000 comprising:

Programme Expenditure

(a) £1,230,000 for Housing programmes;

(b) £1,000,000 for Coalfields Regeneration Trust;

(c) £556,000 from the Invest to Save Budget (£264,000 for Fire Services and £292,000 for the European Structural Funds);

(d) £4,390,000 for the Northern Way programme;

(e) £726,000 for non-voted English Partnerships Urban Regeneration Agencies (URA);

(f) £7,112,000 for non-voted Housing Corporation;

(g) £21,020,000 for non-voted Regional Development Agencies.

Administration Costs

(h) £24,000,000 for Central Administration;

(i) £851,000 for Other Current to cover expenditure on Boundary Commissions.

II. A net transfer of £16,790,000 from Request for Resources (RFR) 2 comprising of a transfer of £18,200,000 from RFR2 to RFR1 (£18,000,000 to non- voted Housing Corporation and £200,000 to Homelessness) and a transfer of £1,410,000 from RFR1 to RFR2 (£10,000 to Local Government Research and Publicity for the Central and Local Government Information partnerships and £1,400,000 to Best Value Inspection).

III. Increase in provision of £1,881,000 for the Invest to Save Budget comprising of £850,000 for Liveability Performance and £1,031,000 for Private Housing Renewal.

IV. A net transfer of £5,423,000 from other government departments, comprising:

From Other government departments

Programme Expenditure

(a) £850,000 from the Home Office to Homelessness for Public Service Priority programme.

Administration Costs (Central ODPM)

(b) £4,400,000 from Department for Transport to cover Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges.

Administration Costs (Government Offices)

(c) £5,362,000 from Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs for additional core funding, Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) funding, Countryside Agency, Rights of Way Casework and SR2002 funding.

(d) £16,225,000 from Home Office to cover work on Crime Reduction Unit, Active Community Unit, Community Cohesion, Drugs Prevention Advisory Service, Communities Policy, Criminal Justice Intervention programme.

To Other government Departments

Programme Expenditure

(e) £21,020,000 transfer of non-cash costs from the Regional Development Agencies to the Department for Trade and Industry.

Administration Costs (Government Offices)

(f) £394,000 to the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) for the core agenda.

V. An increase in receipts of £55,373,000 offsetting increases in provision of £907,000 for Emergency Fire Service; £200,000 for Fire Services; £309,000 for Housing Mobility Grant; £10,609,000 for administration costs; £12,706,000 for Government Offices; £22,000,000 for non voted English Partnerships and £8,642,000 for non voted Housing Corporation.

VI. A transfer of £365,315,000 from resource investment to capital comprising £284,000,000 for Housing Market Renewal Fund, £5,805,000 for the Growth Areas; £37,500,000 for the Liveability Fund and £38,010,000 for Homelessness.

VII. A transfer of £1,000,000 from capital to resource investment for non voted Housing Corporation.

VIII. A net transfer of £3,531,000 from non voted to voted provision comprising:

(a) A transfer of £36,479,000 from the voted Housing programmes to non voted programmes of £1,571,000 for West Northamptonshire Urban Development Corporation (UDC); £1,291,000 for English Partnerships URA (£791,000 from Growth Areas and £500,000 from Planning and Publicity), £9,215,000 to South East of England Development Agencies SEEDA (£9,000,000 from Thames Gateway and £215,000 from Growth Areas); £16,000,000 to East of England Development Agencies (EEDA), £3,300,000 to Thames Gateway (Thurrock); £3,194,000 to Thames Gateway (London UDC); £195,000 to Other Growth Areas; £1,713,000 to Housing Corporation (£713,000 from Thames Gateway and £1,000,000 from the Regional Housing Pot programme);

(b) A transfer of £1,000,000 from non voted English Partnerships to Coalfields Regeneration Trust;

(c) a transfer of £39,010,000 from non voted Housing Corporation to Homelessness programmes.

IX. As a result of the changes to Request for Resources 1, The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's administration provision will be increased by £48,958,000 from £288,366,000 to £337,324,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

X. Take up of end year flexibility of £177,927,000 comprising:

Programme Expenditure

(a) £7,989,000 for Disabled Facilities Grant;

(b) £500,000 for the Northern Way programme;

(c) £4,000,000 for the European Regional Development Fund;

(d) £165,438,000 for non voted English Partnerships.

XI. An increase in receipts of £4,450,000 offsetting increases in provision of £450,000 for non voted West Northamptonshire UDC and £4,000,000 for non Voted English Partnerships.

XII. A transfer of £365,315,000 to capital from resource investment comprising £284,000,000 for the Housing Market Renewal Fund, £5,805,000 for the Growth Areas; £37,500,000 for the Liveability Fund and £38,010,000 for Homelessness.

XIII. A transfer of £31,000,000 to other Government Departments comprising of £1,000,000 to the Department for Education and Skills to provide GAP funding for Combined Universities and £30,000,000 to the Department for Culture Media and Sport as part of the Office contribution for 2005–06 towards the Olympics infrastructure costs.

XIV. A transfer of £1,000,000 from capital to resource investment for non voted Housing Corporation.

XV. Within the capital element of the DEL there is a net transfer of £41,629,000 from voted to non-voted provision comprising:

(a) A net transfer of £43,259,000 from voted Housing programmes to non voted programmes comprising of £141,000 for West Northamptonshire UDC; £7,616,000 for SEEDA (£5,416,000 from Growth Areas and £2,200,000 from Thames Gateway); £575,000 for EEDA; £16,427,000 for English Partnerships (£11,082,000 from Growth Areas and £5,345,000 from Thames Gateway); £20,000,000 to non voted Thames Gateway (£15,000,000 for Thurrock and £5,000,000 for London UDC); and a transfer of £1,500,000 from non voted Arms Length Management Organisations to the Regional Housing Pot programme;

(b) a transfer of £1,630,000 from non voted Departmental Unallocated Provision (£280,000 to European Regional Development Fund; £50,000 to Fire Services; £1,000,000 to provide Gap funding for Combined Universities and £300,000 for the National Register of Social Housing.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Local Government DEL will be increased by £56,288,000 from £46,621,883,000 to £46,678,171,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	17,689	46,186,286	104,535	46,290,821
Capital	38,599	378,740	8,610	387,350
Depreciation*	-556	0	-556	-556
Total	55,732	46,565,026	112,589	46,677,615

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

I. Take up of End Year Flexibility of £34,589,000 comprising:

(a) £18,659,000 for Valuation Services;

(b) £3,617,000 for Best Value Intervention;

(c) £4,591,000 for Local Government on Line;

(d) £6,222,000 for Capacity Building programmes;

(e) £1,500,000 for the Efficiency Challenge Fund.

II. A net transfer of £16,790,000 to Request for Resources (RFR) 1 comprising of a transfer of £18,200,000 from RFR2 to RFR1 (£18,000,000 from the Local Government PSA Performance Fund and £200,000 from Capacity Buildings) and a transfer of £1,410,000 from RFR1 to RFR2 (£10,000 from Planning Land Use Statistics and £1,400,000 from Fire Services).

III. A net transfer of £1,996,000 from voted to non voted programmes comprising of £4,000 to voted Local Governance for Greater London Authority preparation costs and £2,000,000 to non voted Standards Board.

IV. A transfer of £110,000 from resource consumption to capital for non voted Standards Board.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

V. Take up of End Year Flexibility of £38,489,000 for Local Government on Line.

VI. A transfer of £110,000 to capital from resource consumption for non voted Standards Board.

TREASURY

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, National Savings and Investments DEL will be increased by £9,500,000 from £170,294,000 to £179,794,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £9,500,000 from £170,294,000 to, £179,794,000. Within DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	9,500	179,794		179,794
Capital		500		500
Depreciation*		-2,970		-2,970
Total	9,500	177,324		177,324

*Depreciation which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from end year flexibility being drawn down to support expenditure on major project commitments. Such projects include the work on the third party distribution channel and the pilot with Tesco; long-term savings project; internet development and others. Also some resource is essential to maintain the momentum generated through their advertising campaign, which is proving successful.

There is no change in the capital element of DEL.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (John Healey): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Office for National Statistics DEL will increase by £3,944,000 from £166,980,000 to £170,924,000 and the administration budget will increase by £3,944,000 from £166,430,000 to £170,374,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	3,944	161,624	9,300	170,924
Capital	-	21,070	6,500	27,570
Depreciation*	-	-15,500	-	-15,500
Total	3,944	167,194	15,800	182,994

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from EYF of £3,944,000.

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the HM Revenue and Customs Departmental Expenditure Limit will be increased by £150,199,000 from £4,883,772,000 to £5,033,971,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £47,720,000 from £4,475,568,000 to £4,523,288,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	50,249	4,300,640	359,485	4,660,125
Capital	99,950	370,869	2,977	373,846
Depreciation*	147	-164,137	-	-164,137
Total	150,346	4,507,372	362,462	4,869,834

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

Administration costs increases resulting from the take up of £50,000,000 end year flexibility entitlement (EYF) as set out in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (CM6639) published in July. This is partially offset by a transfer of £2,280,000 to the Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office, as part of a machinery of government change; and

Programme expenditure changes resulting from: a transfer of £3,120,000 from the Home Office from their Recovered Assets Incentivisation Fund; a transfer of £863,000 from the Department for Education and Skills in respect of the Savings Gateway Project; and a partial offset relating to a transfer to the Home Office of £1,454,000 to fund some anti-terrorism work.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from the draw down of capital EYF, totalling £100,000,000, and a decrease of £50,000 to reflect a capital funding transfer to Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office as part of the machinery of Government change.

Regulation of Investment Trust Companies

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): The Treasury has today published a feedback document on responses to the consultation on the regulation of investment trust companies launched in November 2004. That document sought views on whether there was a need to introduce additional regulation, and possible options for doing so.

The Treasury received over 120 responses to the consultation from investment trust companies, fund managers, trade associations, consumer representatives and individuals. The overwhelming response to the consultation was in support of continuing to rely on existing Financial Services Authority (FSA) rule making powers to deliver appropriate and effective regulation of investment trust companies.

In assessing the case for change, the Government has considered whether additional regulation of investment trust companies would produce better regulation taking account of the balance between costs and benefits. On balance, the Government have concluded that changes to the structure of regulation as it applies to investment trust companies would not result in better regulation.

It is important, however, that the current regime remains both robust and proportionate. The Government welcome the FSA's forthcoming review of the Listing Rules applicable to investment companies as an opportunity to ensure that this remains the case, in the context of the listing rules generally and wider regulatory developments. The Government also looks to the industry to continue its efforts to improve governance standards.

Copies of the feedback document are available from the Library of the House. The document can also be accessed on the Treasury website at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

Pre-Budget Report

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): I propose to present the Pre-Budget Report to the House of Commons on Monday 5 December.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Culture Media and Sport's Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be increased by £90,973,000 from £1,539,296,000 to £1,630,269,000 and the administration cost limit will decrease by £298,000 from £49,268,000 to £48,970,000. Within the DEL change the impact on resource and capital are set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource DEL	19,111	199,881	1,358,097	1,557,978
Capital DEL	73,862	83,539	87,307	170,846
Depreciation*	-2,000	-5,942	-92,613	-98,555
Total	90,973	277,478	1,352,791	1,630,269

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

Drawdown of £9,657,000 End-Year flexibility of which £6,408,000 is Programme: (£1,250,000) UK Film council; (£1,000,000) Sport England; (£1,000,000) English Heritage; (£1,000,000) Culture Online; (£750,000) British library; (£600,000) Royal Parks for live 8; (£366,000) repayment of Contingencies Fund advance for the Gaming Board (£187,000) Audiovisual Eureka Film Support; (£90,000) Regional Cultural Consortiums; (£90,000) Research; and (£75,000) Sale of the Tote. The drawdown of £2,000,000 Non-Voted, non eash, EYF to meet depreciation requirements.

Transfers from other Government Departments of: £1,650,000 from Department for Education and Science (£1,620,000) for Strategic Commissioning and (£30,000) for Creativity Review; £93,000 for Ministry of Defence to Museums and Galleries for Royal Armouries; and £4,000,000 from Department for Transport in respect of Wembley Development costs. A Machinery of Government change transfer from the Department of Constitutional Affairs £48,000 for the Cenotaph ceremonies.

A transfer of £69,000 to Cabinet Office for Protecting the Centre of Government.

Grants from the Invest to Save budget allocation of £762,000, to Museums, Galleries and Libraries (£77,000) and to Sport (£685,000).

To record the Profit on the Sale of Assets £10,000.

An agreed Capital to Revenue Virement of £980,000 for the Royal Parks.

The administration cost limit has decreased by £298,000 from £49,268,000 to £48,970,000. This is as a result of transfers to programme budgets totalling £3,526,000, and a transfer to Cabinet Office of £69,000 detailed above, partially offset by the take up of Administration End Year Flexibility £3,249,000 and a Machinery of Government transfer of £48,000 from the Department of Constitutional Affairs as detailed above.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

Take up of End-Year Flexibility of £44,822,000 of which £32,500,000 is in respect of Capital Modernisation Fund projects, (£12,000,000) for Listed Places of Worship, (£18,400,000) for the Community Club Development Programme, and (£2,100,000) for Picketts Lock.

The remaining £12,322,000 EYF taken up for the following: (£4,500,000) Culture Online; (£2,962,000) The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission; (£1,500,000 for the Community Club Development Programme; (£1,500,000) for Administration Capital expenditure; (£1,200,000) UK Film Council; (£460,000) for Licensing database; and (£200,000) for Sir John Soane's Museum.

A transfer of £30,000,000 from ODPM for Olympic-related regeneration projects.

An agreed Capital to Revenue Virement of £980,000 for the Royal Parks.

An agreed reserve claim of £20,000 for the initial costs of the Queen Mother's memorial.

DEFENCE

Regional Prime Contract (East)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): Babcock DynCorp, a joint venture of Babcock Infrastructure Services and DynCorp International, has been awarded the Regional Prime Contract covering the Ministry of Defence's estate in Eastern England. This follows the successful conclusion of discussions with Babcock DynCorp who were appointed as Preferred Bidder in July 2005.

The seven-year contract, worth in the region of £500 million, is the last in a series of five such regional arrangements to cover the estate and provide for capital works, property maintenance and facilities management services, throughout the Eastern region of England.

The Ministry of Defence has undertaken to make significant improvements in the overall condition of its estate by changing its organisational structures and introducing Prime Contracting methods.

Encouraging innovation and efficiency, Regional Prime Contracting is a key initiative that aims to provide a better quality of service and greater value for money through suitably incentivised contracts conforming to the principles of "Smart Acquisition".

War Pensioners Report for 2004–05

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The War Pensioners Report for 2004–05 has been published today and a copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Publication of the War Pensioners Report is an annual event dating back to before the Second World War. It is a joint document presented to Parliament by the Secretaries of State for Defence, Health, Scotland and Wales.

The War Pensioners Report for 2004–05 provides an account of the administration of the War Pensions Scheme and the services provided for war pensioners in 2004–05. The Report also provides a variety of data on degrees of disability, pensioner age profiles, rates of pensions etc; and outlines the activities of the War Pensions Committees and Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions throughout the year.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Ministry of Defence Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) will be increased by £109,105,000 from £30,944,726,000 to £31,053,831,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	*New DEL Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	450,824	31,674,758	1,281,792	32,956,550
Capital	(341,719)	6,537,537	744	6,538,281
Depreciation*		-7,556,000	-885,000	-8,441,000
Total	109,105	30,656,295	397,536	31,053,831

* Depreciation, which forms part of Resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

a transfer from Capital DEL to Resource DEL of £370,000,000;

transfers totalling £8,553,000 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (£4,745,000) and the Department for Transport (£3,808,000) as their share of the National Meteorological Programme and Weather Warning Service costs under a pan Government agreement;

a transfer of £145,000 from the Department of Work and Pensions as a contribution to the Veteran Agency's postage costs;

a transfer of £500,000 from the Department for International Development in respect of the Sub Sahara Global Conflict Prevention Pool;

a transfer of £93,000 to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in respect of staff costs for the Leeds Armouries Museum Pattern Room;

the take up of end year flexibility of £28,281,000 Capital DEL and £71,719,000 Resource DEL;

an increase in Capital Appropriations in Aid of £45,886,000 from QinetiQ, resulting from the repayment of a loan to the MOD.

The changes to Capital and Resource, together with changes in internal budgetary re-allocations, will lead to an increased net cash requirement of £459,105,000.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Education and Skills Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL), (including the Office for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (OFSTED) which has a separate Estimate) will be decreased by £661,000 from £30,766,423,000 to £30,765,762,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £1,059,000 from £275,359,000 to £276,418,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

DfES	*Resources Change* £'000	*Resources New DEL* £'000	*Resources Of which: Voted* £'000	*Resources Non-voted* £'000	*Capital Change* £'000	*Capital New DEL* £'000	*Capital Of which: Voted* £'000	*Capital Non-voted* £'000
RfR 1	-13,204	24,989,407	8,316,452	16,672,955	0	4,180,348	2,869,687	1,310,661
RfR 2	12,542	915,973	915,973	0	0	264,167	264,167	0
RfR 3	1	195,253	195,253	0	0	14	14	0
OFSTED	0	220,000	220,000	0	0	600	600	0
Sub Total	-661	26,320,633	9,647,678	16,672,955	0	4,445,129	3,134,468	1,310,661
Depreciation*	0	-47,843	-12,247	-35,596	0	0	0	0
Total	-661	26,272,790	9,635,431	16,637,359	0	4,445,129	3,134,468	1,310,661

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, in the table above, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

Within the Administration Cost limits changes, the impact is set out in the following table:

DfES	*Original* £'000	*Change* £'000	*Revised* £'000
DfES (RfR1)	250,689	1,059	251,748
OFSTED	24,670	0	24,670
Total	275,359	1,059	276,418

Resource DEL

The decrease in the resource element of the DEL of £661,000 arises from a £145,038,000 decrease in the voted element of the resource DEL and an increase of £144,377,000 in the non-voted element of the resource DEL mainly to the Department's Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

Voted Resource DEL

The £145,038,000 decrease in the voted element of the resource DEL arises from:

RFR 1

A £171,495,000 movement to non-voted, for the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority £500,000, the Investors in People UK £300,000, the Children's Commissioner £3,000,000, for the Training and Development Agency for Schools £4,000,000, and for Lifelong Learning programmes transferring to the Learning and Skills Council £163,695,000. A movement from non-voted of £1,034,000 for the General Teaching Council and £300,000 for a technical adjustment to Quality Review. A reduction of £35,000,000 of receipts for the Scientific Research Investment Fund. The take up of Invest to Save Budget of £1,480,000 for the Kid's Club. A movement to RFR2 voted for the Early Support programme £5,000,000 and for Local Authority Children's Centres £19,000,000. A movement from RFR2 voted £2,000,000 for Schools Foundation Stage and £300,000 for Training and Qualifications. A movement to RFR3 voted £1,000 for a token increase due to the reclassification of funding streams for the Children's Fund. A transfer to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport of £1,650,000 for Strategic Commissioning and the Creativity Review. A transfer to the Department for International Development of £19,000 for UK Presidency gift donations. A transfer to the Department of Trade and Industry of £451,000 for the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship and review bodies membership fees. A transfer to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs of £863,000 for the Savings Gateway Pilots Project. A net transfer to the Home Office of £3,205,000 for Young peoples Substance Misuse, Offenders Education, Education in Contracted Prisons and Youth - Volunteering Challenge. A transfer from the Department of Health of £2,989,000 for Academic General Practitioners, Protection of Vulnerable Adults and the Bichard Vetting and Barring Scheme. A transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of £1,000,000 for Universities of Cornwall.

RFR2

A movement to RFR1 non-voted of £9,216,000 for the National College of School Leadership £7,000,000; the Training and Development Agency for Schools £2,000,000 and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority £216,000. The take up of Invest to Save Budget of £58,000 to support families. A movement from RFR1 voted for the Early Support programme £5,000,000 and for Local Authority Children's Centres £19,000,000. A movement to RFR1 voted of £2,000,000 for Schools Foundation Stage and £300,000 for Training and Qualifications.

RFR3

A movement from RFR1 of £1,000 for a token increase due to the re-classification of funding streams for the Children's Fund.

Administration Cost Limits

The £1,059,000 increase in the Administration Cost Limit arises from the transfer from the Department of Health for administrating the Protection of Vulnerable Adults scheme.

Non-voted Resource DEL

The £144,377,000 increase in Non-voted resource DEL arises from the movement of £171,495,000 from RFR1 voted resource DEL; a reduction of £35,000,000 expenditure for the Scientific Research Investment Fund. A movement to RFR1 voted resource of £1,034,000 for the General Teaching Council and £300,000 for a technical adjustment to Quality Review. A movement from RFR2 voted resource of £9,216,000.

Capital DEL

There is no change in the capital element of the DEL.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Forestry Commission (DEL)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Forestry Commission's DEL will be increased by £1,322,000 from £80,288,000 to £81,610,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	1,322	79,937	2,653	82,590
Capital		790	-700	90
Depreciation*		-1,070	-	-1,070
Total	1,322	79,657	1,953	81,610

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from the take up of £2,496,000 end of year flexibility to meet Woodland Grant scheme payments and costs associated with efficiency initiatives and also a transfer of £838,000 from Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to allow the Forestry Commission to administer the Farm Woodland Premium scheme. There is also increased expenditure for community woodlands of £1,100,000, offset by income received from Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and increased income of £2,012,000 received from Office of Deputy Prime Minister to fund the purchase of Jeskyn's Farm (the expenditure of which is non budget and therefore not included in the above table).

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs DEL will be increased by £12,238,000 from £3,018,963,000 to £3,031,201,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £25,000,000 from £317,064,000 to

£342,064,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	12,238	2,253,666	777,535	3,031,201
Capital	-	218,423	120,277	338,700
Depreciation*	-	-107,771	-97,311	-205,082
Total	12,238	2,364,318	800,501	3,164,819

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from (i) take up of £25,000,000 administration resources from the reserve for Developing Defra (ii) take up of £834,000 programme resources from the Invest to Save Budget; (iii) transfer of £4,745,000 of programme resources to the Ministry of Defence due to transfer of responsibility for Met Office functions; (iv) transfer of £5,362,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Government Offices funding; (v) transfer of £838,000 of programme resources to the Forestry Commission for the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme; (vi) profit of £2,651,000 on sale of a Rural Payments Agency (RPA) grain store.

There is no change in the capital element of the DEL.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be increased by £16,047,000 from £1,813,483,000 to £1,829,530,000 and the administration budget will be decreased by £1,400,000 from £797,638,000 to £796,238,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	16,047	1,776,817	52,713	1,829,530
Capital	0	121,978	1,000	122,978
Depreciation*	0	-113,624	-20,000	-133,624
Total	16,047	1,785,171	33,713	1,818,884

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

Request for Resources 1

Administration

I. A transfer of £1,400,000 to the Security and Intelligence Agencies (SIA) for language training provided by the FCO. This will in future be invoiced to the SIA, resulting in an offsetting increase in both income and expenditure of £1,400,000 to reflect this;

Programme

II. Transfers from the Home Office of £1,000,000 for the funding of the Afghan Delivery Plan; and from the Department for International Development (DfID) of £7,985,000 for the transfer of the Small Grants Scheme to the FCO;

III. A transfer to the Security and Intelligence Agencies (SIA) of £3,588,000 for revisions in Planned Programme Activity;

Request for Resources 2

Programme

IV. Transfer from DfID of £12,000,000 for Africa Peacekeeping activity and £150,000 from DfID for Caucasus Conflict Prevention projects;

V. A transfer of £100,000 to SIA for revisions in Planned Programme Activity.

There is no change to the capital element of the DEL.

Consular Fees (Amendment) Order 2005

The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dr. Kim Howells): The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has recently undertaken an exercise to determine the fees to be charged for Biometric passports issued overseas. On 15 November 2005 Her Majesty in Council approved the Consular Fees (Amendment) Order 2005, which amends the Consular Fees Order 2005. The Government is today announcing Biometric passport fees to be charged under the amended Consular Fees Order 2005 with effect from 1 December 2005.

The fee for a standard 32 page Biometric passport will be set at £91.00, the fee for a 48 page Biometric passport will be set at £109.00, the fee for a Biometric passport for a child will be set at £59.00, and the fee for an amendment will be set at £75.50. These fees have been set following a stringent review with HM Treasury of costs.

The Biometric passport is being introduced as part of the ongoing efforts to combat passport and identity fraud. The issuing equipment will be rolled out to our passport issuing Posts between January 2006 and July 2006.

HEALTH

Broadmoor Hospital

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The Department has approved outline proposals for a major redevelopment programme at Broadmoor Hospital in Berkshire.

Broadmoor Hospital is part of West London Mental Health Trust and provides services under the provisions of the NHS Act 1977 for persons who require treatment under conditions of high security. It was recently criticised for the inadequacy of its physical infrastructure and facilities in a 2003 report by the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (now known as the Healthcare Commission).

The redevelopment proposals contained a number of construction options to rectify these deficiencies and provide a safer and more effective clinical environment.

The eventual costs have to be related to the revenue affordability of the scheme and on current estimates this means the cost of redevelopment is unlikely to exceed £190 million at today's prices.

The next step for the Broadmoor scheme will be to further explore the potential construction options over the next 12 to18 months and prepare an outline business case to select the preferred option and procurement strategy, at which point the scheme's capital budget will be set.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Subject to the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department of Health's element of the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be reduced by £174,214,000 from £78,765,403,000 to £78,591,189,000 and the Administration Cost Limit will be reduced by £1,059,000 from £248,688,000 to £247,629,000. The Food Standards Agency DEL will be increased by £300,000 from £144,124,000 to £144,424,000. The overall DEL including the Food Standards Agency will reduced by £173,914,000 from £78,909,527,000 to £78,735,613,000. The impact on resource and capital are set out in the following table.

	Change £ million	*Voted £ million*	*New DEL Non-Voted £ million*	*Total £ million*
Department of Health				
Resource DEL	-174.214	75,237.349	-464.567	74,772.782
Capital DEL	0	1,296.545	2,521.862	3,818.407
Total Department of Health DEL	-174.214	76,533.894	2057.295	78,591.189
Depreciation*	-0.134	-610.510	-51.669	-662.179
Total Department of Health spending (after adjustment)	-174.348	75,923.384	2,005.626	77,929.010
Food Standards Agency				
Resources	0.300	143.777	0	143.777
Capital	0	'0.647	0	0.647
Total Food Standards Agency DEL	0.300	144.424	0	144.424
Depreciation*	0	-2.004	0	-2.004
Total Food Standards Agency spending (after adjustment)	0.300	142.420	0	142.420

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since the capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the DEL arises from a reduction in the level of provisions by £200,000,000. A net transfers from the Home Office of £28,728,000 mainly for prison healthcare, pooled drug treatment budgets, hospital security and a contribution to change-up funding to promote volunteering, offset by the young persons substance misuse planning grant which is now administered by the Home Office. A transfer from the Scottish Executive of £47,000 for a contribution for the high security infectious disease unit and a transfer to the Department for Education and Skills of £2,989,000 (£1,059,000 administration costs) mainly for protection of vulnerable adults scheme and funding Bichard review recommendations.

The administration cost limit has been reduced by £1,059,000 from £248,688,000 to £247,629,000 as detailed above.

The change to the Food Standards Agency resource element of the DEL arose from a transfer of £300,000 programme funds from the Home Office in respect of research into the survivability of chemical biological agents in bottled water and packaged food. The Food Standards Agency's administration cost limit and capital element of the DEL remain unchanged.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Styal Prison

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): I welcome the publication today of the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's (PPO) report into the death at Styal of Julie Walsh in 2003 and wish to make a statement about developments since 2003 and further planned work relating to women offenders. Much work has been done or is underway in respect of women offenders but it is timely to take stock and assess whether the right steps are being taken.

On 21 August 2003 Paul Goggins announced that he had commissioned the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman to investigate the circumstances and events surrounding the death at Styal of Julie Walsh on 12 August 2003 and to examine the death in the context of the series of six deaths at Styal since August 2002. On 21 January 2004 Paul Goggins made a statement in which he outlined the main general findings of the Ombudsman's report and the action the Prison Service was taking as a matter of urgency to prevent a recurrence. The Ombudsman's detailed and thorough report identified some serious inadequacies at Styal relating to regimes, facilities and procedures during the period covered by the six deaths. The Ombudsman suggested what lessons can be learned from these sad events to prevent a recurrence; reported on factors common to the deaths; and made a number of recommendations, which Paul Goggins accepted. The report will be published today, 17 November 2005, on the Ombudsman's website.

The first five deaths were thoroughly investigated by the Prison Service and were examined further by the PPO as part of his investigation into the death of Julie Walsh. Full public inquests took place between October 2003 and April 2005, the sixth inquest concluding on 26 April 2005. These were thorough and transparent investigations. There has been subsequent correspondence with the Cheshire Coroner about a number of concerns he identified in respect of three of the inquests.

Many important changes have been made at Styal in the intervening period including the opening of a first night centre to which women arriving from court are transferred within 30 minutes of arrival, the introduction of a methadone detoxification programme, the opening of a specialist unit known as "CALM" to provide a therapeutic environment for those women not able to access wider regime activities, transformation of

the segregation unit into a Care, Separation and Reintegration Unit, staffed by selected prison officers and mental health nurses to support prisoners in crisis, and development of the Reeman Unit into a day care facility run by mental health nurses to support prisoners with long term mental health issues. Following a review, new suicide and self-harm prevention procedures are in place overseen by a dedicated Suicide Prevention Coordinator. ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork), which provides individualised support and care for women at risk of self-harm has been introduced and staff at Styal folly trained in its use.

The Ombudsman's report raised some very serious issues and has made a valuable contribution to suicide prevention not just at Styal but also throughout the rest of the women's estate. From 1 April 2004 the Ombudsman has conducted investigations into all deaths in prison custody (and probation hostels and immigration centres). He has provided greater independent scrutiny and transparency and increased public confidence, and made it more likely that lessons are learned that reduce the likelihood of further deaths. The report has helped inform development of a suicide and self-harm prevention strategy specifically for women. Moreover, the increased knowledge and learning is being shared across other custodial institutions to help inform suicide prevention strategies across the board.

The Government believe that prison should be reserved for dangerous, serious and seriously persistent offenders and sentences should be as long as necessary for punishment and public protection, but no longer. Sentencing is a matter for the courts but sentencers should be adequately informed about the vulnerability of individual offenders and should balance the seriousness of the offence and the risk of harm offenders pose to others with the risk of harm to themselves. Section 166 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 gives sentencers the discretion to mitigate sentences by taking into account such information and allows sentencers to impose a community sentence, providing there are relevant mitigating factors, even where the offence would normally have justified a custodial sentence. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 also states that a court must not pass a custodial sentence on an offender unless it is of the opinion that the offence, or combination of offences, are serious enough to warrant such a sentence.

Sentencers must be well informed about the range of non-custodial sentences at their disposal. To ensure effective dialogue between sentencers and those who deliver sentences liaison takes place between local probation services and sentencers. Consultative fora involving sentencers, court staff and offender managers are being used to provide feedback to sentencers on the effectiveness of sentences; to enhance understanding of sentencing options available locally; and to provide feedback on sentencing decisions including information when someone they have sentenced to custody self harms, or commits or attempts suicide. Many sentencers welcome this feedback.

Work continues on The Women's Offending Reduction Programme (WORP) to co-ordinate and implement a comprehensive programme of work to address the complex range of factors that affect women's offending—including substance misuse, mental health problems, housing, child care issues, histories of abuse, poverty and education, training and employment. WORP seeks to identify ways in which the various departments, agencies and organisations that deal with these issues can work more effectively together to tackle the problem as a whole, rather than dealing with each in isolation. £9.15 million is to be spent on new approaches in two areas to demonstrate how women's offending can be tackled effectively in the community, including provision of one-stop centres for women serving sentences in the community and for those at risk of offending. We have also introduced a full range of tough, credible and effective sentences as alternatives to custody within a new sentencing framework in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Work is in hand to improve the prison life experience of those women who need to be in prison, particularly relating to their health, mental health and substance abuse needs. We are also developing suicide prevention and self-harm strategies specifically for women; providing much better healthcare services in prison in partnership with the NHS; and improving clinical substance misuse services by providing effective detoxification services and drug treatment programmes for women prisoners.

We believe that all of these measures are helping to make a difference to the vulnerable women who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System. Nonetheless, the Government is not complacent and considers that it would be timely to take stock of the work being done. We therefore plan to look again at the measures in place to ensure that we are doing everything possible for these women, including looking at the pathways through the criminal justice system of "vulnerable" women with a multitude of risk factors. I will make a further announcement about this when the scope of the review has been determined.

United Kingdom Passport Fees

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): The Privy Council has made an Order in Council, the Consular Fees (No. 2) Order 2005, which gives authority for a revision in passport fees. The revision will take effect on 1 December 2005. The fee for a standard 32 page passport will increase from £42 to £51 while the fee for a 48 page passport will increase from £54.50 to £62.50. The fee for a passport for a child will increase from £25 to £34. The fee for an adult using the guaranteed one week counter service for a standard 32 page passport will increase from £70 to £77.50, for a child from £60 to £70 and a 48 page jumbo from £71 to £87. The fee for an adult using the guaranteed same day service for a standard 32 page passport will increase from £89 to £96.50, for a child from £71 to £83 and for a 48 page passport from £95.50 to £104.50. The fee for a collective passport, for organised trips for schools and youth groups, will remain unchanged at £39.

These fees have been set following a stringent review with HM Treasury of costs to ensure that the fee for each type of passport service closely reflects the production costs accrued by that service and bears its share of the cost of consular protection services. This

increase will deliver extensive improvements required in the ongoing efforts to combat passport and identity fraud.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): Plans to change the Charity Commission's Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) and administration budget for 2005–06.

Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Charity Commission DEL will be increased by £1,365,000 from £31,242,000 to £32,607,000 and the administration budget will be increased by £1,660,000 from £30,493,000 to £32,153,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	1,660	32,153	0	32,153
Capital	205	1,604	0	1,604
Depreciation*	-500	-1,150	0	-1,150
Total	1,365	32,607	0	32,607

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

expenditure of £555,000 on restructuring within the Commission in line with the recommendations of the Strategy Unit report 'Private Action—Public Benefit' and the Commission's Strategic Review;

one off accommodation costs of £855,000;

an increase in resource cost of £500,000 depreciation relating to increases in E-Business expenditure.

In addition the resource element reflects corrections to the Main Estimate submission in terms of a £157,000 increase in administrative expenditure and a £407,000 decrease in resource costs related to Efficiency Challenge Fund monies.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from a known peak in E-Business expenditure, reflecting controlled underspend in prior years.

The increases will be funded by the take up of the Commission's End Year Flexibility entitlement.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Plans of changes to the Departmental Expenditure Limit ("DEL") and Administration Budget for 2005–06.

Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Home Office's Departmental Expenditure Limits for 2005–06 will be increased by £75,695,000 from £13,570,091,000 to £13,645,786,000 and the Administration Budget will be increased by £5,855,000 from £698,671,000 to £704,526,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource:	18,813	10,821,095	1,940,502	12,761,597
of which:				
Administration Budget	5,855	649,798	54,728	704,526
Capital	36,531	947,974	250,057	1,198,031
Less depreciation	20,351	-258,457	-55,385	-313,842
Total	75,695	11,510,612	2,135,174	13,645,786

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

£000's

(a)	*Total*	*Admin*	*Prog*
The change in the Resource element of the DEL arises from:	18,813	5,855	12,958
End year flexibility totalling £100,000,000 comprising:	100,000	21,000	79,000
£21,000,000 admin to section O for the departmental reform programme.	21,000	21,000	
£970,000 programme to section F to cover the deliverance of 05–06 policy objectives and manage emerging pressures;	970		970
£30,000 programme to section F to cover programme management costs;	30		30
£15,000,000 programme to section G for the voluntary community sector Cross-Cutting Review Healthy Sector Change Up Grant;	15,000		15,000
£10,000,000 programme to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority to cover additional costs required to alleviate caseload backlog pre 7/7;	10,000		10,000
£10,000,000 programme to section F for Crown prosecution Service charging;	10,000		10,000
£11,180,000 programme to section D for the police incentivisation scheme;	11,180		11,180
£1,820,000 programme to the National Crime Squad for the police incentivisation scheme;	1,820		1,820
£20,000,000 programme to section I to meet commitment to Probation Boards and address capacity pressures faced during 2005–06 and	20,000		20,000
£11,000,000 programme to section I to provide funding for the National Offender Management Information System.	10,000		10,000
Invest to Save budget totalling £2,455,000 comprising:	2,455	0	2,455
£100,000 programme to section B for ISB funded TEA project which deals with truancy exclusion and anti social behaviour;	100		100
£208,000 programme to section B for ISB funded Devon action against domestic violence and abuse project;	208		208
£48,000 programme to section M for ISB funded project 'Investing in a multi cultural Barnsley';	48		48
£228,000 programme to section M for ISB funded project dealing with rough sleeping in Westminster;	228		228
£298,000 programme to section M for ISB funded project 'Nationwide Refugee mentoring';	298		298
£395,000 programme to section I for ISB funded project to run a pilot virtual young offenders institution;	395		395
£517,000 programme to section I for ISB funded Children and Families Project;	517		517
£191,000 programme to section K for ISB funded West Yorkshire community chaplaincy project and	191		191
£470,000 programme to section K for ISB funded 'Family days and support' project.	470		470

£000's

(a)	Total	Admin	Prog
DEL reserve claims of £20,000,000 comprising:	20,000	0	20,000
£5,000,000 programme to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority to cover costs associated with the London bombings.	5,000		5,000
£15,000,000 programme to section A for additional police costs following the London terrorist incidents in July 2005.	15,000		15,000
Transfers from Other Government Departments totalling £16,032,000:	16,032	2,000	14,032
£3,482,000 from the Crown Prosecution Service comprising:			
£3,332,000 programme to section for the "No Witness No Justice" partnership programme to improve services to prosecution witnesses in criminal cases.	3,332		3,332
£150,000 programme to section F for development costs of the central witness bureau.	150		150
£2,150,000 from the Department for Constitutional Affairs comprising:			
£2,000,000 admin to section F to provide area and central support for the local criminal justice boards and	2,000	2,000	
£150,000 programme to section F for development costs of the central witness bureau.	150		150
£4,486,000 from the Department for Education and Skills comprising:			
£1,002,000 programme to section E for substance misusetraining as part of the pooled budget for the Young Peoples Substance Misuse Partnership Grant;	1,002		1,002
£200,000 programme to section E in respect of Change Fund contribution to Young People Substance Misuse Partnership Grant;	200		200
£1,700,000 programme to section J for education funding for the contracted out prison estate;	1,700		1,700
£1,534,000 programme to section K for funding of education within the public sector prisons and	1,534		1,534
£4,500,000 from the Department of Health comprising:			
£4,500,000 programme to section E for a contribution to the pooled budget for the Young Peoples Substance Misuse Partnership Grant.	4,500		4,500
£1,454,000 from HM Revenue and Customs comprising:			
£1,454,000 programme to section D for project Cyclamen	1,454		1,454
£10,000 from the Scottish Executive comprising:			
£10,000 programme to section D to help pay for the security measures at Holyrood House	10		10
Transfers to Other Government Departments totalling £119,967,000:	−119,674	−17,145	−102,529
£35,255,000 to the Crown Prosecution Service comprising:			
£14,000,000 programme from section F to provide additional resources to fund the charging programme;	−14,000		−14,000
£452,000 programme from section F to fund the development of Exchange Integration Service StreamRelease 1 (EXISS R1), an initiative to improve the integration of Criminal Justice IT; Systems	−452		−452
£1,487,000 programme from section F to provide support to the local criminal justice boards;	−1,487		−1,487
£287,000 programme from section E to fund resources in regional asset recovery teams;	−287		−287
£9,100,000 programme from section D to cover the Attorney General's costs of asset recovery work under the Proceeds Of Crime Act 2002;	−9,100		−9,100
£8,350,000 programme from section K and £350,000 programme from section F to provide additional resources for the compass case management system information technology programme and	−8,700		−8,700
£1,229,000 programme from section A to support joint working and improve effective use of enforcement measures for anti social behaviour orders.	−1,229		−1,229
£27,545,000 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs comprising:			
£23,780,000 programme from section A for criminal justice IT funding;	−23,780		−23,780
£215,000 programme from section F to support the work of the Essex local criminal justice board and	−215		−215
£3,550,000 programme from section F to provide additional resources for the Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) information technology programme.	−3,550		−3,550
£1,231,000 to the Department for Education and Skills comprising:			
£1,231,000 programme from Section G for the Youth Volunteering Challenge.	−1,231		−1,231
£340,000 to the Department for Transport comprising:			
£340,000 admin from section F to contribute towards the funding of the development of the Libra Restart Project	−340	−340	
£33,228,000 to the Department of Health comprising:			
£505,000 programme from Section G for the ChangeUp Public Service Priority Programme;	−505		−505
£18,985,000 programme from section K for additional funding;	−18,985		−18,985
£105,000 programme from section O for the provision of a dedicated web site for Hospital Security issues;	−105		−105
£12,300,000 programme from section L as a contribution to the pooled drug treatment budget 2005/06, to support the treatment and testing components of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders and drug rehabilitation requirements and	−12,300		−12,300
£1,333,000 programme from section E for Drugs Intervention Programme related costs.	−1,333		−1,333
£1,000,000 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office comprising:			
£1,000,000 programme from section D for Afghanistan related counter narcotic work.	−1,000		−1,000
£300,000 to the Food Standards Agency comprising:			
£300,000 programme from section D to research the survivability of CB agents in bottled water and packaged food.	−300		−300
£3,120,000 to HM Revenue and Customs comprising:			
£3,120,000 programme from section D for the maintenance of a cash forfeiture litigation team, and to cover expenditure in the regional asset recovery teams, money laundering teams and document exploitation teams.	−3,120		−3,120
£580,000 to the National Assembly for Wales comprising:			
£516,000 admin from section B for crime reduction teams and	−516	−516	
£64,000 admin from Section G for funding staff at Government Offices to administer community cohesion grant programmes.	−64	−64	
£17,368,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister comprising:			
£7,425,000 admin from section B for crime reduction teams in the Government Offices;	−7,425	−7,425	

£000's

(a)	Total	Admin	Prog
£4,836,000 admin from section E for the pay and administration costs of the former Drug Prevention Advisory Service following its integration in the Government Offices for the Regions.	-4,836	-4,836	
£1,803,000 admin from section E for administration costs of the Capacity Building (Criminal Justice Intervention Programme) in the Government Offices for the Regions.	-1,803	-1,803	
£380,000 admin from Section G for funding staff at Government Offices to administer ACU grant programmes.	-380	-380	
£981,000 admin from Section G for funding staff at Government Offices to administer Communities Group grant programmes.	-981	-981	
£800,000 admin from Section G for funding staff at Government Offices to administer community cohesion grant programmes.	-800	-800	
£850,000 programme from Section G for the Change Up Public Service Priority Programme.	-850		-850
(b)	CAPITAL		
The change in the Capital element of the DEL arises from:	36,531		
End year flexibility totalling £7,924,000 comprising:	7,924		
£1,924,000 capital to section D for Police CT Project.	1,924		
£3,000,000 capital to section D for data retention by Communication Service Providers, part of the Anti Terrorism Crime and Security Act.	3,000		
£3,000,000 capital to section N for IT projects.	3,000		
Transfers from Other Government Departments totalling £16,900,000:	16,900		
£16,900,000 from the Department for Constitutional Affairs comprising:			
£16,310,000 capital to section A for criminal justice IT funding and	16,310		
£590,000 capital to section K to provide additional resources for the Offender Management National Infrastructure (OMNI) information technology programme.	590		
Transfer to other Governments Department totalling £13,033,000 comprising:			
£3,480,000 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs comprising:	-3,480		
£3,480,000 capital from section F to provide additional resources for Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) information technology programme.	-3,480		
Invest to Save budget totalling £187,000 comprising:	187		
£4,000 capital to section B for ISB funded Devon action against domestic violence and abuse project.	4		
£5,000 capital to section M for ISB funded project 'Tranfser of capital to IND for ISB Multi cultural Barnsley'.	5		
£1,000 capital to section M for ISB funded project 'Nationwide Refugee mentoring'.	1		
£93,000 capital to section I for ISB funded Children and Families Project.	93		
£70,000 capital to section K for ISB funded West Yorkshire community chaplaincy project and	70		
£14,000 capital to section K for ISB funded 'Family days and support' project.	14		
DEL reserve claim totalling £15,000,000 comprising:	15,000		
In section M, £15,000,000 capital re-profiled from 2007-08 to 2005-06 for biovisa funding.	-15,000		

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for International Development departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be decreased by £8,962,000 from £4,481,044,000 to £4,472,082,000. The administration budget remains unchanged at £238,970,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000's

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	-20,954	3,814,516	637,574	4,452,090
Capital	12,000	42,000		42,000
Depreciation*	-8	-22,008		-22,008
Total	-8,962	3,834,508	637,574	4,472,082

*Depreciation, which forms part of the resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of these assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

Voted

The take up of £4,865,000 of departmental unallocated provision within Request for Resources 1 to support development programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

The take up of £5,000,000 of departmental unallocated provision within Request for Resources 1 to support programmes developing innovative approaches to development.

An increase of £2,000,000 within Request for Resources 1 in respect of additional resources provided to enable a donation to be made to the Disasters Emergency Committee equivalent to VAT charged on Tsunami appeal events.

A transfer of £19,000 from the Department for Education and Skills to Request for Resources 1 for charitable donations relating to the UK Presidencies of the G8 and European Union.

A reduction of £2,838,000 within Request for Resources 1 to adjust for the refund of VAT to the BandAid Charitable Trust being lower than the provision included in Main Estimates.

Non-voted

A reduction of £9,865,000 resulting from the transfer of departmental unallocated provision to Request for Resources 1 to support development programmes in sub-saharan Africa and programmes developing innovative approaches to development.

A reduction of £7,985,000 relating to the transfer of departmental unallocated provision to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a consequence of the transfer of policy responsibility for the Small Grants Scheme.

A reduction of £12,000,000 relating to the transfer of departmental unallocated provision to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of support for the African Union mission in Sudan (Darfur).

A reduction of £150,000 relating to the transfer of departmental unallocated provision to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of Global Conflict Prevention projects in the Caucasus.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

Voted

A draw down of £11,800,000 of capital end-year flexibility as set out in the Public Expenditure 2004–05 *Provisional Outturn* White Paper (Cm 6639) within Request for Resources 1 for construction of new offices and security enhancements to regional offices, for investments in regional development banks and other international development agencies, and for investment in improvements to management information and financial systems.

A draw down of £200,000 of capital end-year flexibility within Request for Resources 2 for investment in information systems for the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit.

The change in the adjustment for depreciation arises from the inclusion within Request for Resources 2 of an allowance for the depreciation of assets used for post conflict reconstruction.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Alistair Darling): Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the Scotland Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be increased by £59,014,000 from £23,306,369,000 to £23,365,383,000.

The DEL increase takes account of the following routine adjustments to the Scottish Executive provision:

the take-up of End Year Flexibility (EYF) by the Scottish Executive amounting to £34,814,000; and

the take-up of 2005 Budget consequentials by the Scottish Executive amounting to £21,107,000.

The DEL increase also includes the following transfers between the Scottish Executive and other Government departments, amounting to a net increase of £3,093,000. These are:

a transfer of £3,750,000 from the Department for Transport;

net transfers of £600,000 to Department for Work and Pensions;

a transfer of £47,000 to the Department of Health; and

a transfer of £10,000 to the Home Office.

The increases will be offset by interdepartmental transfers as detailed above or charged to the DEL Reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): The Department has, today, produced its Winter Supplementary 2005–06 Estimates Memorandum. Copies of the Memorandum have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Transport DEL for 2005–06 will be decreased by £21,457,000 from £11,745,372,000 to £11,723,915,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £22,446,000 from £242,112,000 to £264,558,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-Voted*	*Total*
Resource:				
Administration	22,446	260,535	4,023	264,558
Programme	-36,069	6,083,420	2,458,034	8,541,454
Capital	-4,300	1,847,126	1,448,534	3,295,660
Depreciation*	-3,534	-368,380	-9,377	-377,757
Total	-21,457	7,822,701	3,901,214	11,723,915

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

Resource Change: Administration (total increase of £22,446,000)

Voted: total increase of £22,446,000.

RfR1

(i) a transfer of £19,203,000 from non voted programme resource to Central Administration arising from the winding up of the Strategic Rail Authority;

(ii) a transfer of £7,643,000 from voted programme resource arising from the winding up of the Strategic Rail Authority; partially offset by

(iii) a transfer of £4,400,000 to the Office of Deputy Prime Minister for their share of accruing superannuation liability charges.

Resource Change: Programme (total decrease of £36,096,000)

Voted: total increase of £1,575,986,000

RfR 1

(i) a net transfer from non-voted resource provision of £1,583,379,000 comprising:

(a) a transfer of £1,554,693,000 arising from the winding up of the Strategic Rail Authority and the transfers of responsibilities to the Department;

(b) £17,268,000 transfer to freight grants for functions transferred from the Strategic Rail Authority;

(c) £12,118,000 transfer from Departmental Unallocated Provision for Transport Direct (£7,000,000), Crossrail preparation costs, EU presidency costs and the study of the long term impact of transport decisions (£4,118,000) and transport security (1,000,000); partially offset by:

(d) £700,000 transfer from Roads and Local Transport to Departmental Unallocated Provision to decrease resource provision for consultancies and other services.

(ii) a transfer of £250,000 from the Department for Trade and Industry for the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership.

(iii) a transfer of £7,643,000 to voted administration resource.

Non Voted: total decrease of £1,612,055,000.

RfR 1

(i) a net transfer of £1,583,379,000 to voted resource.

(ii) a transfer of £19,203,000 to voted administration resource; and

(iii) a net transfer of £9,473,000 to other government departments comprising:

(a) £4,000,000 to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in respect of the Wembley National Stadium project;

(b) £3,750,000 to the Scottish Executive for functions transferred from the Strategic Rail Authority;

(c) £2,000,000 to the Office of Rail Regulation for the transfer of functions from the Strategic Rail Authority;

(d) £63,000 to the Welsh Assembly for additional staff costs arising from the devolution of rail services to Wales; partially offset by

(e) £340,000 from the Home Office for the Libra Restart Project.

Capital Change (total decrease of £4,300,000)

Voted: total increase of £50,986,000

RfR1

(i) a net transfer from non-voted capital provision of £50,986,000 comprising:

(a) a reclassification of £54,286,000 from supported capital expenditure (revenue) to capital grants for local transport major schemes;

(b) a transfer of £700,000 to transport technology research from Departmental Unallocated Provision; partially offset by

(c) £4,000,000 transfer from Transport Direct to Departmental Unallocated Provision.

Non-Voted total decrease of £55,286,000

RfR1

(i) a net transfer of £50,986,000 to voted capital and

(ii) a net transfer of £4,300,000 to the Office of Rail Regulation for the transfer of functions from the Strategic Rail Authority.

WALES

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Hain): The Wales Departmental Expenditure Limit will be increased by £1,207,000 from £12,242,287,000 to £12,243,494,000. The increase is a result of:

(a) Net transfers from other Government Departments to the National Assembly for Wales of £643,000.

(b) A consequential of £564,000 for the Invest to save budget as part of the Chancellor's Spring Budget.

These transfers are as follows:

(i) £516,000 from the Home Office for the Community Safety Unit;

(ii) £64,000 from the Home Office for Social Cohesion;

(iii) £63,000 from the DFT for Rail Transport;

The increase in DEL will be offset by transfers from other Departments and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Vinyl Chloride Monomer-Related Diseases

The Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform (Margaret Hodge): The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council report has today been laid before Parliament. After careful consideration, I have accepted the recommendations. Amending legislation will be laid before Parliament.

In brief the changes are as follows:

In the case of Prescribed Disease C24 prescription has been changed from:

Prescribed Disease	*Occupation*
C24 (a) Angiosarcoma of the liver; (b) acro-osteolysis characterised by: (i) lytic destruction of the terminal phalanges, (ii) in Raynaud's phenomenon, the exaggerated vasomotor response to cold causing intense blanching of the digits, and (iii) sclerodermatous thickening of the skin; (c) liver fibrosis	Exposure to Vinyl Chloride Monomer in the manufacture of polyvinyl chloride

to:

Prescribed disease	*Occupation*
C24 Exposure to Vinyl Chloride Monomer causing: (a) Angiosarcoma of the liver; or (b) Osteolysis of the terminal phalanges of the fingers; or (c) Vinyl-chloride monomer-related Raynaud's phenomenon; or (d) Vinyl-chloride monomer-related sclerodermatous thickening of the skin, particularly but not exclusively of the hands; or (e) Liver fibrosis.	Work involving exposure to Vinyl Chloride Monomer in the manufacture of polyvinyl chloride. (C24c occurs in the absence of C24a, b, d, or e the occupational exposure must have occurred before 1 January 1984). [Exposure to polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is not a cause of the prescribed disease].

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library, and are available to hon. Members from the Vote Office.

Departmental Expenditure Limit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Work and Pensions DEL will be increased by £203,583,000 from £8,623,821,000 to £8,827,404,000 and the administration costs limits

will be increased by £39,855,000 from £6,019,407,000 to £6,059,262,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	New DEL Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	143,425	6,815,271	1,715,181	8,530,452
Capital	60,158	396,414	9,928	406,342
Depreciation[1]		-108,628	-762	-109,390
Total	203,583	7,103,057	1,724,347	8,827,404

Note:

1. Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

RfR2

i. an increase in provision of £80,000,000 (other current) due to increased spending on employment programmes (take up of end of year flexibility);

ii. an increase in provision of £600,000 (grants) due to a transfer from the Scottish Executive for the costs of administration subsidy to Local Authorities;

iii. an increase in provision of £2,939,000 (grants) due to a successful bid from the Invest to Save budget;

RfR3

iv. an increase in provision of £5,000,000 (administration) for the costs of age-related payments as announced in the 2004 Pre-budget Report;

v. an increase in provision of £31,000 (grants) due to a successful bid from the Invest to Save budget;

RfR4

vi. a reduction in provision of £145,000 (administration) due to a transfer to the Ministry of Defence for the Veterans Agency postal budget;

RfR5

vii. an increase in provision of £20,000,000 (other current non-cash) due to an increase in the provision for Early Release (end of year flexibility);

viii. an increase in provision of £25,000,000 (administration) from the Reserve to meet the cost of higher Post Office Card Account volumes as agreed in the SR2002 Settlement;

ix. an increase in provision of £10,000,000 (administration) for measures to promote Financial Inclusion as agreed in the 2005 Budget Report;

Capital

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

RfR2

x. an increase in provision of £60,000,000 due to spending on Jobcentre Plus rollout (take up of End Year Flexibility);

RfR3

xi. an increase in provision of £158,000 due to a successful bid from the Invest to Save budget;

Administration Costs

The movement in the Administration Cost limit arises from those items noted above as affecting administration costs.

Movements from Non-voted expenditure

Additionally there are the following drawdowns that are neutral in overall DEL terms:

Departmental Unallocated Provision

xii. £1,500,000 (resource) into RfR2 for the Working Age Client Group;

xiii. £25,000,000 (resource) into RfR3 for the Pensions Service;

xiv. £26,675,000 (resource) into RfR5 for Corporate Administration;

xv. £7,000,000 (capital) into RfR5 for Corporate Projects;

Welfare Modernisation Fund

xvi. £25,000,000 into RfR1 for Child Support Reform;

xvii. £30,000,000 into RfR2 for the Customer Management System;

xviii. £69,000,000 (resource) and £29,000,000 (capital) into RfR3 for the Pensions Transformation Project;

xix. £47,000,000 into RfR5 for expenditure on the Payment Modernisation Project, the Resource Management Project and the Debt Management Project;

Employment Development Fund

xx. £70,000,000 into RfR2 for Jobcentre Plus roll out.

Financial Assistance Scheme

xxi. £21,000,000 from RfR3 into non-voted.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Winter Supplementary Estimate 2005–06

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the *Department for Constitutional Affairs, Northern Ireland Court Service and National Archives: Public Records Office and Historical Manuscripts Commission* Total Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be *increased* by £112,824,000 from £3,673,082,000 to £3,785,906,000 and the administration costs limit will be *increased* by £13,847,000 from £476,234,000 to £490,081,000

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£000s

	Change	New DEL Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource:				
Admin	13,847	490,081	0	490,081
Programme	65,283	1,086,808	2,165,878	3,252,686
Capital	33,694	169,227	2,029	171,256
Depreciation*	0	-127,265	-852	-128,117
Total	112,824	1,618,851	2,167,055	3,785,906

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the Department for Constitutional Affairs DEL arises from:

Resource Change: Admin (total increase of £18,331,000)

RfR1

Transfers from other Government departments:

(i) £3,550,000 resources from the Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) Criminal Justice Service (CJS) ring fence to provide additional funding for the Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) information technology programme.

Take up of End-Year Flexibility (EYF):

(ii) £1,225,000 increase of resources in relation to Local Government Elections.

(iii) £15,141,000 increase of resources in relation to Departmental underspends.

(iv) £150,000 increase of resources in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT).

Transfers to other Government departments:

(v) £248,000 to the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to staff on secondment to Liverpool Community Justice Centre.

(vi) £150,000 to the Home Office in relation to Contribution to the Central Witness Bureau.

(vii) A Machinery of Government transfer of £48,000 to the Department for Culture, Media & Sports in relation to the Remembrance Sunday Ceremony.

Transfers between sections within the Estimates:

(viii) A reduction of £1,289,000 Public Guardianship Office administration resource to program in relation to internal re-allocation.

Resource Change: Programme (total increase of £47,894,000)

RfR1

Transfers from other Government departments:

(i) £23,780,000 resources from the Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) ring fenced funding.

(ii) £215,000 resources from the Home Office in relation to support funding for Essex Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB).

Take up of End-Year Flexibility (EYF):

(iii) £14,000 to Legal Services Commission: Administration in relation to Invest to Save Budget (ISB) funding for the Live and Interactive Project—ISB Ref: 297.

Transfers between sections within the Estimates:

(iv) An increase of £1,289,000 from Public Guardianship Office administration resource to program in relation to internal re-allocation.

Transfers to other Government departments:

(v) £2,000,000 to the Home Office in relation to Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) funding.

(vi) £1,804,000 to Crown prosecution Service in relation to Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) Funding.

Enforcement Improvement Pilot:

(vii) £44,600,000 additional appropriations in aid to Her Majesty's Court Service in relation to the Enforcement Improvement Pilot Scheme (the appropriation in aid of fine receipts in order to reinvest in the enforcement process).

Other Costs

(viii) £71,000,000 non-voted resource DEL for Elections

The change in the resource element of the Northern Ireland Court Service DEL arises from:

Resource Change: Admin (total decrease of £4,484,000)

(i) To take up resource end year flexibility of £655,000 in respect of administration expenditure on the planned costs associated with the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS), £250,000 implementation costs of the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission and in respect of additional cash expenditure on publicly funded legal services by the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission.

(ii) A reduction of £5,389,000 administration resource to programme in relation to internal reallocation.

Resource Change: Programme (total increase of £17,389,000)

(iii) An increase of £5,389,000 from administration resource to programme in relation to internal reallocation.

(iv) To take up resource end year flexibility of £12,000,000 in respect of additional cash expenditure on publicly funded legal services by the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission.

The change in the capital element of the Department for Constitutional Affairs DEL arises from:

Capital Change (total increase of £33,694,000)

RfR1

Transfers from other Government departments:

(i) £3,480,000 capital from the Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) Criminal Justice Service (CJS) ring fence to provide additional funding for the Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) information technology programme.

Take up of End-Year Flexibility (EYF):

(i) £18,500,000 capital to Her Majesty's Court Service in relation to Manchester Civil Justice Centre.

(ii) £10,200,000 capital to Her Majesty's Court Service in relation to Greater London Magistrates Court Authority capital receipts.

(iii) £11,300,000 capital in relation to Core Capital Grants to Local Authorities.

(iv) £5,580,000 increase of capital in relation to the Criminal Justice Reserve.

(v) £1,330,000 increase of capital in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT).

(vi) £170,000 increase of capital in relation to the Capital Modernisation Fund.

(vii) £34,000 capital to Legal Services Commission: Administration in relation to Invest to Save Budget (ISB) funding for the Live and Interactive Project—ISB Ref: 297.

Transfers to other Government departments:

(i) £16,900,000 capital to the Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) funding.

There is no change in the capital element of the Northern Ireland Court Service DEL.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 21 November 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Public Bodies Database

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): In a written ministerial statement of Thursday 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, col. 85WS, it was announced that the previous annual Cabinet Office publication "Public Bodies" had been replaced by an on-line searchable database. I am pleased to announce that the 2005 update of the database has now been completed. Data on individual public bodies as at 31 March 2005 were made available on-line during the summer, and the package has now been completed with the provision of summary reports and a printable (.pdf) file of all the 2005 data. The database is accessible at: http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb/ndpb.nsf.

The database lists the public bodies sponsored by central Government, with contact details, information about their remit and about the membership of their boards. The figures are broken down between male and female members for individual bodies, and summaries are provided at departmental level for the proportions of board members who are women, have declared they have a disability or come from a minority ethnic background.

Comparisons with 2004 database returns show that diversity levels have remained broadly similar. There has been a small increase in the proportion of appointees who have declared they have a disability, but a slight decrease in the percentage of appointments held by women and by people from minority ethnic backgrounds. This reinforces the Government's commitment to continue to pursue its diversity objectives and to promote outreach activity and plans.

The database also includes information about the Government's Task Forces, Ad-hoc Advisory Groups and Reviews, giving a more complete picture of the bodies and groups working to deliver the Government's objectives.

Copies of a printed version of the .pdf file are available in the Library.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

European Court of Human Rights
(B and L v United Kingdom)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My noble and learned Friend, the Parliamentary Under- Secretary of State, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, has made the following statement in the other place today.

"On the 13 September 2005 judgment was given in the case of B and L v United Kingdom. This case concerned an application before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, challenging the Marriage Act 1949 prohibition on the marriage of parents-in-law to children-in-law. It was held that the prohibition was in violation of Article 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Government have accepted this judgment and intend to implement it by amending the Marriage Act 1949 by way of a Remedial Order. Subject to Parliamentary approval, this amendment, when in force, will allow marriages between parents and children-in-law. The Government will lay a document containing a draft Remedial Order and the other information required by the Human Rights Act 1998 before Parliament shortly.

The parallel provisions in the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (Schedule 1, paragraphs 3 and 9; Schedule 27, paragraph 13 and 17 (in part)) will not be commenced so that same-sex couples that wish to form a civil partnership will have parity of treatment in this regard".

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council 22–24 November 2005

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): The European Union Agriculture and Fisheries Council will meet in Brussels from 22 to 24 November 2005.

I will chair the agriculture items with my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ben Bradshaw, in the UK seat.

Ben Bradshaw will chair the fisheries items with my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Jim Knight, in the UK seat.

The main item of agriculture business is to try to reach a general approach (in effect a political conclusion) on the proposal to reform the Common Agricultural Policy sugar regime.

The Council will also consider the proposal for EU Strategic Guidelines on Rural Development, where again, we hope to reach a general approach.

The fisheries items on the agenda include Baltic Sea technical conservation measures, where we hope to reach political agreement. There will also be political debates on Baltic Sea total allowable catches and the effort control measures associated with total allowable catches and quotas for 2006.

Under any other business, the Fisheries Commissioner will update the Council on EU/ Norway fisheries agreement.

There will be an update on avian influenza by the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection.

Poland will inform the Council about a ban by Russia on the import of Polish meat and plants.

The Agriculture Commissioner will update the Council on developments in the WTO agricultural negotiations.

Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania will draw the Council's attention to problems in their transition from the Single Area Payment Scheme (the temporary system of farm payments in place for the new Member States) to the Single Payment Scheme (the system which applies in the rest of the EU).

Cyprus will notify the Commission of a state aid scheme designed to compensate farmers for land lost after the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Inspectorate for Justice, Community Safety and Custody

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Today the Government will publish a policy statement announcing its intention to create a single inspectorate for Justice, Community Safety and Custody. Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

The Government are committed to creating an independent and robust inspection regime for the justice system. In March a consultation exercise was launched that sought views on the purpose, function and future structure of inspection in this sector. The consultation period ended in June and after careful consideration of views the Government believe the best way to realise that ambition is to create a single inspectorate for Justice, Community Safety and Custody.

The policy statement outlines proposals for the design of the new inspectorate. Building on the excellent work done by the five existing inspectorates for the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, court administration, prisons and probation, the new inspectorate will be a modern organisation that provides a strong, expert and independent public voice and gives authoritative assurance and constructive criticism on how the system is working for the people who rely on it: victims, witnesses, defendants, jurors, convicted offenders, professionals and the wider public as its ultimate funder and beneficiary.

The new inspectorate will have a general duty to inspect and report on the functioning of the justice system and the delivery by the bodies within it of their duties relating to wider community safety. Inspection of and reporting on the treatment and conditions of those in prison and other specified forms of custody will be a special duty of the inspectorate.

The Government look forward to working with those concerned with the future of the justice system to implement a unified and strongly led inspectorate that is forward-looking and focused on improving services so as to reduce crime and re-offending and promote confidence in the system as a whole.

Animal (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): I am pleased to inform the House that I have today placed in the Library the annual report of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate for the year 2004. This is the first annual report published by the Inspectorate.

Publication of the report honours a commitment given by the Government in response to a recommendation of the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures in July 2002 that more information should be made available about the work of Inspectorate.

In the Government's response, published in January 2003, we welcomed the Select Committee's endorsement of the integrity of the Inspectorate and of the important contribution that it has made to the welfare of animals in designated establishments. We also recognised that public awareness of the valuable job done by the Inspectorate needed to be improved and concluded that this could be remedied, at least in part, by the publication of an annual report on its work.

The Inspectorate's first annual report published today explains what the inspectors do and how they do it, and provides details of the Inspectorate's staffing and structure, ways of working, professional background and skills, and training and development. There are currently 30 inspectors and our long term target is to have 33.

The report explains the Inspectorate's role in assessing and advising Home Office Ministers and officials on applications for personal and project licences and certificates of designation under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. It also provides details of the inspection system, through which compliance with licence authorities granted under the 1986 Act is monitored and provides information about visiting patterns and practice and the number of visits carried out during the year.

The report also explains the important role of inspectors in gathering and transmitting information on good practice and provides examples of the many events and initiatives to which the Inspectorate made significant contributions during the year.

I commend the report to the attention of Members.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Compensation Agency

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): I have today published the Compensation Agency's combined Corporate Plan (2005–08) and Business Plan (2005–06). The Corporate Plan sets out the long term strategic goals for the Agency over the three-year period, and the Business Plan sets out the Agency's key objectives and performance targets for the coming year.

Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRANSPORT

Ship to Ship Transfers (Firth of Forth)

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): Forth Ports plc has submitted a revised and amplified oil spill contingency plan to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

The revision and amplification of the plan has been prompted by proposals that ship-to-ship transfer of oil carried as cargo should take place within Forth Ports' harbour authority area. Ship-to-ship transfer is a lawful activity. Ship-to-ship transfers within harbour authority areas already take place in the UK at Scapa Flow, Sullom Voe Oil Terminal and Nigg Oil Terminal, in some cases for as long as twenty-five years.

The MCA's role is limited to approving harbour authorities' oil spill contingency plans to ensure that they address the potential risks of activities carried out in those areas, including ship-to-ship transfers. There is no provision for the MCA to reject an oil spill contingency plan submitted to it. It must either approve

the plan or, if the plan is not compatible with the National Contingency Plan or is not appropriate for dealing with oil pollution incidents which may occur in the area in which the harbour authority or operator has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility, it may direct that the plan be altered. It is the duty of the harbour authority to alter the plan if so directed by the MCA. Failure to maintain the plan (with any directed alterations) or failure to implement the approved plan in the event of an oil pollution incident is a criminal offence.

The MCA will co-ordinate a public consultation to assess the implications for relevant nature conservation sites of Forth Ports' revised and amplified oil spill contingency plan. The consultation is designed to establish whether the revised and amplified plan will adversely affect the integrity of those nature conservation sites.

The Government have reached no view on the applicability of the ECJ judgment of 20 October 2005 on the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, commonly known as the Habitats Directive, outside the context in which the case was brought.

However, the substantive provisions of that Directive demonstrate the need for an additional activity—an appropriate assessment of the impact of the plan on the conservation objectives of designated protected sites in the Firth of Forth—which has not hitherto been explicitly addressed during the approval process but which, in my opinion, ought to be carried out as a matter of good policy.

Given the very strong interest which this subject has generated on local economic, environmental and public health grounds, I consider it entirely appropriate that such an assessment is conducted and taken into account when analysing the adequacy of the oil spill contingency plan to deal with incidents in the harbour authority's area of responsibility as the MCA is required to do under the Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention) Regulations 1998.

The consultation will include the submitted oil spill contingency plan material and supporting information from Forth Ports and Scottish Natural Heritage. The consultation will assess the implications of the plan for the protected sites (in view of their conservation objectives) with a view to ascertaining whether the plan will adversely affect the integrity of the sites concerned.

The planned duration of the consultation exercise is 12 weeks. Time will also be required, after the consultation period is over, for the analysis and presentation of the results of the consultation. At the end of this process, in the light of the consultation responses and taking into account the advice of Scottish Natural Heritage, the statutory nature conservation authority, the MCA will finalise its appropriate assessment and consider whether any amendments to the plan are needed.

Airports Policing

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): The Government have decided to amend the Civil Aviation Bill to clarify the responsibilities of airport managers and police in relation to the protection and policing of airports that have been designated by the Secretary of State under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 ("the Act"). There are currently nine airports designated for policing purposes—Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Prestwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. The primary responsibility for policing activity at these airports lies with the Chief Constable and the airport manager must make such payments in respect of policing the airport as the manager and the relevant authority may agree. If they cannot agree, the Secretary of State may be required to determine the amount to be paid to the police by the airport manager (section 26(3)).

Recently it has become clear that the relationship between the responsibilities of airport managers, aircraft operators and others carrying out security activities directed by the Secretary of State under Part 2 of the Act (sections 10 to 24) and of the Chief Constable whose officers police a designated airport under Part 3 (sections 25 to 31) is uncertain and also that the scope of the Secretary of State's power under section 26(3) of the Act is unclear.

Given the importance of this issue to the UK's aviation security programme the Government have therefore decided to use the Civil Aviation Bill to seek to amend the Act, to clarify the relationship between the activities of the airport manager and other directed parties at an airport, and policing activities in order to prevent disputes on this point and to provide a more independent method for settling any disputes that may arise in future. The aim of the amendment is to acknowledge that designated airports require both directed parties and police to perform activities, but that in making policing decisions the Chief Constable should be aware of the role of the directed parties and deploy his resources so that they complement those of the directed parties.

In addition to seeking this amendment, the Government have also decided to commission an independent, wide-ranging review of policing at airports. The review will aim to identify a sustainable approach to the policing of airports which takes account of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in protecting an airport and in particular addresses the need for funding arrangements that are objective and transparent. The review will be asked to compare the present method of policing airports with that of other modes of transport to establish any differences or similarities in policing approaches, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that may apply. The review will also consider whether the principle of designation can be made to work. If it cannot, the review is asked to propose alternative options. I expect the review team to report back with recommendations by spring next year.

As far as the amendment is concerned, it will be helpful to the House and to those affected by it if I set out in detail its effects:

Where an aerodrome has been designated under section 25 of the Act the respective responsibilities of directed parties and the police will be defined. In addition, the manager of the aerodrome, the police

authority and the chief officer of police (the three parties) shall be required to enter into a police services agreement (the Agreement). The Agreement must:

(1) Set out the level of police services and resources required in the year(s) ahead. The Agreement must acknowledge that the police resources will be under the direction and control of the chief officer of police. Since other agencies' and directed parties' activities may affect the police services required those agencies and parties must be consulted before the Agreement is concluded;

(2) provide for the payments in respect of policing to be made and the facilities to be provided by the aerodrome manager;

(3) make provision for modifications to the services to be provided by the police or to the payments to be made by the aerodrome manager as a result of changes of circumstances during the currency of the Agreement.

Where the three parties (i) cannot reach an Agreement because they disagree on a particular aspect such as the level of policing to be provided, or (ii) having reached an Agreement are in dispute as to its terms, construction or operation, the matter will be referred to determination by an expert. The expert must be independent of both parties and have had no prior involvement in the dispute to be determined. The expert's decision will be final and binding, save that a party may appeal to the High Court on a point of law. An expert's decision may, with the permission of the High Court, be enforced as if it were a judgment of the High Court (and may, in particular, be enforced by the use of powers in relation to contempt of court).

Any of the three parties is entitled to ask the Secretary of State to set up the determination. The expert should be a person appointed by the Secretary of State for the particular dispute, and agreed by the aerodrome manager on one side and the police parties for the other side. If the parties cannot agree, the Secretary of State will require each side to appoint an expert and those two experts to appoint a further panel member to act as chairman.

The expert will determine the procedure to be followed in determining a dispute, but any procedure must give each party to the dispute an opportunity to make representations. The Secretary of State will also have an opportunity to make representations before the expert.

Where the case is referred because the parties cannot reach an Agreement, the expert will rule on the dispute and if necessary set out what the provision should be.

Where the dispute concerns a police services agreement which has already been signed, the expert may:

(a) Give a declaration about how a provision of an Agreement is to be construed or operated;

(b) vary the terms of an Agreement;

(c) determine that one party is obliged in accordance with an agreement to pay a specified sum, or a sum to be assessed in a specified manner, to the other party; and/or

(d) make an order about costs.

The definition of the parties' respective roles in protecting an airport and provision for expert determination of any disputes will have effect from today's date and appropriate transitional provision will be made. The provisions regarding the police services agreement will take effect on Royal Assent.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 22 November 2005

TREASURY

HM Revenue and Customs

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): HMRC have today reached a settlement of their claim for compensation from Electronic Data Systems Ltd. (EDS) and Electronic Data Systems Corporation for the problems experienced with the IT system developed by EDS to support the launch of the Tax Credit system in 2003 and the subsequent operation of Tax Credits.

The aggregate settlement is £71.25 million (seventy-one million, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds) including an up front payment and payments of additional amounts over time. Details of the settlement are commercially sensitive and therefore bound by a legal confidentiality agreement as is normal in agreements of this nature.

I have written to the Chairman of the Treasury Committee to inform him of this settlement and David Varney, as Chairman of HMRC, has written in similar terms to the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Administration Committee. Copies of all three letters have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education and Youth Council

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills chaired the EU Education and Youth Council held in Brussels on 15 November. I represented the UK during the Education Council and Peter Peacock, Scottish Minister for Children and Young People, represented the UK during the Youth Council.

There were four substantive items on the Education agenda in the morning:

Ministers adopted a partial political agreement on the Lifelong Learning Programme, which involved agreement on all parts of the programme without budgetary implications. Ministers supported a Presidency compromise deal to allow Member States involvement in selecting projects that receive over €1 million from the programme, and all outstanding reserves were lifted.

Ministers adopted a Resolution on enabling higher education to make its full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy. There was also an informal discussion on universities over lunch, reflecting on the questions posed at the Informal Summit at Hampton Court. Member States focussed on relations between business and universities and discussed a variety of methods to stimulate these. All agreed on the need to promote excellence but differed on how to achieve it; some favoured competition between universities, others building up high standards for all.

Ministers also adopted Conclusions on the role of the development of skills and competences in taking forward the Lisbon agenda, which call for the Commission to look at sectoral approaches to skills development. These conclusions build on discussions at the Informal meeting of Education Ministers in London on 12/13 July and are a Presidency initiative but fit within the ongoing Education and Training 2010 work programme.

There was an exchange of views on the direction that the "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme should take over the next two years and priorities for the Joint Interim Report 2006. Ministers called for greater emphasis on Higher Education following the Hampton Court discussions. The importance of teacher training, adult education and reducing school dropout rates was also emphasised. Many agreed that more effective investment in education and training should be prioritised. Increasing mobility, not just at the level of HE, was a priority for many. Some delegations felt the most important point was to drive forward the priorities already established.

At the Youth Council after lunch:

Ministers adopted a partial political agreement on the Youth in Action programme. As with the Lifelong Learning programme this involved agreement on all sections of the text without budgetary implications.

Ministers agreed a Resolution on implementing the European Pact for Youth and promoting active citizenship.

Ministers discussed how the EU should address the concerns of young people and be brought closer to its young citizens. They stressed the need to show young people how they benefit from the EU, through information campaigns, in order to build a sense of European identity. They also stressed the need to involve young people in developing policies that will affect them, and in decision making. Consideration of the needs of disadvantaged young people and the promotion of social inclusion and integration were also highlighted by many. Some delegations suggested establishing EU wide events involving young people, and the Commissioner mentioned European Youth Week in December as an opportunity for young people to discuss European issues.

The night before the Council, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills hosted jointly with Commissioner Figel a meeting of the EU-level social partners and the extended troika of current, previous and future Presidencies. This gave the social partners the opportunity to offer their views on the issues to be discussed at the following day's Council.

HEALTH

NHS Foundation Trusts

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In accordance with schedule 2, paragraph 11 (5) of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards Act 2003, Monitor's review and consolidated accounts of National Health Service foundation trusts 2004–05, HC 622, was laid before Parliament today. Monitor's statutory name is the Independent Regulator of NHS foundation trusts. Copies of the document are available in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): I have today placed in the Library of the House copies of the National Reducing Re-Offending Delivery Plan, which the Government are launching today. The Delivery Plan builds on the Reducing Re-Offending National Action Plan, which was published in July last year and it includes updates on the 60 plus action points that were agreed across Government at that time.

The Delivery Plan charts the real progress National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and its partners have made over the last 18 months in delivering services to offenders that address the reasons why they re-offend. For example, the proportion of offenders released from prison without accommodation to go to has dropped by a third in the last year, the number of educational awards offenders have achieved has risen by 40 per cent. and the number completing a drug treatment course in prison or a drug testing order in the community is up by a third. The Delivery Plan also sets out the key actions the Government intend to take over the next 18 months towards the delivery our target of reducing re-offending by 10 per cent. by the end of the decade.

The Delivery Plan acknowledges that this is only the beginning and it reaffirms our commitment to build on what we have put in place. Key to delivering our target will be continuing to work with our partners nationally, but also to develop further regional and local partnerships that include business, civic society and voluntary and faith sector contributors as the most significant driver of progress. The Delivery Plan will be built upon in the NOMS five-year strategy that is being developed.

We will also shortly be publishing, with colleagues in the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions, a Green Paper, "Reducing Re-offending Through Skills and Employment". We have been developing proposals for embedding skills and employment for offenders as key tenets of the broader national delivery plan for reducing re-offending which we are announcing today. We look forward to publishing a document which will be the start of a constructive dialogue with our partners about how in the future we can most effectively equip offenders for employment and with the basic skills needed for law-abiding adult life, engage employers fuily in design and delivery of programmes for offenders and drive improvement in the quality of the programmes offered to offenders.

Proceeds of Crime Act (Money Laundering)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I have today laid in draft before Parliament the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and Money Laundering Regulations (Amendment) Order 2005.

The draft Order brings to a conclusion an informal consultation exercise which the Home Office conducted last year on whether the law on the duty of accountants, auditors and tax advisers to report money laundering under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 needed to be changed to bring it fully into line with European Community law, and if so how. This followed representations from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales that the current legislation discriminated unfairly against accountants, auditors and tax advisers, contrary to the second EC Money Laundering Directive (2001/97/EC.)

The consultation exercise resulted in over 40 responses mostly from the accountancy and legal professions. For the most part the accountancy profession argued that UK law was not compliant with the Directive and needed to be amended whereas the legal profession argued that there was no need for a change in the law.

In response the Government have decided to amend section 330 of the Act to provide for the defence to the "failure to disclose" offence, which currently applies to professional legal advisers in certain circumstances, to be extended to include accountants, auditors and tax advisers who satisfy certain conditions. The equal treatment between these professions, which the draft Order provides for, will apply only to the very limited extent that they are carrying out effectively the same functions in relation to legal advice. The exemption from the obligation to report money laundering to the appropriate authorities is therefore a narrow one which should only apply in specified and appropriate circumstances.

It should be noted that the limited exemption from the requirement to report money laundering does not extend to all accountants, auditors and tax advisers. It will apply only to those who are members of a professional body which requires a test of competence as a condition of membership and the maintenance of professional standards, including sanctions for non-compliance with those standards.

The amendments to the Proceeds of Crime Act made by the Order also provide a defence for a person who is employed by, or is in partnership with, a professional legal adviser or other relevant professional adviser, as defined in the Order.

The Money Laundering Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/3075) also give effect to the second EC Money Laundering Directive. In addition to amending section 330 of the Proceeds of Crime Act, the Order also amends the Money Laundering Regulations 2003.

The principal purpose of the EC Directive is to combat money laundering. The Government support the measures in the Directive and is folly committed to working with the financial services industry to maintain strong defences against money laundering. The amendment to the Proceeds of Crime Act, to which the Order gives effect, will help reduce the regulatory burden on accountants, auditors and tax advisers in certain circumstances without damaging the effectiveness of the money laundering reporting regime.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

South Asia Earthquake

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): On 19 November, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State attended the Pakistan earthquake donor conference in Islamabad.

The United Nations, represented by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, all major donor countries and international financial institutions attended.

The Government of Pakistan proposed a range of reconstruction activities for which international community funding was needed to help the people affected by the recent earthquake. Reconstruction will be directed and led by the Government of Pakistan through the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA).

In addition to the terrible human cost of the earthquake, the "Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment" prepared for the Government of Pakistan by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank estimates that Pakistan will need $5.2 billion for relief and reconstruction. This is made up of $1.7 billion for continuing relief and to restore livelihoods and $3.5 billion to replace damaged and destroyed buildings and infrastructure.

My hon. Friend announced at the conference that the United Kingdom would contribute £70 million, or over $120 million, over three years for the reconstruction effort. This money will be used to support the Government of Pakistan's reconstruction programme, which includes the rebuilding and repair of schools, hospitals, electricity and water supplies, houses, and support for restoring people's livelihoods. In conjunction with the Government of Pakistan, United Nations, other donors, international non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives we will agree how this support will be disbursed.

The total amount pledged for both relief and long-term reconstruction is now around $5.8 billion. This includes US$1.9 billion (around £1 billion) in cash grants and assistance in kind, with the remaining US$3.9 billion (£2.3 billion) in concessional loans.

The European Commission announced a new total of $110 million, with increased pledges by most EU Member States. Contributions from Germany and France are each now expected to exceed $100 million. The United States and Saudi Arabia each announced total pledges exceeding $500 million. Pledges from the International Financial Institutions—the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank—now exceed $2.5 billion in total, with the majority offered through concessional loans.

We will need to work closely with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that effective governance structures are in place to ensure proper financial management of these funds and to ensure these pledges make a difference on the ground.

Humanitarian Assistance

The Government of Pakistan's latest figures report over 73,000 deaths and some 69,000 injured in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and in North West Frontier Province. Some 3.5 million people are affected. 2.5 million have lost their homes. 200,000 people are living in remote and cut-off areas above the snow line. In India over 1,300 died and 4,500 were injured. The immediate priority is to ensure that those who survived the disaster are supported through the winter months.

DFID is working, alongside the United Nations, the Red Cross and non-governmental organisations, to help meet the immediate survival needs of the affected population. We will continue this support for as long as necessary. To date, we have allocated £33 million (around $57 million) of assistance for the immediate relief effort. Over £30 million has been disbursed. We are prepared to contribute further.

We have provided over £10 million of direct and in-kind assistance to the United Nations, including logistics support by the United Kingdom military. This included supplying three Chinook helicopters, the airlifting of two helicopters from Spain and rations and water from Kabul using a C130 aircraft. £2 million was contributed for the NATO Air Bridge to transport priority relief items from UN warehouses, such as tents and blankets.

In addition, in support of charitable organisations, DFID has provided £6 million towards their relief programmes and funded 80 flights for the United Kingdom's Disasters and Emergency Committee at a cost of over £3.9 million.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Administration

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I am today announcing the outcome of the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland. This review was launched by the Northern Ireland Executive in June 2002, but since the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly in October 2002 has been taken forward under Direct Rule. Discussions have been held with the Northern Ireland political parties at regular intervals as the review progressed, and Ministers also received advice from the high level panel of independent experts that were appointed by the Northern Ireland Executive to work alongside the review team and provide an important independent element to the process.

The objective was to review the existing arrangements for the accountability, development, administration and delivery of public services in Northern Ireland, and to bring forward options for reform which are consistent with the arrangements and principles of the Belfast Agreement, within an appropriate framework of political and financial accountability.

I am also conscious that the reduction in the number of local authorities will have a direct impact on policing structures, and on the arrangements for improving community safety through community safety partnerships. We will take forward changes in these areas in parallel with the work to implement the RPA, in partnership with the PSNI, Policing Board and other stakeholders who play an important part in the CSP arrangements.

The scope of the review was wide-ranging covering the 26 Local Councils, all the health and social service structures, all the education support structures, all other public bodies and the functions of the 11 central Government Departments.

The review has been conducted in an open and inclusive manner. It has been highly consultative, with considerable engagement with the full range of stakeholders from the outset, and two public consultations. The most recent consultation, which sought views on specific proposals for health and social

services, education, local and public bodies, ended on 30 September 2005 with over 1,000 responses being received. The panel of independent experts worked very closely with the review team throughout the consultation process, participating in a significant number of the meetings with key stakeholder groups and ensuring that there was an agreed understanding about the key messages coming from the consultation.

There has also been an extensive programme of research including academic papers, study visits, surveys and focus groups. All of this evidence, including all of the responses to both consultations, has been published on the review website at www.rpani.gov.uk and copies of the research papers have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses as they have been published during the course of the review. Today an integrated analysis of relevant equality, social need, good relations and rural issues has been published and placed in the Libraries of both Houses along with copies of the two consultation documents.

I and my Ministerial team have been considering all of this considerable body of evidence, including the equality analysis, over the past few weeks before reaching final decisions.

In an ideal world Northern Ireland politicians in a local Executive would be taking the decisions on the outcome of this review. However, it has been impressed upon me that the need for reform is urgent. We need to press ahead but do so in the expectation that there will be a return to devolution and that the new structures will work in that context. The changes I am announcing today will take a number of years to implement, and I would hope that there will be a return to devolution in Northern Ireland in the not too distant future that would allow local politicians to take ownership of and shape the implementation process.

The decisions I am announcing today have been taken in the context of four guiding principles that emerged from the consultation processes. These principles are:

Subsidiarity, or the balance between local democracy and efficiency and effectiveness;

Equality;

Common Boundaries; and

Strong Local Government.

These principles underpin a two-tier model within which all public services in Northern Ireland will operate. In future, the regional tier, which largely comprises central Government Departments, will concentrate mainly on policy development, strategic planning and setting and monitoring standards. At this level also those services that are essentially regional in character will be delivered either by departments or regional authorities. The sub-regional tier, that will have local government at its core, will be the main vehicle for delivery of local public services. This will result in the transfer of many service delivery functions from central Government to local government. However, whether local government delivers a service directly or not, it will have a greater influence over the planning and delivery of services within its boundaries through a community planning process which councils will lead.

Within this model there will also be formal arrangements to facilitate good cooperation between central and local government, the detail of which will be developed during implementation.

The key to making this model work is greatly enhancing the role and influence of local government. All of the evidence has pointed to the need to have a smaller number of much larger councils in order that those councils have both the critical mass and the capacity to take on a greater range of functions and exert influence on the full range of service delivery bodies in their areas. I am therefore announcing that the current 26 local authorities in Northern Ireland will be reduced to seven, and that each council will have a maximum of 50 councillors. I intend to appoint a local government Boundaries Commissioner in the New Year to draw up the boundaries of the new councils. I intend to bring forward legislation to direct the Commissioner to use as a starting point the existing Councils in the following groupings:

New Councils

New Council	*Current Councils*
1	Belfast
2	Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus, Antrim and Lisburn
3	Derry, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane
4	Down, North Down, Ards and Castlereagh
5	Fermanagh, Dungannon and South Tyrone, Cookstown and Omagh
6	Ballymena, Ballymoney, Larne, Moyle and Coleraine
7	Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne

In addition to community planning and a new power of well-being I propose that the new councils will have new or enhanced responsibility for:

Planning

Local Roads

Conservation of natural and built heritage

Local economic development

Local tourism

Urban and Rural regeneration

Rural development

Future European programmes

Environmental services

Application of building regulations

Environmental Health

Leisure and recreation

Arts and Culture

Community development

Community relations

Emergency planning

Maintenance of the public realm

Functions that are transferred to local government will be accompanied by an equivalent transfer of funding. To achieve this, a new system of local government financing will be developed.

A significant number of people expressed some concern about the way in which new councils will exercise their new powers. Taking account of these concerns and the calls for a robust system of checks and balances to ensure transparent decision-making, fair and equitable treatment for all and the protection of

minority rights I am announcing that such a system will be included in legislation. However, this is a very complex and sensitive issue as we need to ensure that the system put in place achieves its objective without stifling innovation and the decision-making process within councils. Further work on the detail will be undertaken in the coming months, and I will want to consult further with the political parties that will be required to work the system.

I recognise that, with the reduction in the overall number of councillors resulting from these proposals, many councillors who have served their communities in Northern Ireland well through very difficult years may chose not to stand under the new arrangements. I have therefore decided that there will be a severance scheme to facilitate the reduction in the number of councillors. There will also be more appropriate remuneration for councillors in recognition of the responsibilities they will take on. Both these issues are being addressed by a Department of the Environment working group and I will take account of its report before deciding the details of the arrangements.

The consultation document also raised the issue of how to facilitate local involvement so that communities do not feel isolated from larger councils, and to ensure that the views of local communities are taken into account in council deliberations. It was suggested that this might be facilitated through an enhanced form of area committees (or "civic councils") in which the committees would have some form of civic role in their areas. I have decided that this should be a matter for the new councils, but will consider whether the legislation establishing the new councils should place a duty on the councils to develop a system to ensure that the views of communities are taken into account in council deliberations.

I am also announcing proposals for major changes to the Health and Social Service structures in Northern Ireland. In place of the current four boards and 19 trusts, having taken account not only of the evidence from this review but also the recent report from Professor Appleby on performance management within the Health and Personal Social Services sector, I am proposing a single Regional Health Authority to commission services, five Trusts plus the Ambulance Service Trust, the reduction of other support bodies from five to three, and the reduction of Health and Social Services Councils from four to one.

The Regional Health Authority will not only replace the four Boards, but will also take on several key functions currently undertaken by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. It will have seven local commissioning groups that will cover areas that are co-terminous with the new council areas to facilitate joint working, thus allowing councils to influence the planning of health and personal social services within their council areas to meet the needs of their constituents. My colleague, Shaun Woodward, Minister for Health and Social Services in Northern Ireland, will make a separate statement on the detail of the Health and Social Services proposals.

On Education I am proposing a single Education Authority in place of the current five Education and Library Boards. It will also take on education support functions currently delivered through a range of other education bodies including the Department of Education. The consultation document sought views on whether Youth Services and Libraries should be transferred to local government. Having considered the views expressed on these issues during the consultation, I have decided that neither of these functions should transfer. My colleague Angela Smith, Minister for Education in Northern Ireland will make a statement on the detail of the proposals for education.

The decisions I have announced today in Health and Social Services, Education and local government will reduce the total number of public bodies in these sectors from 67 to 20.

The review also considered the future of executive agencies and other public bodies in Northern Ireland and variety of views were expressed in the consultation. Work is underway to decide on the future of these bodies and I will make a further announcement on public bodies and their functions before the end of March 2006, when I have had time to consider all of the evidence and make considered decisions. As a result of this work I also expect to announce the transfer of significant extra functions to local government.

Separately and in the light of the current reform of the Tribunal system in England and Wales, a working group with members drawn from the Northern Ireland Courts Service and those NI Departments which sponsor tribunals has been established to examine the implications of these reforms for NI. As part of this work this group will review the current tribunal system in Northern Ireland in terms of efficiency, service delivery and independence, and also the judicial structures which support it, and consider the implications for the establishment of any new tribunals. The group is expected to report next year.

All of my decisions have been underpinned by detailed consideration of the implications for equality, social need, good relations and rural communities. There are clear expectations that my decisions will lead to improved accessibility to public services—particularly for those most vulnerable in our society, improvements in the diversity of people who participate in public life, and fair treatment for staff. I believe that these three issues should be a central part of the decisions taken within organisations, sectors and across the public sector as a whole during implementation.

I want to pay tribute to all those who work and have worked in the public sector in Northern Ireland and who have delivered public services through the past difficult years. I know I can count on them to continue to provide dedicated services to the public. I recognise that the changes I am announcing today will give rise to concern amongst staff about their future in the public sector. With this in mind, I propose to establish an independent advisory public sector commission to ensure the smooth transfer of staff to new organisations and to advise Government on guiding principles which would apply to all sectors. Further work is being undertaken to finalise the details of the composition and remit of this Commission.

Although the terms of reference of this review, drawn up by the former Northern Ireland Executive, precluded the number and configuration of the Northern Ireland departments, the decisions I have announced will have significant implications for Departments. I will,

therefore, be including departmental structures and responsibilities in my further discussions with all the political parties in Northern Ireland.

Public Administration (Education Sector)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): The Government in Northern Ireland is today publishing its decisions on the Review of Public Administration (RPA) consultation. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has already made a written statement today in the House setting out the broad range of change across the entire Northern Ireland public sector. This statement sets out decisions relating specifically to education and how the change process will be managed.

I want to thank those who have responded to the consultation process, and to acknowledge the significant contribution which these responses have made to the consideration of the RPA proposals. Some 687 responses, two thirds of the total responses received, were related to the education proposals and as such demonstrated the interest, energy and commitment of respondents to the change process.

The analysis of the responses revealed that there was broad support for radical reform, for re-focusing the role of DE, for the establishment of a single education body, for reviewing advice services, for enhanced local involvement and for the better provision of services at the front-line.

Concerns were also raised, including the perceived absence of a clear vision for education, the implications of creating two education bodies, the threat to the ethos and autonomy of individual schools, the impact of change at local level and the possible dangers of a strong centralised administration system.

All the responses received have been considered carefully against the Government's plans for a modern, accountable and responsive framework within which education policy can be developed, implemented and monitored more effectively, in the interests of improved services for all.

The changes I am announcing today are substantial and will impact upon staff in all parts of the education service. Despite the unavoidable upheaval, I know that through the period of change we can continue to rely on their professionalism and commitment in shaping the future in the interests of young people and their families.

Against this backcloth I have made the following decisions.

Changing the Department of Education

The Department of Education will undergo significant change to enable it to focus more effectively on strategy, policy development and on the translation of policy into improved outcomes at the front line. The Department will set the overall strategic direction of the education and youth sector. Its future relationships with others will be focused on clear accountability and improving standards, with performance and quality indicators established from the outset, giving strategic direction to the delivery of services. Funding allocations will be linked closely to policy priorities and performance improvement. In future, there will be a clear separation between policy formulation and operational delivery, resulting in the transfer of certain functions from the Department to the proposed new Education Authority.

This refocusing of the Department's role will require significant internal change, with closer alignment of the strategic planning, policy making, accountability and resource allocation functions and a stronger focus on the information and evidence base needed to inform policy decisions.

These changes to DE will present challenges for the Department and its staff. I recognise the concerns of staff and trades unions about the transfer of functions and jobs out of the NICS to a new Education Authority. I am satisfied, however, that the weight of the argument is in favour of transferring a number of operational activities from DE. I have asked DE to carry out an immediate internal review to confirm those functions which will transfer and to put in place appropriate transition arrangements, in co-operation with staff and their relevant unions.

In reshaping the role of DE I am mindful that education, alone, will not be able to deliver the improvements needed and I will be putting in place effective arrangements to enable DE to work collaboratively and constructively with other Departments, agencies and institutions in the interests of children and young people.

Changing Education Support

Having considered carefully the diverse views expressed about the nature and purpose of the support arrangements I have decided that there will be a single Education Authority (EA) and not two bodies, as suggested in the consultation document. The Education Authority will have responsibility for the functions performed currently by the Education and Library Boards, the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Regional Training Unit (RTU). It will also have responsibility for the front-line support and related functions currently undertaken by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Comhairle na Gaelscolaiochta (CnaG). The Education Authority will become the employing authority for all teaching and other staff employed in grant-aided schools. With regard to the Staff Commission, the creation of the Education Authority will mean that some of its function will be absorbed into the Authority while others will no longer be required.

The responses to the consultation reflected a concern that the proposals had the potential to undermine the ethos and status of schools. I appreciate fully the strength of feeling on this matter. I want to assure everyone involved that the new arrangements do not weaken or undermine the role of governors. Nor do they alter the ethos of individual organisations or schools. For me, ethos is developed within the organisation and is influenced by the values of governors, staff, parents, pupils and the local community.

Under the new arrangements Boards of Governors will largely retain the role they currently play in relation to the selection, appraisal, promotion and dismissal of

teachers and other school-based staff. They will continue to make the key decisions regarding the appointment and management of staff. The role of the Education Authority will be to ensure that decisions are taken within a framework which is consistent across all schools and is driven by the need to raise standards, and which reflects best practice in people management within the terms of existing employment legislation.

The ownership of the controlled schools estate, currently with the Education and Library Boards, will transfer to the Education Authority. This decision will not confer advantages to schools in the controlled sector nor disadvantage any other grant-aided school. The legislation which I will be bringing forward will explicitly ensure that the Education Authority will provide funding, services, advice and support to all grant-aided organisations on an equitable basis, irrespective of ethos or ownership considerations. The Education Authority's relationships will be consistent and support governors and staff in their work. The Department will ensure that all necessary controls are in place to deal with potential conflicts of interest and to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all.

In reshaping the delivery of support, I am determined to ensure that the Education Authority achieves no less than the very highest standards of service provision. In monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Authority, its services will be benchmarked against best practice.

The Education Authority will be fully and directly accountable to the Department of Education, in particular for the delivery of effective and efficient services. The Authority will be governed by a Board, appointed in accordance with the principles set out by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

I am conscious of the need to ensure that the Education Authority is given sufficient flexibility to determine its own internal structures and working arrangements. However, there are three areas in particular which should be built into the organisational framework from the outset. These are:

The appointment of a Director of Children's Services to co-ordinate the Education Authority's responsibilities for children;

The close alignment of functions currently undertaken by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, the Curriculum Advisory Support Service, Classroom 2000 (c2k) and the Regional Training Unit within the Education Authority; and

An effective interface between the Education Authority and other owners of the schools' estate to ensure that school provision is strategically and effectively planned.

I am mindful of the uncertainty and genuine concerns of staff employed in the Education and Library Boards and the other bodies affected by these changes. It will be important that staff concerns are identified and addressed at the outset, and of course education staff are not alone in this regard. With this in mind my Ministerial colleagues and I have agreed to establish a Public Service Commission to advise on the principles and steps necessary to ensure the smooth transfer of staff to new organisations in a fair and consistent manner.

Changing Inspection, Monitoring, Research and Advice

The inspection and monitoring of all education and training establishments and services will be the direct responsibility of the Education and Training Inspectorate, which will be operationally independent of all service providers and users. The Inspectorate will evaluate the impact of these services for the key purposes of promoting improvement in learning and teaching and of informing policy discussions and decisions. Evidence from inspection will be used to assure Government and the public on the quality and standards of services.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will continue to provide inspection services for DE, the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). The Chief Inspector or nominee will be an integral member of Departmental Boards at which all strategic Departmental and policy issues are discussed. On all education policy initiatives, the Inspectorate will provide an independent professional assessment of the effectiveness of the existing or proposed new policy. The Inspectorate will plan and implement its programme of work operating through a Service Level Agreement agreed with each Permanent Secretary. The Minister or a Permanent Secretary may, from time to time, invite the Inspectorate to carry out special assignments, as appropriate. The Minister will meet with the Chief Inspector to receive regular reports across the range of professional educational issues.

A new statutory Education Advisory Forum will be established to act as a unified advisory interface between the Department and the education sector. Its membership will include representatives from the Transferors and Trustees, as well as the Integrated and Irish Medium sectors and Voluntary Grammar Schools. Members of the Advisory Forum will provide on-going advice to the Department. The Forum will also meet the Minister for Education on a regular basis.

The establishment of the Education Advisory Forum will provide new, more effective mechanisms through which the Department can commission and receive advice. The statutory advisory role of CCEA and CCMS will be repealed and there will also be fundamental changes to the relationship between the Department and other organisations providing advice. Consequently, DE will review existing arrangements to streamline and improve coordination. This will improve decision making and strengthen the local advisory role, as set out in the consultation report. The review will help to inform the constitution, roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Forum. It will give specific consideration to the most effective ways of providing a voice for parents and young people in influencing decision-making on education.

The review will consider the Department's wider engagement of education stakeholders within a social partnership model, with the aim of strengthening the channels of communication with the teachers' unions and other interests. This review will lead to more direct engagement with Boards of Governors, school principals and teachers to ensure that their views are considered.

Changing Youth Services

DE will continue to be responsible for youth service policy and strategy, but will link this increasingly to wider education priorities. In strengthening the relationship between youth provision and formal education, youth services administration will be placed within the Education Authority, as will the functions of the Youth Council. A Northern Ireland Network for Youth will be established to strengthen the direct voice of young people in all relevant aspects of government provision. The role of District Councils in youth service provision will be strengthened also through new District Youth Networks.

Changing Procurement

Earlier this year, the Department conducted a review of the arrangements for planning, procuring and delivering school building projects. The aim was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes involved. The review concluded that there was a strong case for a single education infrastructure procurement service which would bring together the specialist skills required in support of the education sector. It would be dedicated to delivering a fit for purpose estate, to ensure that the significant investment to be made transforms our schools estate, and that planning is undertaken within a wider strategic context.

The review identified that many of the specialist activities required are currently split between the Department and the education sector bodies. These activities are important to ensure that the estate is planned and delivered effectively and will need to relate closely to the work of the Department. The allocation of these specialist functions between the Department and the Education Authority will be confirmed in due course.

Supporting Education at local level

Bringing together, in a regional Education Authority, the functions of five Education and Library Boards with specific geographically defined responsibilities is likely to raise concerns about the loss of local sensitivity in service provision. However, by their very nature, schools and youth services are delivered at local level. The relationship with the local community is strengthened in many ways including local involvement through Boards of Governors, volunteering, shared facilities and joint initiatives. The growth of the extended school model will continue to enhance the role of schools as learning communities within their localities.

I am committed to reinforcing the links between education and the local community under the new arrangements. This will be achieved by:

Ensuring that the organisation structures and activities of the Education Authority support a strong local presence and promote engagement at community level, drawing lessons from best practice across the public sector;

Active participation of the education sector in community planning; and

Education working jointly with others to maximise the opportunities for providing shared services at local level.

Relationship with other Government Departments

The transformation of administration which the RPA will bring forward will take place in the context of increasing recognition of the inter-dependence of public service provision.

The appointment of a Director of Children's Services is a clear recognition of this. There are other key interfaces which Departments must take into account in planning service delivery under the new arrangements. These include:

DE and DEL working closely together to agree the responsibilities of the Education Authority in relation to the 14-19 agenda and teacher education. I intend to see how there will be better integration of skills and education between the functions which are overseen by DE and DEL. A key aspect of this is how best we deliver the 14-19 curriculum but I believe that there are wider areas which may be worth examining. We will reflect further on this.

DE and DCAL agreeing the relationship between the new Regional Library Authority and the Education Authority. This will include consideration of the links between school and public library provision and wider opportunities for shared service provision.

Moving Forward

The new structures represent a fresh start for the administration and delivery of education services. They are not simply a reorganisation of current bodies, but rather a new and fundamentally different approach.

Within this model, the Department of Education will establish the strategic direction for education, setting policy, priorities and standards for schools and youth services, and ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of services by the new Education Authority. The Department will set clear standards for the delivery of support and this will be the basis of its commissioning and funding through the new Education Authority. Across the entire education and youth service there will be clear links between the funding provided by the Department and the anticipated outcomes.

The Department's decision-making will be informed by:

The Department's own research, evaluation and monitoring processes;

Independent advice and inspection evidence provided by the Education and Training Inspectorate;

Advice from the Education Authority, particularly in relation to curriculum and professional development; and

Advice from the new Education Advisory Forum.

Giving effect to these changes means that virtually all existing education legislation will need to be amended or repealed.

The legislation will ensure that Boards of Governors continue to exercise a large measure of autonomy in the day to day management of their schools. I fully recognise and support the distinctiveness and ethos that Boards of Governors and staff help foster within schools. I pay tribute to the role of School Governors and will protect their influence in these new arrangements.

To assist with the change process and to ensure an effective transition, the Department of Education will:

Undertake bilateral discussions with those most affected to consider the impact of changes; and

Establish a programme board, chaired by the Department, to co-ordinate implementation of the RPA in co-operation with central RPA implementation arrangements.

The role of the programme board will include:

Establishing project teams to take forward the work streams arising from RPA implementation. The individual project teams will draw on the expertise of staff within existing organisations to ensure that their knowledge and experience is used effectively;

- Defining and managing arrangements to ensure the smooth transition to the new structures; and
- Developing and managing an RPA communications strategy.

The programme board will report to the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education and will be supported by an RPA advisory group, comprising representatives from across the education sector.

Transition

The legislative changes will determine the timeframe for putting in place shadow arrangements for the new body. However, I expect that all those involved in education administration will now move quickly to adopt joint working arrangements in preparation for the changes that will result from the RPA implementation.

Conclusion

Today's announcement signals a new beginning in how we, in education, conduct our business. We are already in the process of transforming education to meet the needs of young people in a rapidly changing world. It is entirely appropriate that the administration of education should be modernised to ensure that it can provide effective support and improve the delivery of front-line education services. The new arrangements will be more streamlined and corporate than at present and will bring greater coherence and consistency in practice.

To do less than the programme of change I have outlined today would be to do a disservice to future generations of young people and their families. Together we can make a real difference, and I urge everyone involved to work collaboratively with DE to ensure a better education service for all.

Public Administration (Future Health and Social Care Structures)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): I am today announcing my plans for future health and social care structures in Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's announcement on the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland sets out the background to the Review, reflects on the consultation process and sets out the key changes for public administration in Northern Ireland.

The current organisation of health and social services in Northern Ireland is too cumbersome, too bureaucratic and hugely inefficient. It produces inequalities and unacceptable delays for treatment.

I have already begun a rapid programme of reform and modernisation. By March 2006 people will wait no more than 12 months for in-patient and day case operations and from March 2006 the targets for replacement hips and knees will be no more than nine months, for cardiac surgery no more than six months and for cataracts no more than six months. I am also driving a £2.2 billion investment programme across the health and social services with developments at all major hospital sites and across the primary and community sector.

The next step is to put in place structures, which are patient-led, patient-centred and patient responsive and which will free resources for investment in front line health and social services.

I will replace the four Health and Social Services Boards and create a new statutory Strategic Health and Social Services Authority which will be responsible for performance managing the health and social services, ensuring that services are accessible, responsive, high quality and efficient.

Some of the functions currently exercised by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety will transfer to the new Authority. The Department's primary function will be to set policy and targets and it will be a significantly smaller, more tightly focused body.

Seven primary care-led Local Commissioning Groups will be established, patterned on the proposed areas of the seven new District Councils. Acting as local offices of the Strategic Health and Social Services Authority, the Local Commissioning Groups will work in conjunction with local primary care practitioners and the Authority to commission services from Trusts. These commissioning arrangements will be developed in consultation with primary care professionals and could evolve to primary care-led commissioning arrangements along the lines of proposals currently under development in England.

Five new integrated Health and Social Services Trusts will replace 18 of the 19 existing Trusts bringing the total number of Trusts to six, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, which will continue to provide a regional ambulance service. As a result of having a greater critical mass these Trusts will create and develop new linkages between hospital and community-based services.

I will replace the four Health and Social Care Councils with a powerful single Patient and Client Council which will engage with people and communities to promote health and wellbeing, and ensure that services are responsive and patient-centred and that decisions reflect public priorities.

I also intend to incorporate the Health Promotion Agency into the new Strategic Health and Social Services Authority and the Regional Medical Physics Agency into one of the new Trusts, thus reducing the number of regional service delivery bodies to three. The remaining regional service delivery bodies will be the Central Services Agency, the Guardian Ad Litem Agency and the Blood Transfusion Agency.

I am content for now that there is a case for retaining in their present form the remaining smaller NDPBs which did not fall within the remit of the Review of Public Administration but I expect them to work closely with other health and social services organisations to reduce their management costs.

I will sympathetically consider the case for locating the new Strategic Health and Social Services Authority and the new Patient and Client Council outside the Belfast area.

These new structures will be put in place as quickly as possible. With immediate effect groups will be identified to lead the development of the new Trusts which will require subordinate legislation and which will become

fully operational by 1 April 2007. Over the coming months we will develop our model of a Strategic Health and Social Services Authority, which will require primary legislation, and the new primary care commissioning arrangements. This will be done in consultation with health officials, doctors, pharmacists, social workers, dentists, nurses and other health and social services professionals with a view to having these formally in place by 1 April 2008.

We will also explore ways in which we can devolve commissioning power to local primary care-led groups in advance of the Strategic Health and Social Services Authority and the Local Commissioning Groups being established.

The speed of this reorganisation will understandably give rise to concerns among people working in health and social care services and indeed in my Department. I am however committed to ensuring that every reasonable effort is made to avoid compulsory redundancies while at the a same time taking into account the legal rights of staff in the context of fundamental change to terms and conditions of employment and work location.

I am satisfied that implementation of these proposals will ensure that the health and social services in Northern Ireland become genuinely patient centred and more accessible. They will also be more effective and efficient with a greater proportion of expenditure devoted to front line service delivery and development.

Waterways Ireland

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): Waterways Ireland is a cross border implementation body established by agreement between the British and Irish Governments dated 8 March 1999. The body has responsibility for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterways of Ireland, principally for recreational purposes.

The Sponsor Departments for the body are the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRGA) in the Republic of Ireland.

As DCAL Minister I have discussed accountability arrangements for the body with the DCRGA Minister and the Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland. We have agreed the Business Plan for 2006 and we have also agreed that the Chief Executive will report to Ministers on the outcome of performance targets for 2005, these include:

(i) To ensure the continued delivery of the highest standard of corporate governance in Waterways Ireland and to ensure that the Internal Audit process is carried out in a proper manner and that the recommendations of these audits are implemented in a timely manner.

(ii) To ensure the completion of an independent review of the practices and policies relating to bullying in Waterways Ireland.

(iii) To deliver a written policy on recruitment and promotions in Waterways Ireland.

(iv) To progress the procurement of suitable new accommodation for staff.

(v) To implement the Marketing Strategy of Waterways Ireland.

The Chief Executive also has specific responsibility for meeting the plans, objectives and targets set out in the current year's Business Plan.

Together with officials in our Departments I will continue to work with the DCRGA Minister and the Waterways Ireland Chief Executive to ensure the body is fully accountable for meeting the terms of its Performance Agreement 2005.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 23 November 2005

TREASURY

ECOFIN

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): I will chair the Economic and Financial Affairs Budget Council (Budget ECOFIN) on 24 November 2005. The Permanent Representative to the European Union, Sir John Grant, will represent the UK. The meeting will include conciliation with the European Parliament, during which the Council and the European Parliament will aim to agree on expenditure levels. Items on the agenda are as follows:

Approval of the list of "A" points.

Presentation of the Annual Report for 2004 by the European Court of Auditors: President Hubert Webber will present the EC accounts for 2004.

Preparation for conciliation with the European Parliament: ECOFIN will consider its approach for reaching an agreement with the European Parliament on the 2006 Annual EC Budget.

Preliminary Draft Amending Budget No. 8 for 2005: ECOFIN will seek to reach an agreement on Amending Budget No. 8. This takes into account the Commission's Amending Letter of 16 November, which makes a net reduction to the Commission's Agriculture and Structural Funds estimates of €1.3 billion for 2005.

Amending Letters No. 1 and 2 to the Preliminary Draft Budget for 2006: ECOFIN will seek to reach agreement on the Amending Letters to the 2006 Budget. Amending Letter No. 1 includes €40 million commitments and €21.2 payments under Heading 4 of the Budget (External Actions), in order to finance assistance to ACP countries affected by the sugar reform. Amending Letter No. 2 decreases commitments and payments under heading 1A of the Budget (Agricultural Expenditure) by €361 million, due to revisions to the Commission's expenditure forecasts.

Draft Budget for 2006: ECOFIN will seek to reach agreement on Council's second reading of the 2006 Annual Budget, having considered the amendments proposed to the Draft Budget by the European Parliament.

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council on the mobilisation of the Flexibility Instrument: ECOFIN will seek to reach an agreement in Council on a proposal to exceed the Financial Perspective ceilings.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Legal Profession

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): I have today published a report aimed at increasing diversity in the legal profession. This report responds to the advice provided to the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor by the Legal Services Consultative Panel.

While the Government recognise that significant improvements have been made in recent years, we consider that more action is necessary to ensure equality of opportunity for those entering or already in the profession.

The Panel made 17 recommendations on how to address the difficulties faced by those entering into, or progressing within, the legal professions. The Government broadly accept these recommendations. The report sets out how we will take this forward.

As a first step, I have written to a number of firms and chambers today asking them to publish the diversity information that they already collect on those working within their organisations. This will ensure openness and transparency. This should in turn lead to greater public confidence in the legal professions as a whole.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Independent Police Complaints Commission

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): I am pleased to announce that the Annual Report of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is being laid before Parliament on 23 November 2005 and published on that day.

This is the first Annual Report from the IPCC. The report deals with the work completed in 2004–05 and, in particular, how the IPCC has engaged with diverse communities and stakeholders and it gives an insight into some of the high profile investigations in which the IPCC has been involved.

The report also looks forward to the extension of the IPCC jurisdiction next year when it will deal with serious complaints against HM Revenue and Customs and complaints and conduct matters involving the new Serious Organised Crime Agency. It intends to meet these and other challenges by increasing its investigative capacity and enhancing its guardianship role.

Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): I have approved a package of financial support for the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners (the Council).

The Home Office recognises the importance of quality in forensic science and has therefore supported the Council since its creation. The Council has now been in operation for five years and it was therefore agreed that a business review should be undertaken. This review, led by the Council supported by KPMG and officials from the Home Office, produced robust business plans for the next five years.

On the basis of those plans proposals were submitted as to the level of financial support required by the Council. I have accepted those proposals and agreed (subject to review and performance) a programme of funding as follows.

Year	*Allocation*
2005-06	£430,000
2006-07	£441,000
2007-08	£403,000
2008-09	£158,000
2009-10	£130,000

I have placed in the Library a paper which provides more detail about the Council and the funding agreed.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Billy Wright Inquiry

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): The Chairman of the Billy Wright Inquiry, Lord MacLean, wrote to me on 13 July formally to request that I convert the statutory basis of the Billy Wright Inquiry to the Inquiries Act 2005, under section 15 of that Act.

I received representations from a number of parties in relation to Lord MacLean's request. I was not formally obliged by the Inquiries Act to consider these but in this case I felt that it would be right to do so and to give the Inquiry Chairman the chance to consider them, if he wished, before responding to his request. It has taken time for me to do this, which is why I have only recently been able to arrive at a decision in relation to Lord MacLean's request.

I have very carefully considered the representations made by Lord MacLean and by other parties in relation to the request, and have sought to take all the relevant factors into account. My concern throughout has been to ensure that the Billy Wright Inquiry should be able to carry out its work both as fully and as effectively as possible. In light of this, and taking into account both Lord MacLean's case for conversion and the representations which have been made against it, I have decided to grant the request of the Billy Wright Inquiry to be converted to the Inquiries Act 2005.

Through this statement I am formally giving notice under section 15 of the Inquiries Act to Lord MacLean and the panel members that the Billy Wright Inquiry will become an inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005. The date of conversion will be the date of this statement, 23 November 2005, and from this date the Billy Wright Inquiry will be held under the Inquiries Act 2005. Lord MacLean will remain the Chair of this Inquiry and there will be no change to its terms of reference as announced on 16 November 2004.

It remains the strong wish of both the Government and the Billy Wright Inquiry that the full facts in relation to the death of Billy Wright should be established. I would seek to reassure those who made representations in opposition to conversion that I am confident that the utmost will be done to address their concerns and to maintain public confidence in the Inquiry, both by the Inquiry itself and by the British Government. I have personally assured Mr David Wright, Billy Wright's father, that the Government will continue to co-operate fully with the Inquiry.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

EU Competitiveness Council

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science and Innovation will Chair the Competitiveness Council for the research items and the Space Council on 28 November. I will be chairing for industry and internal market items on 29 November 2005.

The first item on 28 November will be the seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development. A UK Presidency compromise text has been put to the Council with a view to obtaining agreement from Ministers on a partial general approach. The text covers the whole of the Framework Programme minus the articles relating to the budget, which form part of separate negotiations on Future Financing.

Next, the Council aims to agree Conclusions welcoming the recent Commission Communication "More Research and Innovation—Investing for Growth and Employment. A Common Approach". I do not expect any substantive debate on this item.

The Space Council will be convened in the afternoon. This will be the third meeting of the Space Council—a joint meeting of the Competitiveness Council and the European Space Agency (ESA) Ministerial Council. Lord Sainsbury will jointly chair this meeting with the current Chair of the ESA Ministerial Council (Germany). Following presentations on European Space activities, including national space programmes, from the Commission and the Joint Secretariat, there will be an exchange of views on International Co-operation based on a UK Presidency discussion paper. The Space Council will then seek to agree a set of Orientations on the Commission's recent Communication on GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security).

On 29 November, I will open the Council with a report of the discussion at dinner the previous evening on Industrial Policy (based on a short Presidency paper). This follows publication last month of the Commission's latest Communication on Industrial Policy.

We then hope to agree Council Conclusions on Better Regulation. These will welcome recent Commission initiatives on simplification of existing legislation, the withdrawal of pending proposals, and impact assessment, highlight better regulation activities in Council formations and consider next steps.

The proposed Chemicals Regulation REACH is the next item on the agenda. The UK Presidency's revised compromise text will provide the basis for a substantive debate. While we are still hopeful of political agreement during the UK Presidency, any actual vote will be delayed until a subsequent Council in response to a German request for more time to consider the proposal, given the delay in forming the new German Government.

I will present a Presidency progress report on the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP). This includes a set of principles to underpin next year's

negotiations on management structure and evaluation, which Ministers will be asked to endorse. There is unlikely to be a lengthy discussion.

At lunch, Ministers will discuss a Presidency progress report on the Services Directive. This will cover the three main political issues: scope; the interaction between the proposal and worker protection rules; and the balance between promoting free movement of services and safeguarding Member States' public policy objectives. After lunch, in the main Council meeting, we will have a further exchange of views to draw some conclusions on the way forward.

Next, we hope to agree Council conclusions on EU Contract and Consumer Law noting progress on work in these areas. I will then present a progress report on Council considerations to date on the Commission's proposal for a Health and Consumer Protection Strategy.

Finally, two items will be presented under Any Other Business. I do not expect any debate on these items:

Progress report on the re-launched Lisbon Strategy (Lisbon National Reform Programmes) (at the request of Italy);

Development of tourism in Europe after Enlargement (at the request of Lithuania).

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 24 November 2005

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Culture and Audiovisual Council

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): On 14 November I chaired the Education, Youth and Culture Council in Brussels, when the Culture and Audiovisual agenda items were taken. Patricia Ferguson MSP, Scottish Executive Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, represented the UK. Education and Youth issues were taken on 15 November.

I chaired a discussion over lunch regarding plans for the switchover to digital television. The aim of the discussion was to share experiences and exchange good practice. All Member States agreed that it was a big challenge, but one that is achievable. Many stressed the added value of digital television especially for minority groups and strengthening cultural diversity. Many felt that state aid may have a role to play in ensuring that minority groups were not left behind. It was noted that different Member States were using different technologies, partly reflecting their different backgrounds. Commissioner Reding (Information Society and Media) noted the close interest of Telecoms Ministers and suggested a joint meeting might be useful in the future.

The Council agreed partial political agreements on the MEDIA 2007 programme, which provides financial support for the European film industry, and the Culture 2007 programme, which will provide financial support for transnational co-operation projects in the field of culture. The budgetary aspects of these programmes will be decided once the financial perspectives have been agreed.

With regard to the Culture 2007 programme, a compromise was reached on the wording relating to the eligibility of non-audiovisual cultural industries, which made clear that EU funding could not be used to support profit-making activities. On comitology, Member States unanimously agreed that all projects applying for an EU contribution of over €200,000 (£135,000) should be submitted to the management procedure. The minimum number of operators participating in projects was also agreed.

The Council agreed to a general approach on the proposal to improve the selection and monitoring procedures and the EU dimension of the European Capital of Culture Programme. In addition, the Council designated Linz and Vilnius as Capitals of Culture for 2009 and nominated the Council's two representatives (Mr Claude Frisoni and Sir Jeremy Isaacs) for the selection panel looking at the proposed Capitals for 2010.

I also chaired an exchange of views regarding the Commission's proposals to develop European digital libraries. All Member States spoke in support of further work on European digital libraries and the great majority supported the Commission's proposed approach of developing a network of digital libraries, rather than supporting a single, central library. Some felt that the latter option would be too costly and instead preferred to build on ongoing work. Co-operation with other Member States would avoid duplication and allow common standards to be developed so that digitised material could be shared more easily. A number of Ministers asked the Commission to do more work on possible costs involved and noted that decisions needed to be taken on what would be funded by the Member States and what would be funded by the EU.

It was noted that there were a number of key issues, such as ensuring that intellectual property rights were respected and making sure the initiative promoted all European languages, including minority languages.

Commissioner Figel (Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism) welcomed the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity in October and noted that the Commission would soon bring forward a proposal for Community ratification. He also presented the Commission proposal for a European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008.

DEFENCE

Gulf Veterans

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): On 31 October, a Pensions Appeal Tribunal announced its decision in the case of Mr Daniel Martin. The Government welcome the acceptance by the Pensions Appeal Tribunal of the umbrella term Gulf War Syndrome to cover conditions causally linked to the 1990–91 Gulf War. The Government hope that the use of the umbrella term will address the known concern of some Gulf veterans that we have not recognised a link between their ill-health and the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict. We hope that this will help to provide an element of closure for those who have sought some acknowledgement that their ill-health is connected to their Gulf service.

The Government also welcome the decision by the Pensions Appeal Tribunal which found that there was no reliable evidence to show that Gulf War Syndrome is a discrete medical condition. This confirms the view which the Ministry of Defence has consistently taken and which is based on the overwhelming consensus of worldwide medical and scientific opinion.

The level of awards will not be affected by the use of the umbrella term as it has always been the policy of the Ministry of Defence to award in full where evidence of disablement is shown and where that disablement is due to, or aggravated by, service.

The issues surrounding the ill-health reported by veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict remain a priority for the Government. We have acknowledged that some veterans of the Gulf Conflict have become ill and that this ill-health may be related to their Gulf service. Since taking office in 1997, the Government have made it a priority to assist veterans or their dependants by

providing medical help, initiating scientific research, making information available and providing financial assistance. We will continue this approach, as appropriate, for the future.

Future Infantry Structure

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): On 16 December 2004 my predecessor announced to the House, *Official Report*, columns 1795–1800 (part no.6) volume 428, plans to re-balance the army and reduce the infantry from 40 to 36 battalions, with associated changes to the titles of the infantry battalions and regiments.

Since the announcement, significant further planning and consultation has been undertaken. This has seen detailed and extensive work, which has included a period of local consultation led by the regiments and divisions. As a result, and with the full approval of Her Majesty The Queen, I am happy to announce the new titles of the Regular and TA infantry regiments and battalions as follows:

Current Regimental/ Battalion Title	*New Regimental/ Battalion Titles*	*Abbreviation*
	The Guards Division	
1st Battalion Grenadier Guards	1st Battalion Grenadier Guards	1 GREN GDS
1st Battalion Coldstream Guards	1st Battalion Coldstream Guards	1 COLDM GDS
1st Battalion Scots Guards	1st Battalion Scots Guards	1SG
1st Battalion Irish Guards	1st Battalion Irish Guards	1 IG
1st Battalion Welsh Guards	1st Battalion Welsh Guards	1 WG
	The Scottish Division	
The Royal Regiment of Scotland		
Formation Arrangements: Regimental formation by the end of March 2006, with The Royal Scots and The King's Own Scottish Borderers Battalions of The Royal Regiment of Scotland, amalgamating on 1 August 2006.		
Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)	*Amalgamates to become* The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	1 SCOTS
1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment)	The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	2 SCOTS
1st Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers	*Amalgamates to become* The Royal Scots Borderers, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland *as above*	1 SCOTS *(as above)*
1st Battalion The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)	The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	3 SCOTS
1st Battalion The Highlanders (Seaforth, Gordons and Camerons)	The Highlanders, 4th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	4 SCOTS
1st Battalion The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's)	The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	5 SCOTS
Territorial Army Battalions		
52nd Lowland Regiment	52nd Lowland,	6 SCOTS
	The Scottish Division	
51st Highland Regiment	6th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland	7 SCOTS
	The Queen's Division	
The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)		
Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	1 PWRR
2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	2 PWRR
	Territorial Army Battalion	
3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	3rd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)	3 PWRR
The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers		
	Regular Battalions	
1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1 RRF
2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	2 RRF
	Territorial Army Battalion	
The Tyne Tees Regiment[1]	5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	5 RRF
The Royal Anglian Regiment		
Regular Army Battalions		
1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	1 R ANGLIAN
2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	2 R ANGLIAN
Territorial Army Battalion		
The East of England Regiment[2]	3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	3 R ANGLIAN
	The King's Division	
The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border)		
Formation Arrangements: Regimental formation 1 July 2006.		
Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion The King's Own Royal Border Regiment	1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border)	1 LANCS
1st Battalion The King's Regiment	2nd Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border)	2 LANCS
1st Battalion The Queen's Lancashire Regiment		

The King's Division

Territorial Army Battalion		
The Lancastrian and Cumbrian Volunteers	4th Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (King's, Lancashire and Border)	4 LANCS[1]

The Yorkshire Regiment (14th / 15th, 19th and 33rd / 76th Foot)
Formation Arrangements: Regimental formation 6 June 2006.

Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion Prince Of Wales's Own Regiment Of Yorkshire	1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Prince Of Wales's Own)	1 YORKS
1st Battalion The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment)	2nd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards)	2 YORKS
1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding)	3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Duke of Wellington's)	3 YORKS
Territorial Army Battalion		
The East and West Riding Regiment	4th Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment	4 YORKS

The Prince of Wales's Division

The Mercian Regiment
Formation Arrangements: The Mercian Regiment will form on 24 August 2007.

Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion The Cheshire Regiment	1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Cheshire)	1 MERCIAN
1st Battalion The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment (26th/45th Foot)	2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters)	2 MERCIAN
1st Battalion The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's)	3rd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Staffords)	3 MERCIAN
Territorial Army Battalion		
The West Midlands Regiment	4th Battalion The Mercian Regiment	4 MERCIAN

The Royal Welsh
Formation Arrangements: Regimental formation 1 March 2006.

1st Battalion The Royal Welch Fusiliers	1st Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Welch Fusiliers)	1 R WELSH
1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales (24th/41st Foot)	2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Regiment of Wales)	2 R WELSH
Territorial Army Battalion		
The Royal Welsh Regiment	3rd Battalion The Royal Welsh	3 R WELSH

The Light Division

The Rifles
Formation Arrangements: Formed in 2007.

Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion The Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry *and* 1st Battalion The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry	1st Battalion The Rifles	1 RIFLES
1st Battalion The Royal Green Jackets	2nd Battalion The Rifles	2 RIFLES
2nd Battalion The Light Infantry	3rd Battalion The Rifles	3 RIFLES
2nd Battalion The Royal Green Jackets	4th Battalion The Rifles	4 RIFLES
1st Battalion The Light Infantry	5th Battalion The Rifles	5 RIFLES
Territorial Army Battalions		
The Rifle Volunteers	6th Battalion The Rifles	6 RIFLES
The Royal Rifle Volunteers	7th Battalion The Rifles[4]	7 RIFLES

The Royal Irish Regiment (27th (Inniskilling), 83rd, 87th and Ulster Defence Regiment)[5]

Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment	1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment	1 R IRISH
Territorial Army Battalion		
The Royal Irish Rangers	The Royal Irish Rangers	RANGERS

The Parachute Regiment

Regular Battalions		
1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment[6]	1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment	1 PARA
2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment	2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment	2 PARA
3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment	3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment	3 PARA
Territorial Army Battalion		
4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment	4th Battalion The Parachute Regiment	4 PARA

The Brigade of Gurkhas

1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles	1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles	1 RGR
2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles	2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles	2 RGR

The London Regiment

Territorial Army Battalion		
The London Regiment[7]	The London Regiment	LONDONS

[1] Currently within the King's Division and not part of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.
[2] Currently not part of the Royal Anglian Regiment.
[3] On formation in Jul 06 the new regiment will have 3 regular Bns with the TA Bn known as 4 LANCS. The 3 regular battalions will merge to form 1 LANCS and 2 LANCS in Mar 07. This is a change to the title announced in Dec 04; this is at the Regiments own request.
[4] Formed from Bn HQ and 2 x Coys of RRV with 2 x Coys of 1 ONDONS.
[5] Not included are the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment who have not been subject to FAS.
[6] As announced on 16 December 2004, 1 PARA will be the core of the new Tri-Service Special Forces Support Group, and will be removed from the infantry structure.
[7] Currently within the Queen's Division.

The Chief of the General Staff (General Sir Mike Jackson) has written to the Infantry Colonels Commandant informing them of these changes.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Social Exclusion Unit Report

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): Today the Social Exclusion Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is publishing a major report entitled "Transitions: Young Adults with Complex Needs".

The report proposes:

a renewed focus on the 16- to 25-year-old age group, building on the

Government's successful programmes for disadvantaged children and families;

a focus on the invisible early twenties, the age at which youth policies have tended to end;

the need for all young adults to have a trusted adult in their lives to help negotiate their way around different agencies; and,

smoother—and therefore better—transitions between services by joining up vertically to promote continuity of service from adolescence to adulthood.

The report highlights three key themes:

Thinking and Behaviour.

For young adults, issues around thinking and behaviour are particularly critical because decisions made during the transition to adulthood—particularly in areas like education and employment—are some of the most important and far-reaching decisions taken at any time of life.

Age-bound services.

The importance of the issue of age boundaries was reinforced during this project by practitioners and young people alike. Two issues dominated the discussion of this area: the often abrupt ending of services once a young person reaches a certain age, and the sometimes poor transition between youth and adult services.

Holistic services and the 'trusted adult'.

Young adults with multiple problems may lack the skills and resilience needed to make the transition to adulthood. Support, advice and guidance are crucial in order for young adults to make a successful transition. For many young adults this will come from their parents, relatives, guardians, or teachers—but not all young adults have these sources of support. For them, this supporting role may be filled by a personal advisor or mentor—or someone else acting in the role of 'trusted adult'.

The report contains 27 action points to be taken forward by Government Departments. The Implementation Team in the Social Exclusion Unit will monitor the progress made by the Departments on individual action points and will work to ensure that the overarching goals contained within the report are pursued across Government.

Baroness Andrews, Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will chair an ad-hoc group of Ministers from key Departments to oversee progress towards the action points contained in the report.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Further copies can be downloaded from http://www.socialexclusion.gov.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=785

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Database

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): On 6 April I announced the database of parliamentarians' foreign affairs interests that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had created.

Since then, the FCO has been working on a new Parliamentary Question (PQ) management system so that it can be compatible with the next generation of the FCO's desktop IT system which will be introduced next year. The new PQ management system will allow officials throughout the Department to see the FCO questions that hon. Members have asked. In order to concentrate parliamentary information in one place, this new system will also replace the database of parliamentary interests, and in addition to records of Parliamentary Questions hon. Members have asked, it will include records of their participation in foreign affairs debates.

HEALTH

12th Wave Work Programme (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): Today I am announcing referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) of topics for its 12th Wave work programme.

I am referring to NICE clinical guidelines in the following areas:

Low Back Pain;

Stroke;

Glaucoma;

Irritable bowel syndrome;

Investigation of children with suspected abuse;

Chronic Kidney Disease;

Spinal Cord Compression;

Borderline Personality Disorder; and

Antisocial (Dissocial) Personality Disorder.

I am also asking NICE to consult on the remit and scope for technology appraisals of the following:

Autologous tumour vaccine for stage i-iii renal cell carcinoma;

Idaraparinux sodium for the prevention of stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation and for the prevention of recurrent venous thromboembolism;

Neuro-imaging in the first onset atypical psychosis;

Cochlear Implants;

Recombinant factor Vila for traumatic bleeding;

Rimonabant for smoking cessation, weight loss and reduction of cardiovascular risk factors of overweight obesity;

Certolizumab pegol and natalizumab for the treatment of moderate to severe Crohn's disease;

Varenicline for smoking cessation;

Alteplase for acute ischaemic stroke;

Rituximab and abatacept for the treatment of refractory rheumatoid arthrits Adalimumab and leflunomide for the treatment of moderate to severe psoriatic arthritis;

Ruboxistaurin (LY333531) for diabetic eye disease;

Tegaserod maleate and cilansetron for Irritable Bowel Syndrome;

Continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) for Sleep Apnoea; and

Muraglitazar and tesaglitazar for type II diabetes and associated lipid abnormalities.

Early referral of Herceptin (Trastuzumab) for early stage breast cancer and Velcade (Bortezomib) for multiple myeloma was made on 21 July.

NICE will begin consultation with organisations representing patients, healthcare professionals and the healthcare industries on the remit and scope of these technology appraisals. I will consider the comments arising from the consultation when finalising the precise remit of the appraisal topics.

I will shortly be considering proposals for public health topics which will be included in this programme of work.

Further information including details of the remits of the topics may be found on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk.

NICE will be publishing indicative timescales for its work on these topics in due course.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's Annual Report 2004–05

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): The 2004–05 annual report of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority was laid before the House today. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Use of Firearms (England and Wales)

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): The statistics for 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 show that the number of police operations in which firearms were authorised was 15,981.

The Police discharged a conventional firearm 18 times covering five incidents. In addition, the Police discharged baton rounds in 23 incidents and fired Taser in 35 incidents.

Armed response vehicles were deployed on 13,137 occasions and there were 6,243 authorised firearms officers in England and Wales.

Full details are set out in the tables below:

NUMBER OF OPERATIONS IN WHICH FIREARMS WERE AUTHORISED

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
TOTAL	13,991	14,827	16,657	15,981
AVON & SOMERSET	195	262	311	333
BEDFORDSHIRE	237	301	442	475
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	114	57	104	241
CHESHIRE	419	451	397	358
CLEVELAND	37	170	453	530
CITY OF LONDON	40	131	364	404
CUMBRIA	71	77	72	152
DERBYSHIRE	275	401	369	287
DEVON & CORNWALL	101	96	112	71
DORSET	184	193	231	223
DURHAM	89	83	156	144
ESSEX	323	312	275	296
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	165	185	127	176
GTR MANCHESTER	580	518	507	461
HAMPSHIRE	198	162	208	237
HERTFORDSHIRE	112	172	195	185
HUMBERSIDE	297	187	183	206
KENT	115	137	207	163
LANCASHIRE	232	238	318	241
LEICESTERSHIRE	300	268	295	260
LINCOLNSHIRE	477	392	386	294
MERSEYSIDE	1,020	628	751	733
METROPOLITAN	2,447	3,199	3,563	2,964
NORFOLK	175	200	178	195
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	43	138	148	158
NORTHUMBRIA	1,440	1,275	1,140	977
NORTH YORKSHIRE	92	100	147	185
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	384	452	459	408
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	258	463	484	546
STAFFORDSHIRE	232	281	255	216
SUFFOLK	163	270	251	153
SURREY	245	247	203	151
SUSSEX	248	204	280	187
THAMES VALLEY	179	167	195	289
WARWICKSHIRE	130	149	164	124
WEST MERCIA	117	91	197	162
WEST MIDLANDS	822	902	1377	1264
WEST YORKSHIRE	757	604	575	853
WILTSHIRE	45	58	63	88
DYFED POWYS	28	29	28	51
GWENT	20	37	40	81
NORTH WALES	302	259	197	223
SOUTH WALES	283	281	250	236

NUMBER OF AUTHORISED FIREARMS OFFICERS (AFOs)

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
TOTAL	5,776	5,763	6,096	6,243
AVON & SOMERSET	116	84	122	118
BEDFORDSHIRE	48	53	58	56
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	56	71	60	60
CHESHIRE	81	89	75	76
CLEVELAND	85	80	95	100
CITY OF LONDON	73	72	86	89
CUMBRIA	92	87	89	90
DERBYSHIRE	80	69	70	74
DEVON & CORNWALL	108	115	132	123
DORSET	57	59	60	64
DURHAM	86	102	97	103
ESSEX	180	184	186	202
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	71	80	82	93
GTR MANCHESTER	219	202	205	187
HAMPSHIRE	87	94	94	92

NUMBER OF AUTHORISED FIREARMS OFFICERS (AFOs)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
HERTFORDSHIRE	46	47	50	53
HUMBERSIDE	96	96	96	101
KENT	113	93	90	94
LANCASHIRE	138	129	122	115
LEICESTERSHIRE	69	68	51	53
LINCOLNSHIRE	91	87	78	86
MERSEYSIDE	78	84	94	93
METROPOLITAN	1,805	1,823	2,060	2,134
NORFOLK	104	109	114	125
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	51	56	52	50
NORTHUMBRIA	125	99	90	93
NORTH YORKSHIRE	66	64	60	56
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	136	131	138	138
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	92	100	98	122
STAFFORDSHIRE	71	63	67	76
SUFFOLK	90	80	96	88
SURREY	62	48	53	49
SUSSEX	120	141	134	130
THAMES VALLEY	186	180	172	176
WARWICKSHIRE	50	51	46	53
WEST MERCIA	125	131	139	141
WEST MIDLANDS	111	110	124	134
WEST YORKSHIRE	116	132	140	130
WILTSHIRE	71	78	80	74
DYFED POWYS	77	62	58	79
GWENT	57	60	71	74
NORTH WALES	83	75	73	65
SOUTH WALES	138	125	139	134

NUMBER OF OPERATIONS INVOLVING ARMED RESPONSE VEHICLES (ARVs)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
TOTAL	11,574	11,848	13,218	13,137
AVON & SOMERSET	173	215	249	312
BEDFORDSHIRE	172	269	414	419
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	43	45	155	172
CHESHIRE	523	337	356	773
CLEVELAND	13	63	86	154
CITY OF LONDON	39	131	364	275
CUMBRIA	53	45	65	134
DERBYSHIRE	253	363	312	254
DEVON & CORNWALL	76	32	94	54
DORSET	182	180	215	195
DURHAM	57	66	96	91
ESSEX	165	176	138	138
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	140	166	109	121
GTR MANCHESTER	528	406	440	364
HAMPSHIRE	116	108	128	167
HERTFORDSHIRE	81	129	157	155
HUMBERSIDE	273	170	158	184
KENT	89	132	193	124
LANCASHIRE	192	185	273	228
LEICESTERSHIRE	292	232	269	232
LINCOLNSHIRE	470	367	355	276
MERSEYSIDE	974	547	687	677
METROPOLITAN	1,667	2,447	2,423	2,322
NORFOLK	157	186	169	163
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	25	90	99	89
NORTHUMBRIA	1,349	1,204	1,063	893
NORTH YORKSHIRE	60	67	110	144
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	333	397	404	336
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	221	280	322	438
STAFFORDSHIRE	208	241	212	183
SUFFOLK	116	160	194	119
SURREY	225	240	190	140

NUMBER OF OPERATIONS INVOLVING ARMED RESPONSE VEHICLES (ARVs)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
SUSSEX	189	171	250	163
THAMES VALLEY	174	167	179	265
WARWICKSHIRE	104	31	138	102
WEST MERCIA	100	111	241	152
WEST MIDLANDS	563	592	975	952
WEST YORKSHIRE	609	565	543	656
WILTSHIRE	43	39	28	54
DYFED POWYS	28	29	28	48
GWENT	16	16	23	74
NORTH WALES	265	198	153	180
SOUTH WALES	218	253	161	165

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

South Asia Earthquake: Relief

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am today committing a further £25 million to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the 8 October earthquake in Pakistan. This will bring DFID's total contribution to the relief effort to £58 million, which together with our pledge of £70 million to the reconstruction effort over three years, means that the UK's total contribution to relief and reconstruction is £128 million.

DFID has focused its initial £33 million of relief support on practical assistance, including shelter and logistics, and funding for the relief programmes of the United Nations, the Red Cross Movement and non-governmental organisations. Although the relief effort has gathered pace, with the onset of harsh winter conditions the need to strengthen relief operations is now critical. In particular, we need to provide for those living above the snow line or in organised or spontaneous camps. Further support for logistics, shelter, camp management, health, water and sanitation, and nutrition is required.

The additional funds announced today will help do this. We will also be giving further support to the United Nations' helicopter operation. As part of this, £5.5 million will go to the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, as DFID takes on the contracts for four medium lift Mi-8 helicopters for a four month period. With the onset of winter the need is shifting away from heavy-lift helicopters like the UK CH-47 Chinooks—which are now completing their operations—towards medium-lift helicopters to ensure deliveries to remote and isolated communities. The Mi-8 helicopters are ideally suited to the environmental conditions and will be able to deliver relief to any location in the affected area throughout winter.

I can also report that this funding will help support an 86 strong team drawn from 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers to be deployed under NATO command, to undertake emergency shelter building operations in remote high-altitude areas in the Bagh region. The Royal Engineers unit are highly specialist troops who are trained to operate in winter and mountainous conditions.

DFID will also be providing further support for: shelter and winter kits, including stoves, for high altitudes; management and servicing of camp sites; primary health care centres, mobile clinics, women's health and counselling; water and sanitation in camps, local communities and hospitals; and food in both camps and displaced communities in remote areas.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Meg Munn): The Government propose the Commission for Equality and Human Rights would be based in two sites in England, with a majority of staff based in Manchester and a significant presence in London. The CEHR would also have offices in Glasgow and Cardiff and a strong regional presence throughout Great Britain.

The provisions establishing the CEHR are set out in the Equality Bill, which is currently before Parliament.

The decision follows an independent study conducted on behalf of Government to identify suitable options for the location of the new organisation. Further work will be undertaken as to the way in which the functions of the CEHR will be divided between the various sites. All existing Commissions will be fully engaged in this process. The report of the location study, a Race Equality Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment, will be placed in the House Libraries shortly.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 7 November 2005

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Charging Decisions

Jon Trickett: To ask the Solicitor-General what guidance has been provided to *(a)* the Crown Prosecution Service and *(b)* police in relation to statutory charging arrangements and pre-charge bail from a police station to obtain a charging decision from a Crown Prosecutor. [24681]

The Solicitor-General: On 21 May 2004, the Director of Public Prosecutions issued guidance to police officers and Crown prosecutors under section 37A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The guidance sets out the cases that must be referred to prosecutors for charging decisions and the circumstances in which a release on bail before charge may be appropriate in accordance with the amendments to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

In April 2005, further guidance was issued to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the police on the subject of granting pre-charge bail to obtain a charging decision from a Crown prosecutor. The guidance was formulated as a result of issues raised during the implementation of the statutory charging arrangements, and establishes a standardised approach to the operation of pre-charge bail.

The decision to detain or grant pre-charge bail to obtain a charging decision from a Crown prosecutor is solely for the custody officer. There is no need to consult a Crown prosecutor to authorise the granting of bail or to confirm the conditions

Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Serious Fraud Office is investigating the allegation of corruption involving a Department of Trade and Industry employee. [22063]

The Solicitor-General: Following an article published in *The Guardian* newspaper on 13 October 2005, the SFO can confirm that information has been passed to it, in connection with alleged corruption of a DTI employee. The information provided is being considered to determine whether there is sufficient evidence, or realistic prospect of obtaining sufficient evidence, to justify commencing an investigation.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23837]

The Solicitor-General: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Solicitor-General what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Law Officers' Departments by the Gershon review. [21301]

The Solicitor-General: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the Annual Report for the Law Officers' Departments[1]. Further progress will be reported in the individual Law Officers' Departments Autumn Performance Reports and, at aggregate level, in the pre-Budget report.

[1] Cm 6531

Mr. Francois: To ask the Solicitor-General who in the Law Officer's Departments has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Departments by the Gershon review. [21313]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General, as the Minister superintending the Law Officers' Departments, is responsible for the overall delivery of the Departments' efficiency programme.

Terrorism Bill

Mr. Cash: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will place his advice to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the compatibility of the Terrorism Bill with the Human Rights Act 1998 in the Library. [25606]

The Solicitor-General: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to the House on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1071.

Mr. Cash: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will make a statement on the compatibility of the Terrorism Bill with the Human Rights Act 1998. [25609]

The Solicitor-General: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has made a statement under section 19(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act 1998 giving his view that the Terrorism Bill is compatible with the Convention rights. Given the long-standing convention on not disclosing the content of Law Officer advice nor whether or not such advice exists, it would be wrong to comment further on this issue.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Leader of the House which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Office's Skills Development Plan. [23840]

Nigel Griffiths: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Hutton), on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Leader of the House how much his Office spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23460]

Nigel Griffiths: No expenditure by the Leader's Office has been incurred on items of art in 2004–05. Items of art in his Office are on loan from the Government Art Collection.

Scottish Legislation

David Mundell: To ask the Leader of the House further to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 83W, on Scottish legislation (scrutiny), how much time was spent on scrutinising Scottish legislation between *(a)* 1992–93 and *(b)* 1999–2000, broken down by bill. [23618]

Mr. Hoon: Further details breaking down the information provided in my earlier answer are available from the Journal Office of the House.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bilateral Aid

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department plans *(a)* to monitor and *(b)* to disaggregate information on how direct budget support provided as bilateral aid is spent. [25897]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the response given to my hon. friend the Member for Cardiff, North on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 512W.

EU Commissioner for External Trade

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the European Commissioner for External Trade on *(a)* the Economic Partnership Agreements and *(b)* the World Trade Organisation meeting in December. [24241]

Hilary Benn: I have had several discussions on both these issues with Commissioner Mandelson since he took up office. Most recently, the commissioner joined the informal meeting of EU Development Ministers which I hosted on 23 and 24 October in Leeds, by video-conference. There we discussed in particular the importance of a credible package of "Aid for Trade" measures to be in place before the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in December, so that developing countries can see that we are serious in addressing their concerns over trade reforms, and also so that they will be able to adjust to new trading circumstances as well as benefit from the opportunities that trade liberalisation can bring.

Niger

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when his Department first received warning of a food crisis in Niger from *(a)* the Early Warning System of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, *(b)* the Famine Early Warning System Network of the US Agency for International Development, *(c)* the FAO-WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission and *(d)* his Department's officials based in that country. [24260]

Hilary Benn: The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)'s Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) produces two sets of reports that warn of imminent food crises in Africa. The "Foodcrops and Shortages Report" from February 2005 stated that the harvest in Niger was normal against the five year average, and did not require exceptional and/or emergency assistance. The "Food Supply Situation and Crop Prospects" Report in April 2005 similarly omitted Niger from its list of countries facing food emergencies. Only in its June 2005 edition did the "Foodcrops and Shortages Report" recommend emergency assistance for Niger, and only in September 2005 did Niger feature on FAO/GIEWS' list of countries facing food crises.

The FEWSNET bulletin first flagged Niger as a country under "Warning Status" in December 2004, but it was not until June 2005 that this was upgraded to "Emergency Status" demanding "highest priority urgent action".

DFID attended the presentation of the World Food Programme (WFP)/FAO's initial Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) findings from the Sahel region in December 2004, where cereal production for the entire region was reported as average, in spite of drought and locusts, but where pockets of need were identified within all the Sahel countries. Based on the evidence, DFID judged that large scale food aid would not be required at that time.

DFID does not have any officials based in Niger. The London based humanitarian unit responsible for monitoring emerging crises in Africa had been monitoring the situation in the Sahel since the locust invasions of August 2004. In April 2005, the first incontrovertible evidence of a deteriorating situation was provided by Medecins Sans Frontieres. A full account of DFID's subsequent response is set out in my parliamentary written statement on the Niger food crisis made on 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 26–27WS.

WALES

Dentistry

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last discussed NHS dentistry with the Health Minister in the National Assembly for Wales Government. [24702]

Mr. Hain: I met with the First Minister on 20 October when we discussed a range of issues, including dentistry. My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales is in regular conversation with the Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services, Brian Gibbons, and plans to meet him to discuss dentistry on 14 November; I met him on 28 October. In addition, I met my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 3 November on this very same issue.

Devolution

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he will issue his guidance for a Government Department on devolution; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [25674]

Mr. Hain: Following the publication on 15 June 2005 of the Better Governance for Wales White Paper, the Government has agreed a revised Devolution Guidance Note 9.

General Devolution Guidance is available on the DCA website: http://www.dca.gov.uk/constitution/devolution/guidance.htm

A copy of DGN 9 is in the Library.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Women's Pensions

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to tackle women's pension inequality; and what discussions she has had with the Department for Work and Pensions on this issue. [24107]

Meg Munn: The Women and Work Commission was set up in 2004 to look at ways to tackle the gender pay gap. Their report will be published in January 2006. The Department for Work and Pensions published a report on women and pensions last week, which provides a detailed analysis of women's pension position, without policy proposals. Both reports will inform the next steps taken by the Government to tackle women's pension inequality.

Both my right hon. Friends the Cabinet Minister for Women and I have had discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the issue of women's pensions. The issue of women's pensions is central to the National Pensions Debate and the women and pensions report will provide a valuable contribution to that debate. The report provides a firm basis on which to build consensus on the way forward and achieve fair outcomes for women.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to encourage women to provide for their retirement using private pensions. [24108]

Meg Munn: I welcome the report that the Department for Work and Pensions published last week, which provides a detailed analysis of women's pension position. It considers both state and private pension entitlements and highlights key influences on the level of women's retirement incomes: women's education, employment, earnings, caring responsibilities and demographic trends. It also includes research on household financial planning.

The issue of women's pensions is central to the National Pensions Debate and this report provides a valuable contribution to that debate. The report provides a firm basis on which to build consensus on the way forward and achieve fair outcomes for women.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has commissioned on preventative measures to prevent the spread of Avian influenza. [24112]

Mr. Bradshaw: The current research programme on Avian influenza (AI) is multi-disciplinary with many facets that are aimed toward improving our understanding of the disease and effective methods of prevention and control.

For example, one project is conducting studies to assess virus survival under various environmental conditions. This will provide direct evidence on risks of transmission in poultry products. Another project is seeking to develop improved diagnostic technologies that will allow more rapid identification of infection.

Other studies are currently under way to improve our understanding of viral transmission within flocks and the effect, on this, of prior immunity.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many registered quarantine sites for birds exist in the UK. [24646]

Mr. Bradshaw: Current records show that there are 83 bird quarantine facilities and centres in the UK. This figure may not distinguish between single facilities and multiple units in large bird quarantine centres.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what training for *(a)* state veterinary service veterinary surgeons and *(b)* private practice veterinary surgeons (i) has been and (ii) are being provided with in the detection of Avian influenza. [24655]

Mr. Bradshaw: All veterinary surgeons, as part of their training, are trained in clinical investigation and the diagnosis of disease.

The state veterinary service has recently run a programme of training for veterinary officers to update them on dealing with a potential outbreak of Avian influenza. Confirmation of disease is based on laboratory analysis and not clinical diagnosis in the field.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements have been made for the safe disposal of poultry carcasses in the event of a cull for avian influenza. [24656]

Mr. Bradshaw: Disposal of carcases of birds infected with highly pathogenic Avian influenza would be by off-site incineration or rendering in specialist plants. If existing incineration and rendering capacity were fully utilised, carcases would be disposed of by deep burial in suitably engineered commercial licensed landfills.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the capacity of the

rendering industry to deal with the number of poultry slaughtered in the event of an outbreak of Avian influenza. [24658]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is in close contact with the United Kingdom Renderers Association (UKRA) and has assessed the current available capacity and maximum likely capacity. The available capacity at any time will depend on the time of year, breakdowns and other demands. Some 2,500 tonnes per week (equivalent to 1.25 million chickens) would be available very quickly and a further 10–15,000 tonnes could be brought on stream within about two weeks.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what further steps her Department plans to take to ensure that Avian influenza does not enter the UK through poultry meat imports. [23185]

Mr. Bradshaw: Poultry meat can only be imported from countries approved by the European Community. In addition the country of origin must submit a plan setting out the guarantees which it offers with regards to the use of veterinary drugs and other products which could lead to residues and contaminants in foods.

Fresh poultry meat must have been slaughtered, cut and stored in Community approved establishments.

Each consignment must be accompanied by a certificate signed and stamped by a duly authorised veterinary officer of the Government of the exporting country and bear a health mark.

All poultry meat and birds imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts where they are subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks. These check ensure that these import conditions are met.

If there is an outbreak of notifiable disease in an exporting country Defra takes appropriate emergency safeguard action in accordance with Community legislation. This may include a ban on imports of animals and animal products from all, or parts, of that country.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what tests her Department carries out on meat imports to ensure that they are free of *(a)* Avian influenza and *(b)* foot and mouth disease. [23186]

Mr. Bradshaw: Testing imported meat would be both impractical and prohibitively expensive. Currently available tests have only been validated for detecting viruses in clinical samples.

Current EU legislation contains measures to ensure that meat imported into the EU does not originate from animals infected with serious disease.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for how long she expects farms infected with avian influenza to be closed. [24111]

Mr. Bradshaw: After the disease has been confirmed, the premises must first be depopulated of poultry and subjected to preliminary cleansing and disinfection. Following depopulation, the premises must be cleansed and disinfected to standards set by a DEFRA veterinarian and this may take several weeks for it to be completed. The premises must then remain empty of poultry for at least 21 days. We would then allow the premises to re-stock if there were no more outbreaks of the disease in the locality. Once restocked the poultry would be kept under close surveillance for a period of 21 days and subjected to clinical inspections during that period.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 308, how many poultry and bird markets she expects will be closed. [24113]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005, birds collected together at exhibitions, shows, fairs or other gatherings are no longer permitted except under licence following a veterinary risk assessment. Information on the number of poultry and bird markets is not readily available. This is anticipated to affect a number of markets.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for how long the Government propose to keep *(a)* bird auctions and *(b)* bird markets closed in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza; what assessment she has made of (i) the effect of the closures on those employed in markets and auctions; and (ii) the merits of paying compensation to those affected. [24114]

Mr. Bradshaw: On the 21 October the European Commission considered the encroaching avian influenza threat and, as a result, introduced a decision to ban bird markets, fairs and other gatherings of birds until the 31 January 2006, when the decision will be reviewed. This decision was implemented in England by the Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005 (2005 No. 2989). The ban will remain in place until the European law requiring it is lifted. We have worked with representatives of groups holding such events and assessed the risks. As a result, some gatherings may continue under licence and subject to biosecurity controls. We will consider any applications for a licence sympathetically and any which can be permitted to go ahead following a veterinary risk assessment will be licensed. There is no provision for the payment of compensation in these circumstances.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she will take to ensure secondary losses resulting from biosecurity restrictions relating to avian influenza do not have an adverse economic impact on farmers. [24451]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department considers that poultry farmers, in common with all animal owners, have a responsibility to maintain good biosecurity and have issued appropriate guidance. Any action taken to control avian influenza should be proportionate and decided upon in the light of an overall assessment of the risks, costs and benefits in a particular situation.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what compensation package has been agreed with the poultry industry in the event of an avian influenza outbreak; and if she will make a statement. [24503]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the event of an avian influenza outbreak, compensation would be payable under schedule 3 of the Animal Health Act 1981 against the number of healthy birds destroyed at time of slaughter.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of personnel numbers within the state veterinary service to deal with an outbreak of avian influenza. [24505]

Mr. Bradshaw: The SVS and DEFRA as a whole have plans in place to enable them rapidly to increase personnel numbers to deal with an outbreak of avian influenza.

These plans include the ability to call on trained contingency LVIs, vets from other signatory country members of the International Health Emergency Reserve and staff from other Government Departments.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what model her Department has prepared to predict the spread of avian influenza should an outbreak occur. [24645]

Mr. Bradshaw: My Officials are currently closely engaged with both the industry to collect data and a wide range of modellers to ensure that a range of models to support policy development and decision taking is rapidly put in place.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she has given on the holding of bird fairs and sales. [24694]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005 prohibit birds to be collected together at any fair, market, show or exhibition except under licence following a veterinary risk assessment. Detailed guidance on these rules are set out on the DEFRA website (http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/shows/qanda.htm) and relevant stakeholders have been informed.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's assessment is of the risk of the feral pigeon population as a disease reservoir for avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [25124]

Mr. Bradshaw: In comparison to domestic chickens, feral pigeons are generally unsusceptible to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Experimental studies show that while pigeons can be infected with HPAI they do not appear to excrete the virus. This suggests that pigeons are unlikely to form a reservoir of infection of virus. However, the risk cannot be completely discounted and the public is encouraged to report any unusual die-off in pigeons or any other wild birds to the DEFRA helpline (08459 33 55 77) when further advice will be provided.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has in place regarding the treatment and regulation of birds in *(a)* zoological gardens and *(b)* other public animal parks (i) in preparation for and (ii) in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [23878]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures in Zoos) Regulations 2005 outline the treatment and regulation of birds in 2005, and institute similar establishments in the event of a need to reduce the risk of transmission of avian influenza If required, an avian influenza prevention (zoos) zone will be declared in all or part of England, or restrictions notices may be served on the owner or occupier of any zoo where susceptible birds are kept.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* parrots and *(b)* other birds at the quarantine facility in Essex referred to in DEFRA press release 471/05 have been examined by veterinary *(a)* inspectors, *(b)* technicians and *(c)* experts. [23895]

Mr. Bradshaw: All of the birds kept at the quarantine facility referred to in Defra press notice 471/05 have been examined by officers of the State Veterinary Service.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* parrots and *(b)* other birds have been sampled for H5N1 avian influenza virus; how many samples were collected; and what the results were of the samples submitted for laboratory examination. [23901]

Mr. Bradshaw: Two parrots were submitted on 20 September for examination and both proved to be negative for avian influenza virus. A parrot and a mesia were submitted on 14 October from which the isolation of H5N1 was made. On 22 October a total of 104 parrot and 171 other bird carcasses were submitted and representative samples according to species and location in the quarantine site were tested. A number of the mesias have tested positive. We are awaiting the results from the rest of the birds.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether there have been any recorded episodes of animal-to-animal spread of H5N1 avian influenza. [23903]

Mr. Bradshaw: H5N1 avian influenza is normally transmitted between birds. The ease of transmission depends on the species of birds involved.

However, on rare occasions it has been known for other mammalian species to become infected following close contact with infective birds. There is little to suggest onward transmission from these species.

There is some evidence to suggest that pigs have become infected with avian influenza viruses of subtypes H5N1 following contact with infective birds. There is no evidence of onward transmission from pigs to other pigs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether H5N1 avian influenza is transmissible to pigs. [23904]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is evidence to suggest that pigs have become infected with avian influenza viruses of subtypes H5N1 following contact with infective birds. There is no evidence of onward transmission from pigs to other pigs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions officials from her Department had with officials of the Taiwan Government prior to publishing the working hypothesis of the Chief Veterinarian on the origin of the H5N1 virus recovered from bird samples taken at the quarantine facility in Essex. [23920]

Mr. Bradshaw: None.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the source of H5N1 infection among birds at the quarantine facility in Essex. [23928]

Mr. Bradshaw: Extensive virological examinations of the birds are being carried out but these will take at least two weeks to complete.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what laboratory procedures are used to identify clades. [23996]

Mr. Bradshaw: A clade is a distinct branch within a phylogenic organisation of viruses within a family. Identification of which clade an influenza virus belongs involves isolation of the virus by growth on eggs, subsequent characterisation by examination of its nucleotide sequence and then comparing this to the sequences of other viruses previously isolated. It is then possible to place the new isolate within the family tree.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what definition of clade her Department uses in relation to the taxonomy of H5N1 sub-types. [24077]

Mr. Bradshaw: A clade is a genetically homologous group of viruses which clearly can be distinguished from other groups.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 307–9, on avian influenza, what regulations she plans to bring forward to assist in reducing the risk of disease and strengthening the ability to control an outbreak of bird influenza. [24061]

Mr. Bradshaw: New measures to help prevent the spread of avian influenza have been agreed by the European Commission through Commission Decision 2005/734 amended by 2005/745.

The Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005 which came into force on 28 October implements this into domestic legislation and in the event of an increased risk assessment:

(i) Allows for future biosecurity measure to be introduced if needed (e.g. feeding and watering birds indoors or keeping birds indoors).

(ii) Bans the gathering of birds at markets, shows, fairs and similar events.

(iii) Requires keepers of 50 or more commercial poultry to notify specific information on that poultry.

The Avian Influenza (Preventative Measures in Zoos) Regulations 2005 which also came into force on 28 October 2005:

(i) Require Government to undertake a risk assessment of the possible introduction of avian influenza by wild birds.

(ii) Allow for future preventative biosecurity measures to be introduced if needed (e.g. feeding and watering birds indoors or keeping birds indoors).

(iii) Provide powers to require zoo birds to be vaccinated in high-risk areas.

Biomass Industry

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of UK-produced biomass energy for *(a)* electricity and *(b)* heat has been generated from crops grown in the UK in each of the last three years. [22083]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

Estimates used to compile the tables shown in the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 2005, show that in 2002, 2003 and 2004 all biomass used for the generation of heat in the UK was home produced. For biomass used in co-firing with fossil fuels to generate electricity, 56 per cent. was imported in 2003 and 63 per cent. in 2004. Information to enable the corresponding proportion for 2002 to be calculated is not available. It is further estimated that there is no importation of other bio-fuels such as straw, or short rotation coppice for electricity generation.

The tables from the Digest of UK Energy Statistics used for this reply are 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.7. The Digest is available in the Libraries of the House.

Biosecurity

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the latest information provided by her Department to farmers on biosecurity measures to deal with avian influenza and West Nile fever. [20763]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has distributed guidance materials on avian influenza to our partners in the industry—including the British Poultry Council, the British Egg Industry Council and the National Farmers Union—who are helping to distribute this material to their members, who cover the majority of birds. A simple one-page leaflet on biosecurity and surveillance for smaller concerns and back yard keepers has also been produced and is being distributed widely including to all veterinary practices and placed in trade and specialist press targeting the same audience. All this information is available on my Department's website and I am placing copies in the Library of the House.

Advice regarding West Nile Virus is contained in the draft contingency plan for Specified Type Equine Exotic Diseases which is currently out for public consultation.

The draft plan can be found at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/current.htm. The closing date for responses is 21 November 2005.

Information concerning West Nile Virus can also be found on the West Nile Virus Q&A at: http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/westnilevirus.htm

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the level of preparedness for the vaccination of animals against *(a)* avian influenza and *(b)* West Nile fever. [20765]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no vaccines against avian influenza which have a marketing authorisation for use in the UK. Work is in hand to consider whether vaccination of birds in zoos or other centres on the one hand, or of commercial poultry on the other, should form part of the control strategy in the UK. There are no vaccines against West Nile fever with a marketing authorisation for use in the UK. A draft contingency plan for dealing with outbreaks of specified type equine exotic diseases (which includes West Nile virus) was issued for consultation in July 2005.

Birds

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received on the number of wild birds traded into the European Union *(a)* in 2004 and *(b)* to date in 2005; and what checks have been made for avian influenza among these birds. [23813]

Mr. Bradshaw: Figures from the EU-wide computer system used to record imports of animals and their products, known as TRACES, show that in 2004 67,480 captive birds were imported into the European Union. Of these 66,586 were imported into the UK.

In 2005 120,639 captive birds were imported into the EU to date. Of these 119,856 were imported into the UK.

These figures are for captive birds, as no distinction can be made between captive bred birds and wild caught birds. The figures do not include poultry. However there are discrepancies between these figures and the figures reported by CITES. We are concerned about these discrepancies between these figures and are urgently investigating them to resolve the problem.

All imported captive birds must be held in quarantine for 30 days during which time a test must be carried out for the avian influenza virus.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what procedures are followed for the quarantine of birds from different countries in separate facilities; and when this system was put in place. [23704]

Mr. Bradshaw: EU law includes no requirement for quarantined birds from different countries to be kept separate in a quarantine facility.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many call centres were run by her Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year. [23305]

Jim Knight: The Regional Payments Agency (RPA) manages the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) call centre and Customer Service Centre. The DEFRA and Pets Travel Scheme helplines are both situated in BCMS/RPA call centre.

The Environment Agency manages a National Customer Contact Centre and Floodline.

The following tables show figures for each contact centre and helpline.

BCMS/ English and Welsh lines

(a) Year	*Total calls received*	*Total calls answered by an agent*	*Total calls abandoned*	*Percentage calls answered*
2003–04	464,802	426,689	38,113	92
2004–05	413,813	402,437	11,376	97
2005–06	263,273	259,597	3,676	98.6

During busy periods callers receive a message that advises them that demands are high and to call back later. We do not have figures for how many callers receive this message or an engaged tone.

Defra helpline

(a) Year	*Total calls received*	*Total calls answered by an agent*	*Total calls abandoned*	*Percentage calls answered*
2004–05	77,927	72,516	5,411	93.5
2005–06 (to date)	67,778	62,302	5,476	92.5

The DEFRA helpline began operating from BCMS on 1 April 2003.

Detailed information on figures for years 2003–04 is disproportionate to costs and therefore not available.

Pets travel scheme helpline

(a) Year	*Total calls received*	*Total calls answered by an agent*	*Total calls Abandoned*	*Percentage calls answered*
2004–05	35,871	33,992	1,879	96
2005–06 (to date)	39,061	37,616	1,445	95

The Pet Travel Scheme helpline began operating from BCMS on 1 April 2004.

The BCMS call centre is able to manage call flow to both the DEFRA and Pets helplines so that callers do not receive an engaged tone through the provision of a front ended Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. It has the capacity to point calls to a live agent ensuring that no caller receives an engaged tone. It is essential that all callers have access to advisers for the Pet Travel Scheme.

RPA Customer Service Centre

(a) The Rural Payments Agency Customer Service Centre was not active in 2003–04.

We utilized the services of two BT contact centres, Shoreditch and Derby, to help handle the volume of calls at the busiest period. The maximum number of agents (advisers) supplied by BT was 186, in mid May 2005, steadily reducing to 15 by the end of August. These were in addition to the RPA CSC normal complement of 68 agents.

	Total calls received	Total calls answered	Handled by an adviser (percentage)	Total calls abandoned	Percentage	Total calls engaged/ disconnected	Percentage
(b) 12 July 2004 to 31 March 2005	201,109	106,379	53	11,195	5.5	83,535	41.5
(c) 1 April 2005 to 28 October 2005	408,352	294,093	72	8,185	2	106,074	26

Environment Agency

National Customer Contact Centre

Period covered: 1 September 2004 to 30 September 2005 (the date the service went fully live).

	Total calls received	Total calls answered by adviser	Total calls abandoned	Percentage calls answered
2004-05	468,055	434,924	33,131	93
2005-06	485,152	449,763	35,389	93

It is extremely rare for any caller to get an engaged tone; this would only happen if we were exceptionally busy. We have no statistics available for the number of callers getting such a tone since these callers do not make it through to our system.

Floodline

The Environment Agency's FLOODLINE service has one Call Centre supplier who provides both an Interactive Voice Recording service (RMS) and a Live Agent call operator service for all the calls received on the 0845 988 1188 number.

RMS

RMS provides an automated flood warning service to the public, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, which is accessible via the 0845 988 1188 number. Flood warnings are issued and managed by the Environment Agency and SEPA, who have the ability to record and delete warnings for particular areas of the country as required. Public callers can hear flood warnings either by

1. Navigating down a menu structure to their required area,
2. By 'quick dialling' to the required area or
3. By direct transfer to a warning message by the Floodline Call Centre operator.

Live Agent

The 0845 9881188 number also provides the public the option of speaking to a Live Agent Operator to advise on any matter associated with flooding or related issues.

Call statistics of Floodline call centre—0845 9881188

Date	Total calls received	Total calls handled by RMS	Total calls offered to adviser	Total handled by an adviser (percentage)	Received but abandoned (percentage)
January 2003 to January 2004	154,746	112,934	41,812	94.9	5.1
January 2004 to January 2005	142,407	104,063	38,344	95.5	4.5
January 2005 to October 2005 (part year)	80,273	48,179	32,094	95.5	4.5

(iii) We are unable to advise on the number of callers that received an engaged tone. This would be unlikely to happen on the RMS service as we have a concurrent capacity of 720 lines.

Charity Shops

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she has issued to local waste collection authorities concerning the charging of charity shops for the collection of unusable items donated by members of the public. [25505]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has issued no specific guidance to waste collection authorities about the charging of charity shops for the collection by waste collection authorities of unusable items donated by members of the public since the publication of the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992. Guidance to waste collection authorities in Schedule 2 to these regulations covers the types of household waste for which a charge for collection may be made. Where waste collection authorities do decide to charge they must only recover their costs of collection and these costs must be set at a level so that the authorities do not make a profit. There are no plans to change this guidance.

Commercial Poultry Producers Register

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the register of commercial poultry producers is expected to be established. [24062]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department plans to establish the GB register by the end of December 2005.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will update the information released relating to individual recipients of common agricultural policy support payments to include *(a)* the postcode of the recipient and *(b)* location information at the NUTS-5 level. [23580]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) disclosed common agricultural policy (CAP) payment information on 22 March 2005, listing the names of CAP subsidy recipients and the amount paid to them in the last two years.

The information represented an annual aggregate figure for payments to each recipient under all of the schemes paid by RPA. The full list of schemes covered by the disclosure is set out in Annex A.

RPA published on its website in July 2005 a supplement to the CAP payments information giving details of payments by geographic location for the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) year 2003–04. The regional analysis has been produced using the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) and NUTS levels one and two were used to provide this analysis.

It was concluded that a more detailed regional breakdown to lower levels of NUTS codes 3, 4, and 5 and the release of full postal addresses would not be appropriate. The general privacy arguments were examined in detail and it was concluded that the risks around privacy intrusion outweighed the limited additional public value of the additional postal address data.

Further, the diversion of more resources from other priority work, in particular considering RPA's imperative to commencing Single Payment Scheme payments to farmers by February 2006, to produce additional geographical breakdown would be manifestly unreasonable.

Annex A—Schemes Administered By RPA

IACS and other farm based schemes dealt with by RPA for England:

Arable schemes:

Arable Area Payments Scheme (AAPS) including Fibre Flax Subsidy and Hemp Subsidy

Aid for Grain Legumes

Bovine schemes:

Beef Special Premium Scheme (BSPS)

Suckler Cow Premium Scheme (SCPS), including decisions about suckler cow quota

Extensification Payments Scheme (EPS)

Slaughter Premium Scheme (SPS), including Veal Calf Slaughter Premium

Sheep schemes:

Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (SAPS), including the LFA Supplement and decisions about sheep quota

Agrimonetary Compensation linked to any of the above schemes

England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), including the Hill Farm Allowance Scheme (HFA).

Structural funds:

The Structural Funds are a multi-funded EU programme. Defra is the managing authority, RPA is the paying authority (responsible for financial and accounting controls) and the Government Offices act as the intermediate bodies (responsible for administration and implementation).

RPA only pays under the Guidance element for schemes in Objective 1 regions and for Leader + schemes.

Non-IACS (i.e. CAP) schemes dealt with by RPA for the UK:

General:

Aid for Concentrated Grape Must

Aid for Dehydrated Fodder

Apple Consumption Aid

Beef Information Programme

Butter for Manufacture

Butter for Non-Profit Making Organisations

Cane Sugar Refining Aid

Control of Casein in Cheese Making

Casein Production Subsidy

Citrus Processing Aid

Concentrated Butter for Direct Consumption

End Use Control of Certain Fruit and Vegetables

Fibres Processing Aid

Fish Carry-Over Aid

Fish Flat-Rate Aid

Fish Flat-Rate Premium

Fish Private Storage Aid

Fish Withdrawals Compensation

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Withdrawals

Fruit and Vegetable Operational Programme

Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation Recognition

Grape Juice Aid

Herbage Seed Production Aid

Milk Quotas Scheme

Olive Oil Production Refunds

Over Thirty Months Scheme

Promotions to Internal Market

Promotions to Third Countries

School Milk Scheme

Selective Cull Scheme

Skimmed Milk Powder for Animal Feed

Starch for Prescribed End Users

Sugar and Isoglucose Production Levies

Sugar in the Chemical Industry

Intervention purchasing schemes:

Cereals

Beef

Dairy

Private storage aid schemes:

Dairy

Sheepmeat/goatmeat

Pigmeat

Beef

Sugar oils and starch:

Cane Sugar Refining

End Use Control of Certain Vegetable Oils

Olive Oil Production

Production Refund on sugar used in the Chemical Industry

Starch Refunds—Cereals

Starch Refunds—Rice

Isoglucose Quotas and Production Levies

Sugar Quotas and Production Levies

External trade schemes (including export refunds):

Bananas

Beef and Veal

Beef Import Tariff Quota

Cereals

Rice

Fish

Floriculture (live plants and flowers)

Fruit and Vegetables

Milk/Milk Products

Processed Goods (i.e products including two or more agricultural products supported by the CAP)

Oils/Fats

Oilseeds/Seeds

Pigmeat

Eggs

Poultrymeat

Sheepmeat and Goatmeat

Sugar, Isoglucose and Insulin Syrup

Tobacco

Whisky refunds

Wine

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list recipients of payment under common agricultural policy agri-environment and rural development schemes for the last two years including *(a)* size of payment, *(b)* date of payment, *(c)* name of scheme under which payment was made, *(d)* name of recipient, *(e)* postal address of recipient and *(f)* location of enterprise in respect of which the payment was made. [23581]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) disclosed common agricultural policy (CAP) payment information on 22 March 2005, listing the names of CAP subsidy recipients and the amount paid to them in the last two years.

The information represented an annual aggregate figure for payments to each recipient under all of the schemes paid by RPA, including agri-environment and rural development schemes. The full list of schemes covered by the disclosure is set out in Annex A.

RPA investigated the practicalities of providing further breakdown by scheme, including scheme type, date of payment and name of scheme under which payment was made. It was concluded that it was unreasonable to produce this data because it is held in detailed scheme records and to reconcile the scheme statistics against the monies paid at the aggregate customer level would be extremely resource intensive.

RPA published on its website in July 2005 a supplement to the CAP payments information giving details of payments by geographic location for the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) year 2003–04. The regional analysis has been produced using the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) and NUTS levels one and two were used to provide this analysis. It was decided that a more detailed regional breakdown and the release of full postal addresses would not be appropriate. The general privacy arguments were examined in detail and it was concluded that the risks around privacy intrusion outweighed the limited additional public value of the additional postal address data.

Further, the diversion of more resources from other priority work, in particular considering RPA's imperative to commencing Single Payment Scheme payments to farmers by February 2006, to produce additional geographical or scheme breakdown would be manifestly unreasonable. However RPA continues to examine detailed requests on a case by case basis.

Annex A—Schemes administered by RPA

IACS and other farm based schemes dealt with by RPA for England:

Arable schemes:

Arable Area Payments Scheme (AAPS) including Fibre Flax Subsidy and Hemp Subsidy

Aid for Grain Legumes

Bovine schemes:

Beef Special Premium Scheme (BSPS)

Suckler Cow Premium Scheme (SCPS), including decisions about suckler cow quota

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Slaughter Premium Scheme (SPS), including Veal Calf Slaughter Premium

Sheep schemes:

Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (SAPS), including the LFA Supplement and decisions about sheep quota

Agrimonetary compensation linked to any of the above schemes:

England Rural Development Programme (ERDP), including the Hill Farm Allowance Scheme (HFA)

Structural funds:

The Structural Funds are a multi-funded EU programme. Defra is the Managing Authority, RPA is the paying authority (responsible for financial and accounting controls) and the Government Offices act as the intermediate bodies (responsible for administration and implementation).

RPA only pays under the Guidance element for schemes in Objective 1 regions and for Leader + schemes.

Non-IACS (i.e. CAP) schemes dealt with by RPA for the UK:

General:

Aid for Concentrated Grape Must

Aid for Dehydrated Fodder

Apple Consumption Aid

Beef Information Programme

Butter for Manufacture

Butter for Non-Profit Making Organisations

Cane Sugar Refining Aid

Control of Casein in Cheese Making

Casein Production Subsidy

Citrus Processing Aid

Concentrated Butter for Direct Consumption

End Use Control of Certain Fruit and Vegetables

Fibres Processing Aid

Fish Carry-Over Aid

Fish Flat-Rate Aid

Fish Flat-Rate Premium

Fish Private Storage Aid

Fish Withdrawals Compensation

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Withdrawals

Fruit and Vegetable Operational Programme

Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation Recognition

Grape Juice Aid

Herbage Seed Production Aid

Milk Quotas Scheme

Olive Oil Production Refunds

Over Thirty Months Scheme

Promotions to Internal Market

Promotions to Third Countries

School Milk Scheme

Selective Cull Scheme

Skimmed Milk Powder for Animal Feed

Starch for Prescribed End Users

Sugar and Isoglucose Production Levies

Sugar in the Chemical Industry

Intervention purchasing schemes:

Cereals

Beef

Dairy

Private storage aid schemes:
Dairy
Sheepmeat/Goatmeat
Pigmeat
Beef
Sugar, Oils and Starch:
Cane Sugar Refining
End Use Control of Certain Vegetable Oils
Olive Oil Production
Production Refund on sugar used in the Chemical Industry
Starch Refunds—Cereals
Starch Refunds—Rice
Isoglucose Quotas and Production Levies
Sugar Quotas and Production Levies
External trade schemes (including export refunds):
Bananas
Beef and Veal
Beef Import Tariff Quota
Cereals
Rice
Fish
Floriculture (live plants and flowers)
Fruit and Vegetables
Milk/Milk Products
Processed Goods (i.e products including two or more agricultural products supported by the CAP).
Oils/Fats
Oilseeds/Seeds
Pigmeat
Eggs
Poultrymeat
Sheepmeat and Goatmeat
Sugar, Isoglucose and Insulin Syrup
Tobacco
Whisky refunds
Wine.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received on progress towards implementing the mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy in each other EU member state. [23823]

Jim Knight: The European Commission published a summary on 8 September 2005 entitled "Implementation of the CAP reform in the Member States" which outlines how each member state is implementing the 2003 reforms. Copies will be made available in the Library of the House.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the EU Trade Commissioner on agricultural support payments; and if she will make a statement. [21267]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, discusses important policy issues with all relevant EU Commissioners, including the EU Trade Commissioner. Agricultural support payments are a key element of the current Doha Development Agenda negotiations in the WTO.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to reply to the letter dated 25 July 2005 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding tallow combustion. [23931]

Jim Knight: The issues raised in the hon. Gentleman's letter of 25 July to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State fall within the remit of the Scottish Executive. The hon. Gentleman's letter has therefore been transferred to the Scottish Executive correspondence section which will reply to him directly.

Departmental Consultations

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list formal consultations being sponsored by her Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22567]

Jim Knight: A list of the Department's current consultations can be found on the Defra website at via the home page under 'consultations' or direct to the website http://defraweb/corporate/consult/current.htm. This site contains the date of issue and the deadline for responses.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which individual is responsible for developing and implementing her Department's Skills Development Plan. [23845]

Jim Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Hutton) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place in the Library a copy of her Department's Skills Development Plan. [23869]

Jim Knight: We will ensure that a copy of the Department's Skills Development Plan will be made available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of her Department's vehicles use *(a)* hydrogen fuel cells and *(b)* hybrid environmentally friendly technologies. [21414]

Jim Knight: The following percentages relate to vehicles owned by Defra and its executive agencies.

Type of vehicle	*Percentage*
(a) hydrogen fuel cells	0
(b) powered by hybrid environmentally friendly technologies	1.3

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions her Department's vehicles have produced in each year since 1997. [21415]

Jim Knight: Defra was created on 8 June 2001. Full year information is available from 2002-03. Information on carbon emissions from business road travel in vehicles owned by Defra and its executive agencies each year is shown in the following table.

Tonnes

	Carbon dioxide emissions
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	1,153
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	1,214
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	1,394

Business road travel is also carried out by officials in their own vehicles.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of journeys made by *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers in her Department have been made by public transport in each year since 1997. [21418]

Jim Knight: Records held by Defra and its executive agencies do not allow for this information to be separately identified.

Duck Producers (Inspections)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many inspections have been carried out in each of the last three years at the premises of duck producers. [19564]

Mr. Bradshaw: The State Veterinary Service has carried out the following number of inspections on the premises of duck producers in the last three years:

	Number
1 January to 31 December	
2003	121
2004	168
1 January to 30 September	
2005	121

Fireblight Disease

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the possible existence in wild plants of the fireblight disease. [23806]

Mr. Bradshaw: Fireblight, a bacterial plant disease, is well established throughout much of Europe and has been known to exist in the UK since the 1950s. It is a serious disease of apples, pears and related trees and shrubs in the family *Rosaceae*, sub family *Pomoideae*. The list of susceptible material includes several plants which commonly grow wild in England and Wales, including *Chaenomeles* (Flowering Quince), *Cotoneaster*, *Crataegus* (Hawthorn) and *Sorbus* (Mountain Ash).

The first UK finding of fireblight was in Kent in 1957. It is now widespread in Wales, England and also parts of Scotland but absent from Northern Ireland. The disease can be spread by wind, rain, birds and pollinating insects, as well as on contaminated pruning tools and by the planting of infected plants which may or may not show symptoms. It is known to have spread in England along hawthorn hedges planted alongside railways, motorways and main roads. There are no pesticides currently available to treat the disease.

Nurseries intending to move fireblight-host material have to be registered with DEFRA and must have at least two inspections per year in order to retain their ability to trade susceptible plants within the EU.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are in place to ensure that exporters of fireblight-susceptible species of trees and shrubs do not use other species' names on the necessary paperwork; and what assessment she has made of whether those who inspect the paperwork are capable of *(a)* differentiating and *(b)* identifying the species. [23807]

Mr. Bradshaw: Exporters of plants and plant products to non EC countries must satisfy the plant health requirements of the importing country. In many cases importing countries require consignments to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the official services in the country of origin as evidence that those requirements have been met. In the case of fireblight-susceptible host plants, where requested by an exporter and if required by the importing country, DEFRA's Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI) will undertake inspection of the material and, if it is found to comply with the conditions of import, will issue the necessary phytosanitary certificate. This would include details of the plant genera and species.

In relation to movements within the EU, growers of fireblight host material are required to register with DEFRA as producers of plant material requiring a plant passport and they also have to apply to DEFRA for authorisation to issue plant passports. An element of the authorisation process is to designate a technically experienced person who is responsible for passporting and associated plant health matters on the premises. In order to retain their authorisation producers must be inspected at least twice a year by the PHSI. One of these inspections will take place during the period of growth of the plants and the other at the time of despatch of material, including a check of records and documentation. If at any time a registered plant passporter is shown to be deliberately falsifying information or contravening the passporting regulations, his authorisation to issue plant passports may be withdrawn.

PHSI are normally graduates and invariably have a background or qualification in horticulture or agriculture. On appointment they receive a period of intensive training, which will include plant, pest and disease identification, familiarisation with the legislation under which they will operate, plant passporting and export certification arrangements etc. On completion of this formal training they shadow experienced Inspectors for a further period of field-based training, including

visits to plant passporting and/or exporting nurseries. Identification of fireblight hosts is included as part of this general training.

Flooding

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been allocated to complete the Morecambe sea defence scheme; and when work will commence. [24554]

Mr. Morley: Defra approved the final two phases of the Morecambe coastal works for grant aid in October this year. Lancaster city council is currently running a procurement exercise to secure a contractor and they expect to start work in this financial year. The amount of Government grant will reflect the price negotiated as part of the procurement process.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what payments to contractors who undertook work for the Government during the foot and mouth outbreak are outstanding; and if she will make a statement. [25433]

Mr. Bradshaw: Invoices to the value of £5.1 million remain disputed and unpaid. The Department is disputing payment in those cases where it believes on the basis of the quantum, accounting, technical and legal advice it has received that it was overcharged for goods, services and works during the foot and mouth disease outbreak.

In all other cases, the Department has paid businesses for the goods, services and works provided at its request in connection with the outbreak in 2001.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21296]

Jim Knight: Progress on achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual report. The latter can be viewed on Defra's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/deprep/default.htm. It contains details of headcount reductions and cost savings. Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance reports and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21318]

Jim Knight: The right hon. Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

Lord Bach, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for sustainable farming and food has specific responsibility for efficiency. Ministers' biographical details can be viewed at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/index.asp.

Greenhouse Emissions

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assumptions of economic growth were made when setting the targets for the reduction of greenhouse emissions. [19086]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The central economic growth assumption was for a long term growth rate of 2.35 per cent. per annum. The sensitivity of projected emissions to possible alternative outcomes for economic growth was examined by analysis using assumed low and high growth rates of 1.75 per cent. and 2.85 per cent. per annum respectively.

Household Waste

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which local authorities have a fortnightly collection of household waste. [22865]

Mr. Bradshaw: A number of local authorities operate partial fortnightly collections. Some of their properties receive a fortnightly collection and the remainder are weekly, or they operate an alternating system with residual waste collected one week followed by a collection of recyclable material in the following week.

No central source holds the information requested but the waste and resources action programme have provided the information given in the table.

Position at September 2004

Alnwick District Council
Ashfield District Council
Babergh District Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Blyth Valley Borough Council
Boston Borough Council
Braintree District Council
Breckland District Council
Broadland District Council
Bromsgrove District Council
Broxtowe Borough Council
Castle Morpeth Borough Council
Cherwell District Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Chichester District Council
Copeland Borough Council
Dacorum Borough Council
Daventry District Council
Derby City Council
East Hampshire District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council

Erewash Borough Council
Exeter City Council
Forest Heath District Council
Fylde Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Gosport Borough Council
Hambleton District Council
Harborough District Council
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Hyndburn Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
Lichfield District Council
Mansfield District Council
Melton Borough Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
Mole Valley District Council
North Devon District Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North Norfolk District Council
North West Leicestershire District Council
Northampton Borough Council
Nottingham City Council
Oswestry Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
Preston City Council
Rochford District Council
Rossendale Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Ryedale District Council
Scarborough Borough Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Derbyshire District Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Lakeland District Council
South Norfolk District Council
South Northamptonshire Council
St. Edmondsbury Borough Council
Swale Borough Council
Tamworth Borough Council
Teignbridge District Council
Telford and Wrekin Borough Council
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Torbay Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Tynedale District Council
Vale Royal Borough Council
Wansbeck District Council
Waveney District Council
Wealden District Council
Wellingborough Borough Council
Woking Borough Council
Wycombe District Council
Wyre Forest District Council

Position at September 2005

Alnwick District Council
Ashfield District Council
Babergh District Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Blyth Valley Borough Council
Boston Borough Council
Braintree District Council
Breckland District Council
Broadland District Council
Bromsgrove District Council
Broxtowe Borough Council
Castle Morpeth Borough Council
Cherwell District Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Chichester District Council
Copeland Borough Council
Dacorum Borough Council
Daventry District Council
Derby City Council
East Hampshire District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
Exeter City Council
Forest Heath District Council
Fylde Borough Council
Gedling Borough Council
Gosport Borough Council
Hambleton District Council
Harborough District Council
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Hyndburn Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
Lichfield District Council
Mansfield District Council
Melton Borough Council
Mid Suffolk District Council
Mole Valley District Council
North Devon District Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North Norfolk District Council
North West Leicestershire District Council
Northampton Borough Council
Nottingham City Council
Oswestry Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
Preston City Council
Rochford District Council
Rossendale Borough Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Ryedale District Council
Scarborough Borough Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Derbyshire District Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Lakeland District Council

South Norfolk District Council
South Northamptonshire Council
St. Edmondsbury Borough Council
Swale Borough Council
Tamworth Borough Council
Teignbridge District Council
Telford and Wrekin Borough Council
Tonbridge and Mailing Borough Council
Torbay Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Tynedale District Council
Vale Royal Borough Council .
Wansbeck District Council
Waveney District Council
Wealden District Council
Wellingborough Borough Council
Woking Borough Council
Wycombe District Council
Wyre Forest District Council
Bolton Borough Council
Burnley Borough Council
Chiltern District Council[1]
Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Macclesfield Borough Council
Mendip District Council
Mid Devon District Council[2]
Newark and Sherwood District Council
North Kesteven District Council
Shepway District Council
South Buckinghamshire District Council[1]
South Hams District Council[2]
South Somerset District Council
Taunton Deane Borough Council
West Wiltshire District Council[3]
North Shropshire District Council[2]

[1] Trial taking place
[2] Planning to introduce or just starting to introduce a fortnightly collection.
[3] Fortnightly collection only partly rolled out across a local authority.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many employees in her Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23372]

Jim Knight: DEFRA runs a centrally funded Adult Further Education scheme which offers 100 per cent. funding to members of staff who wish to do a GCSE level qualification for numeracy, literacy or another key skill area. Every applicant who has applied for a numeracy/literacy qualification or course has had their costs fully funded centrally.

We are also supporting a number of employees for whom English is not their first language through 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) courses. Delegates can take nationally recognised tests at two levels, the higher of which is the equivalent of a GCSE pass at grade A-C.

In the current financial year DEFRA is also assisting six members of staff in undertaking London Public Sector Apprenticeships which contain modules on numeracy and literacy.

The current take up figures for these schemes are as follows:

Financial year	*Numeracy*	*Literacy*
2003–04	1	—
2004–05	1	1
2005[1]	4	—
2005[1]	—	[2]19
2005[1]	—	[3]6

[1] To date.
[2] ESOL.
[3] Apprenticeships.

DEFRA operates devolved learning and development budgets so there may be additional staff who request (and obtain) numeracy and literacy training from their own business unit budgets, however, these are not recorded centrally at present.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of her Department. [23408]

Jim Knight: DEFRA has used a wide range of methods to promote the uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among our employees.

These include the dissemination of promotional material and information, including posters, CD Roms and leaflets across DEFRA sites via our network of Training Co-ordinators and through close liaison with the PCS Union Learning Representatives (ULRs).

In addition, information has been posted on our learning and development website and also on the PCS Union Learning Representatives web pages.

Presentations and facilitated discussions have been undertaken at a Training Co-ordinators conference, where co-ordinators were informed about the national tests and were given the opportunity to test their numeracy and literacy skills. These sessions were intended to enable the co-ordinators to encourage uptake among staff in their local business areas in DEFRA.

DEFRA have also held numerous 'drop-in' sessions in York and London where staff could find information and talk to learning and development advisers about all aspects of learning and development, including numeracy and literacy.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23429]

Jim Knight: DEFRA operates a centrally funded Adult Further Education scheme which offers 100 per cent. funding to members of staff who wish to do a GCSE level qualification for numeracy, literacy or any

other key skill area. Every applicant who has applied for a numeracy/literacy qualification or course has had their costs fully funded.

DEFRA has spent £3,200 on in-house training in literacy and numeracy under the Adult Further Education scheme since the financial year 2003 (the first year for which figures are available). This can be broken down into financial years as follows:

Financial year	*Numeracy*	*Cost per head (£)*	*Literacy*	*Cost per head (£)*
2003–04	1	128.80	—	
2004–05	1	328.80	1	500.00
2005 (to date)	4	560.70	—	

We are also supporting a number of employees for whom English is not their first language through 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) courses. Delegates can take nationally recognised tests at two levels, the higher of which is the equivalent of a GCSE pass at grade A-C. The courses are funded by the Learning Skills Council.

In the current financial year DEFRA is also assisting six members of staff in undertaking London Public Sector Apprenticeships which contain modules on numeracy and literacy. These are also funded by the Learning Skills Council.

Additionally, literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in DEFRA's programme of centrally funded in-house communication skills and financial management courses which will assist the development of an individual's skills in these areas. Unfortunately, it is not practical to cost out the literacy and numeracy elements in these courses.

DEFRA operates devolved learning and development budgets so there may be staff who request (and obtain) numeracy and literacy training from their own business unit budgets which are not recorded centrally at present.

Milk Prices

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government have calculated a figure for a fair price for a litre of milk. [22726]

Jim Knight: The price of milk at producer, processor and retail level is determined by the market. It is not for Government to determine price.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* highest, *(b)* average and *(c)* lowest price paid per litre to farms for milk was in 2004–05. [22167]

Jim Knight: The Milk Development Council's Datum website shows the highest annual average farm gate milk price for the past 12 months was 21.62 pence per litre (ppl), the average price was 18.96 ppl, and the lowest 17.11 ppl.

The average price is calculated as a raw average of the 40 contracts shown on the latest price notice, irrespective of contract volumes (i.e. not a weighted average).

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average *(a)* farm gate price of a litre of milk, *(b)* cost of producing a litre of milk and *(c)* retail price for a litre of milk was in each year between 1984 and 2004. [22170]

Jim Knight: The information is as follows:

Farm gate prices

Pence per litre

	Excluding any retrospective bonus payments made by purchasers	*Including retrospective bonus payments made by purchasers*
2001	19.13	19.26
2002	17.05	17.10
2003	18.01	18.03
2004[1]	18.45	18.47
2004[1]		
August	18.49	18.51
September	19.48	19.49
October	19.51	19.53
November	19.48	19.50
December	18.92	18.94
2005		
January	18.52	18.54
February	18.31	18.34
March	18.32	18.33
April	17.58	17.60
May	17.11	17.12
June	17.30	17.31
July	18.05	18.07
August	18.45	18.47

[1] Data from this point are provisional.

Source:
DEFRA

The table shows monthly average farm gate milk prices in pence per litre for the last thirteen months for the United Kingdom, and weighted annual averages for 2001 to 2004. The average prices are calculated from monthly surveys of milk purchasers conducted in England and Wales by DEFRA, in Scotland by SEERAD and in Northern Ireland by DARD. The size of the sample surveyed is estimated to account for 99 per cent. of milk production this month. The farm gate price is the average price received by producers, net of delivery charges. No deduction has been made for superlevy.

The University of Manchester report "The Economics of Milk Production England and Wales 2002/03", commissioned by DEFRA and the Welsh Assembly Government, calculated the average weighted cost of production to be 18.33 pence per litre. However the report also found that there is a huge disparity in the costs of production and profitability between the most and least efficient dairy farmers. The 25 per cent. of

farmers with the lowest cost of production were producing milk for an average 12 pence per litre less than the 25 per cent. with the highest costs. Data on production costs broken down by year are not available.

The average UK retail price of whole milk are available from 1986 onwards:

	Pence per litre
1986	42.1
1987	44.4
1988	45.8
1989	49.3
1990	54.5
1991	56.3
1992	59.8
1993	59.8
1994	63.3
1995	63.3
1996	63.3
1997	61.6
1998	59.8
1999	59.8
2000	59.8
2001	65.1
2002	63.3
2003	64.4
2004	61.9
2005 (average to September)	61.4

Note:
The price is an average of shop bought and delivered whole milk.
Source:
ONS

National Equine Database

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what account was taken of the free availability of similar information from other sources when deciding to charge a fee for use of the National Equine Database. [24079]

Jim Knight: The National Equine Database is being established jointly between Defra and the horse industry as it will help to meet Government objectives over passports and disease surveillance and the industry's own objectives to improve its prospects by enhancing breeding. Information about pedigree and performance can be commercially valuable and, although Defra will meet its share of future running costs, the industry will need to cover its costs. Our initial research did show that some basic information is available free from other sources, as it will be from NED. A recent study commissioned jointly with the industry indicated that the combination of the quality and accessibility of the information on the database will enable its costs to be recovered from fees.

Over-30-month Scheme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to amend the over 30 months scheme; and if she will make a statement. [23130]

Jim Knight: The over 30 months scheme is expected to continue after the OTM Rule is lifted on 7 November until the beginning of January 2006 at the earliest. It will then be replaced by a voluntary three-year scheme (the older cattle disposal scheme) to dispose of cattle born before 1 August 1996 which are permanently excluded from the food chain.

Pesticide

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how long she expects the voluntary initiative on pesticide use to stay in place; and if she will make a statement. [22443]

Mr. Morley: The voluntary initiative on pesticides is due to conclude in March 2006. The position beyond this date will depend on the Government's evaluation of the environmental benefits delivered and on the initiative's proposals for future work. We expect new proposals from the Voluntary Initiative Steering Group on future targets and how the initiative proposes to meet those targets by the end of the year.

Poultry Meat

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from which countries imports of poultry meat to the United Kingdom are banned. [23184]

Mr. Bradshaw: Only countries specifically approved to export poultry meat to the EU may do so. Those countries must also have EU approved establishments for slaughtering, cutting and storing fresh poultry meat. Currently the only countries with such premises are Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Israel, Romania and Thailand.

Some of these approved countries are currently experiencing outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). They are China, Thailand, Romania and Croatia. We have banned imports of all live birds and related products (including poultry meat) from those countries. There are no specific bans with respect to HPAI from countries where trade is already prohibited by EU legislation.

Radioactivity

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 617W, on radioactivity, whether *(a)* national Governments and *(b)* industry regulators appointed by them will make the ultimate decision on whether a meter installed under Article 13 of the Energy End Use and Energy Services Directive should be deemed to be technically feasible and cost effective. [23561]

Mr. Morley: Article 13(1) of the draft directive would place an obligation on member states, i.e. national Governments, to ensure that, in so far as that is technically possible, financially reasonable and proportionate in relation to potential savings, final customers are provided with competitively priced individual meters that accurately reflect actual energy consumption and that provide information on actual time of use. If this obligation is included in the final text of the directive, the Government's proposals for implementation will be the subject of formal consultation in due course.

Recycling

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of household waste each local authority in England recycled in 2004–05. [24438]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information on recycling from individual local authorities for 2004–05 is not yet available.

Local authority Best Value Performance Indicators for 2004–05, which include information on household waste recycling rates will be available on 15 December from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.bvpi.gov.uk

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of household waste each council in the Yorkshire and Humber region recycled in the last period for which figures are available. [24762]

Mr. Bradshaw: The latest information on household recycling rates (including composting) are from the 2003–04 DEFRA municipal waste management survey. Full list of household recycling rates for individual local authorities can be found on the DEFRA website:

www.defraweb/environment/statistics/wastats/mwb0304/download/annexb.xls

Renewable Energy

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the Government have a renewable heat strategy; [22204]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the effect on carbon emissions of carbon renewable heat generation. [22206]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Government are presently developing their strategy regarding renewable heat. To inform that process, the Department commissioned with DEFRA a study from Future Energy Systems (FES) to specifically assess the heat sector, the scope it offers for carbon savings and to analyse scope for future Government support. That report is now being considered as part of the work of the climate change programme review. The FES study can be viewed on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk 'Heat Study.'

The Government are also be considering the recommendations of the biomass task force in this area, whose report to Government was published on 25 October 2005. The report can be viewed on the DEFRA website at www.Defra.gov.uk 'Biomass Report.'

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many renewable obligation certificates went to biomass crop-fuelled generation in each year of the operation of the renewables obligation; and how many of these went to co-fired generation. [22334]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) are responsible for the administration of the renewables obligation. Information on renewable obligation certificates (ROCs), issued by generation technology on a monthly basis, is published in Ofgem's annual report on the renewables obligation. While Ofgem's annual report provides a breakdown of ROCs issued for biomass and co-firing generation, it does not distinguish between different fuel sources like crops.

Ofgem's first annual report on the renewables obligation, covering the obligation period from 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003, was published in February 2004. The second annual report, covering the obligation period from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 was published in February 2005. Copies of the annual reports are available from Ofgem's website (www.ofgem.gov.uk).

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the carbon abatement which may be achieved by using biodegradable municipal waste to generate heat. [22335]

Margaret Beckett: The Department of Trade and Industry recently published a report on renewable heat, which estimated that the net carbon savings from generating heat from the biomass fraction of municipal solid waste would amount to 61kgC/MWh compared to using oil to produce heat and 46 kgC/MWh compared to gas. The report is available at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/renewables/policy_pdfs/heatreportfinal.pdf

Snares

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the danger to (i) badgers, (ii) livestock and (iii) domestic animals from snares. [25280]

Jim Knight: DEFRA commissioned an independent working group on snares to examine all issues surrounding the snaring of foxes and rabbits. The group included experts on both animal welfare and wildlife management. The group's report has been published which contains a section examining the risks snares pose to non-target species such as badgers, livestock and domestic animals. In response to the report, DEFRA has published a code of good practice on the use of snares in fox and rabbit control and a DEFRA snares action plan. The documents may be found on:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/snares/index.htm

UK Carbon Emissions

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what emission factors are used in the calculation of UK carbon emissions from natural gas. [22203]

Margaret Beckett: The time series of natural gas carbon emissions factors for each year from 1990 to 2003 in kilotonne carbon per megatherm fuel consumed (kt/Mtherm fuel consumed) is shown in the following table. The time series of UK specific emissions factors is derived from the recent review of carbon emission factors and is used in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

	Natural gas emissions factor (kt/Mtherm fuel consumed)
1990	1.44939
1991	1.45219
1992	1.45500
1993	1.45780
1994	1.46061
1995	1.46392
1996	1.46723
1997	1.47097
1998	1.47471
1999	1.48133
2000	1.47557
2001	1.47715
2002	1.47874
2003	1.48046

UK Exports (Australia)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the effect of the introduction of origin labelling in Australia on UK exports to that country. [22725]

Jim Knight: The objectives of the amendments to country of origin labelling in Australia and New Zealand are to provide consumers with adequate information to make informed choices and to bring existing country of origin labelling in those countries into line with World Trade Organisation agreements. The Government do not envisage that the changes will have a significant effect on UK exports to these markets.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what date the new treatment standards for waste electrical and electronic equipment will be published; and if she will make a statement. [25023]

Mr. Bradshaw: We expect to publish guidance on the selective treatment requirements set out in Annex II of Directive 2002/96/EC on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) at the same time as we make regulations to transpose the treatment permitting requirements of the directive. The guidance is being amended in the light of comments received during an earlier consultation by the Environment Agency and will be available in good time for the implementation of the directive's producer responsibility obligations in respect of WEEE in June 2006.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Africa

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes of policy he expects will be made to give developing countries the freedom and flexibility implied in paragraph 31 of the G8 communique on Africa. [21661]

Ian Pearson: The Government have already announced changes to policy on debt relief and aid conditionally. In March the Government launched a new policy "Partnerships for poverty reduction—rethinking conditionally".

In trade negotiations, no concessions should be demanded from least developed countries. We will strive to ensure that all developing countries have the flexibility to plan and sequence liberalisation in line with national development plans through appropriate special and differential treatment provisions.

Bechtel

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the final cost was of the Bechtel consultancy on the British nuclear industry; and if he will publish the full report from Bechtel. [23692]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Bechtel advised the Department, by means of a contract for services, on matters relating to arrangements for setting up the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Services under the contract included providing strategic management, and direct technical and commercial functions to both the Department and the 'shadow' NDA. The contract was signed on 12 August 2002 and was novated to the NDA on 25 May 2005. The final cost was £23.16 million. The Department did not request a report to be prepared.

Background to the creation of the NDA can be found on its website at www.nda.gov.uk

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultancy projects Bechtel is undertaking for his Department. [23693]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* The Department has no consultancy projects with Bechtel at the present time.

Bolton Business Ventures

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what fund will replace the Phoenix Fund in relation to Bolton Business Ventures Ltd. [24416]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Phoenix Fund was created in 2000 to stimulate enterprise in disadvantaged communities by providing business support and by improving access to finance. It was always intended to be a pump priming measure and was not designed to provide long-term or core funding for business support organisations.

Responsibility for regional economic development and business support now lies with the Regional Development Agencies. However, the Government have introduced the Community Investment Tax Relief to enable organisations like Bolton Business Ventures to raise further finance from the private sector to lend on to small businesses.

BREEAM98

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what rating has been attained under the most recent assessment of the application of BREEAM98. [21509]

Alan Johnson: The most recent BREEAM assessment on the DTI HQ Estate was in 1996, when the major refurbishment of 1 Victoria street achieved a very good rating.

British Steel Industry

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of the consultation conducted by his Department on the impact of proposed new Eurocodes on the British steel industry. [22859]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

Government does not consult on the structural Eurocodes as these are industry standards and guidance, and public consultation is carried out by the British Standards Institute.

Businesses (Knowledge Transfer)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much businesses received through *(a)* collaborative research and development, *(b)* transfer networks and *(c)* knowledge transfer partnerships in (i) the United Kingdom and (ii) Scotland in each of the last 10 years. [22658]

Alan Johnson: The information is as follows:

(a) Collaborative Research and Development:

These are the sums made available through the DTI contributions to LINK and the current grant for collaborative R&D product.

£000

	UK grants	*Grants to Scottish-based businesses*
1988–99	44,679	2,278
1999–2000	6,768	345
2000–01	7,399	377
2001–02	7,824	399
2002–03	7,809	398
2003–04	8,375	427
2004–05	7,763	396
Total	90,618	4,620

Clear Skies and Solar Photovoltaics

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* jobs and *(b)* investment in the UK micro-renewables sector of the decision to end the Clear Skies and Solar Photovoltaics Major Demonstration Programme; and if he will make a statement. [22425]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The Clear Skies and Solar PV Programme have contributed to the development of the micro-generation industry in the UK, including an installer base. The new Low Carbon Buildings Programme will continue to fund the installation of micro-generation technologies in household, community and large-scale projects. The micro-generation strategy will look at removing some of the wider barriers currently hindering market development.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to minimise the gap between the end of the Clear Skies and Solar Photovoltaics Major Demonstration Programme and the start of funding allocations under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. [22426]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* £1.5 million has been brought forward from the £30 million for the Low Carbon Buildings Programme to minimise any potential funding gap between the existing and new programme.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence; [21885]

(2) what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from members of the public. [21907]

Alan Johnson: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently.

All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

My Department has recently centralised correspondence and inquiry handling within a new DTI Response Centre. I believe that this will deliver a better performance in responding to Members' correspondence.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will reply to the letters of 26 May 2005 and 25 July 2005 from the hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells on regulation. [24617]

Alan Johnson: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Competitiveness, responded to these letters on 23 September.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22456]

Alan Johnson: During the period April 2000 to March 2005 the Department consumed gas and electricity as is shown in the table.

	Electricity Mwh	*Electricity Cost (£000)*	*Gas Mwh*	*Gas Cost (£000)*
2004–05	17,190	1,050	6,755	120
2003–04	18,010	957	6,961	137
2002–03	17,087	942	7,924	103
2001–02	17,776	855	7,802	121
2000–01	18,532	929	8,422	115

Departmental Land

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24363]

Alan Johnson: The DTI administrative estate does not include any land or property in the Kettering constituency.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23464]

Alan Johnson: My Department has not incurred any expenditure in 2004–05 on items of art.

Departmental Staff Secondment

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many departmental staff are attached or seconded to small businesses as part of their career development; and which sectors they work in. [1087]

Alan Johnson: There are currently two staff on secondment from the Department of Trade and Industry to small businesses as part of their career development; one to the financial services sector and one to the retail and wholesale sector.

Small companies have shown limited interest in taking secondees from the Department. This may be due to cost implications as the Department seeks full salary reimbursement for all outward secondments.

However, the Department also operates a scheme under which all senior civil servants are required to spend at least one week in a business per year as part of their career development; these businesses often include small businesses across all sectors.

Diesel

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with EU colleagues on strategies to bulk purchase diesel; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of bulk purchasing on cross-European diesel prices. [23565]

Malcolm Wicks: There have been no such discussions. Recent changes in European diesel prices reflect developments in the international oil market rather than changes in purchasing strategies. International oil prices have been high due to general tightness in the oil market caused by strong global demand growth.

Member states of the European Union and the International Energy Agency (IEA) hold emergency oil stocks for release in the event of an international oil supply disruption. The recent co-ordinated response by the UK and other IEA countries made extra supplies available to the market to help it respond more effectively to the disruption caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Displaced Workers (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to expand skills retraining services for displaced workers in Coventry. [24028]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Learning and Skills Council and Job Centre Plus work together to ensure there are a range of opportunities available to support individuals being displaced as a result of redundancies. In conjunction with FE colleges and training providers they ensure that training opportunities are available for those who wish to retrain.

A number of specific measures have been put in place to ensure that Coventry workers displaced as a result of large scale redundancies such as MG Rover, Peugeot and Marconi have access to skills retraining services. This includes securing additional funds as appropriate for example through Rapid Response, European Funding and Advantage West Midlands (RDA) to provide support that cannot be funded through mainstream funds.

E-mail Scams

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the amount of money fraudulently obtained from UK consumers through e-mail scams in each of the past 10 years. [24531]

Alun Michael: The Office of Fair Trading estimates that the UK consumers lose up to £1 billion per year to a variety of scams, but is unable to provide a reliable estimate of how much was obtained specifically from e-mail scams.

India

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value was of *(a)* imports from India to the UK and *(b)* exports to India from the UK in each of the last five years. [24623]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The value of *(a)* imports from India to the UK and *(b)* exports to India from the UK in each of the last five years is set out in the table:

UK trade in goods with India

£ million

	UK Imports	*UK Exports*
2000	1,712	2,056
2001	1,884	1,781
2002	1,870	1,768
2003	2,147	2,293
2004	2,340	2,243

For the period January to July 2005, the value of Imports from India to the UK, in millions, was 1,629; an increase of 23 per cent. based on the corresponding period for 2004. For the same period, the value of exports to India from the UK was 1,643; an increase of 26 per cent. based on the corresponding period for 2004.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of his Department's trade missions involving representatives from companies there have been to India in each of the last five years. [24625]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The total number of outward trade missions from the UK to India during the last five years is 173[1]. The total number of companies that accompanied these missions is 1,148[2]. A breakdown of the number of missions to each post during each of the last five years is set out in the table. The table also includes the total number of companies accompanying these missions.

[1] There are no records available of the number of missions that visited New Delhi and Kolkata in 2000. This may affect slightly the total number of Missions to India during the last five years.
[2] There are no records available of the number of companies that accompanied missions to New Delhi and Kom to India during the last five years.

	New Delhi	*Mumbai (inc. Ahmedabad)*	*Kolkata*	*Chennai (inc. Bangalore and Hyderabad)*	*Total*
2000	No records available	16	No records available	8	24
Number of UK companies	—	176		12	188
2001	1	1	1	3	6
Number of UK companies	2	9	9	19	39
2002	27	9	1	12	49
Number of UK companies	115	49	8	112	284
2003	22	11	0	12	45
Number of UK companies	144	64	0	113	321
2004	20	11	2	16	49
Number of UK companies	118	59	2	137	316

International Trade Agreements

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking towards ensuring that developing countries are not obliged to open up their markets through international trade agreements. [24441]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Government opposes forced opening of developing country markets through trade agreements or aid conditionality. We continue to work with the European Commission and the other member states to secure ambitious, pro-development trade agreements with developing countries.

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget is for the low carbon buildings programme. [22210]

Malcolm Wicks: The budget for the new programme is £30 million over three years.

Miners' Compensation

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total value is of compensation payments paid to former miners in the Rotherham metropolitan borough council area since 2000. [23274]

Malcolm Wicks: The total paid in compensation to former miners and their families in Rotherham borough constituency since 1 January 2000 is £10.4 million.

Nuclear Power

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, whether any assessment has been made of the political stability of countries containing potential sources of uranium for use in the UK's nuclear power reactors. [23086]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has carried out no assessment of the political stability of countries that may be potential sources of uranium for the UK's civilian nuclear power reactors.

Currently the majority of uranium for the UK's civilian nuclear power reactors is sourced from Australia and Canada.

Oil Imports and Exports

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in which years since 1997 the UK has been a net oil *(a)* exporter and *(b)* importer, giving the quantity of oil in each case. [24307]

Malcolm Wicks: Figures for UK oil imports and exports are routinely published in the DTIs annual Digest of UK Energy Statistics and quarterly Energy Trends publications. The UK has been a net exporter of oil (crude and products) since the early 1980s. Annual figures for 1997 to 2004 are shown in the following table with net imports denoted by a minus (−) sign.

Net exports of oil

Million tonnes

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Crude oil and natural gas liquids	36.8	43.5	49.6	41.2	35.4	33.0	23.9	7.5
Refinery feedstocks	−7.4	−6.9	−2.6	−2.7	−2.1	−2.8	−3.2	−5.6
Petroleum products	18.1	13.0	7.8	6.5	1.6	8.1	6.0	10.8
Overall oil	47.5	49.6	54.8	45.0	34.9	38.3	26.7	12.7

Source:
Digest of UK Energy Statistics

UK crude oil production peaked in 1999 and has declined subsequently. The 2003 Energy White Paper noted that the UK is expected to become a net importer of oil by around 2010.

Post Offices

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* sub-post offices and *(b)* post offices there were in (i) the UK and (ii) Westmorland and Lonsdale in each year since 1997. [24548]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). I have therefore asked David Mills, the chief executive of POL, to provide a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Regional Development Agencies

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list *(a)* enterprise gateways, *(b)* enterprise hatcheries and *(c)* enterprise hubs in each regional development agency; and which of them are based in (i) stand alone and (ii) shared premises. [21677]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* I have asked each regional development agency to provide me with the relevant information about the region's activities. I will write to the hon. Member when I have the necessary information and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money each regional development agency has spent on *(a)* providing, *(b)* designing, *(c)* constructing and *(d)* erecting (i) sculptures and (ii) statues in their region in the last five years for which figures are available. [20973]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Some of England's regional development agencies (RDAs) have commissioned sculptures and statues in their regions over the last five years as part of their wider efforts to regenerate deprived or run down areas, consistent with RDAs' statutory purposes set out in the RDAs Act 1998. Making the places where people live and work more attractive, can stimulate increased business investment, and community cohesion. Works of art also play a part in making business paths more attractive and assisting with inward investment and in promoting tourism and interpretation of historic areas and landscapes. RDAs play an important role in such developments, often working in partnership with business, local government and other public and voluntary organisations in order to promote the region and its economy.

Advantage West Midlands (AWM)

Public art plays a role in the West Midlands's regeneration and small area redevelopment. It is very rare that Advantage West Midlands directly funds public art but it contributes to schemes and developments which have an element of public art as part of the overall project.

East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

EEDA do not provide finance for stand alone sculptural pieces.

East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)

EMDA have not commissioned or erected statues or sculpture in its region.

London Development Agency (LDA)

The LDA have contributed to the commissioning of statues through its Single Regeneration Budget programmes:

Public Roundabout Upgrade (Dagenham)—£110,000

CEME Phase 2 Lighting Sculpture (Havering)—£56,000

Bobby Moore Statue, (Green Street)—£103,027

Royal Docks Statue in Canning Town—£25,000

Royal Arsenal Plinth—£25,000 for the cleaning, repairing, moving and erecting the Duke of Wellington Statue on to the raised park at the Royal Arsenal.

One North East (ONE)

One North East have spent the following amounts on purchasing/commissioning sculptures in the region in the last five years:

	£
Being Human	40,800
Generation	62,326
Windmills	30,000

South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA)

SWERDA have spent the following amounts on purchasing/commissioning sculpture in the last five years, as part of wider regeneration projects:

	£
2005–06	280,000
2004–05	436,857
2002–03	5,000
2000–01	600,000

North West Development Agency (NWDA)

Sculpture/statue	Location	NWDA investment (£)
B of the Bang	Berwick, East Manchester	500,000
Sycamore	Manchester	20,000
Rochdale Olympics	Rochdale	50,000
Gateway Statue	Ellesmere Port town centre	80,848
Meadow Lane screen	Ellesmere Port town centre	49,148
Herdi (Herdwick sheep)	Cockermouth	27,000
Spirit of Barrow	Barrow	45,000
Willie Horne Statue	Barrow	40,000
Owl Statue	Jubilee Woodland, Sefton	5,000
Another Place	Crosby Beach, Sefton	90,000
The Mersey Wave	Speke-Garston	1,350,000
Chinese Arch	Liverpool	386,000
New Brighton Pierrot	New Brighton	38,000
Splash Statue	National Football Museum, Preston	90,000
Futures Park	Bacup	5,608
Arts in the Forest	East Lancashire	5,572
Panopticons[1]	East Lancashire	600,000
Thunderbird 3	Blackpool	15,000
Blackpool Circus	Blackpool	100,000
Great Promenade show	Blackpool	46,095
Blackburn town centre	Blackburn	100,000
Mirrorball	Blackpool	n/a
Penelope	Wolstenholme Square, Liverpool	n/a
Total[2]		3,643,271

n/a = Not available.

[1] Panopticons: NWDA has approved £600,000 for this project, which has yet to complete. Spend to date is £273,833.

[2] Total does not include Mirrorball and Penelope—details of these projects are not available at present.

South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA)

SEEDA do not directly commission any sculptures or statues for the region.

Yorkshire Forward

Yorkshire Forward have commissioned the following projects:

Transformation

Commission to Public Arts for temporary sculptural installation in two towns. Cost to Yorkshire Forward £38,938, with £5,000 worth of staff time, therefore total investment of £43,938.

The Green

Commission to Public Arts for temporary installation in five towns. Cost to Yorkshire Forward £106,410 plus £15,000 staff time, therefore total investment of £121,410.

Island Wharf

The first phase of the Humber Quays project which is part of the broader City Centre Masterplan for Hull has £50,000 spent on the following: Sculptural Wave Wall in the plaza—approximately £40,000 including lighting; Sea Trek Statue—reset on a new granite plinth with lighting approximately £10,000.

Bronze Fisherman Statue

Through the Community Intervention Chest in 2002-03 the Grimsby Fishermen's memorial fund were awarded £5,000 towards the costs incurred in the commissioning of the bronze fisherman Statue in Grimsby.

John Wesley Statue

This Statue was also funded through the Community Intervention Chest, but our details are limited. It is believed they were awarded the maximum £5,000 and the Statue was erected in Epworth.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the final funding settlement is for the renewables industry in the current funding programme for renewable energy. [20213]

Malcolm Wicks: I assume the question refers to the low carbon buildings programme, which is due to start in April 2006, subject to state aids clearance and for which the Government have just announced a budget of £30 million over three years.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the final deadlines are for grant funding applications to the *(a)* Clear Skies and *(b)* solar photovoltaics major demonstration programmes. [22212]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows.

(a) The final deadline for Clear Skies community applications was 4 November. For householders there is no set date, grants will be offered up until March 2006 unless forecasting shows that funding will run out sooner, in which case a month's notice will be given.

(b) For the PV demonstration programme the final stream 2 deadline will be in February. For household application grants will be offered up until March 2006 unless forecasting shows funding will run out sooner, in which case a month's notice will be given.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the *(a)* Clear Skies and *(b)* Solar Photovoltaics Major Demonstration Programmes will end; when their successor programmes will begin; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure continuity in the renewables sector. [22337]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows:

(a) The Clear Skies Programme and Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme end in March 2006.

(b) The new Low Carbon Buildings Programme is due to start in April 2006.

£1.5 million of the £30 million budget has been brought forward to the existing programmes to ensure there is a minimal gap between their end and the start of the new programme.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* residential and *(b)* commercial properties (i) contracting to receive renewable energy and (ii) using on-site renewable generation in each year since 1997. [23482]

Malcolm Wicks: No estimates have been made of the number of residential and commercial properties contracted to receive renewable energy, or using on-site renewable generation, in each year since 1997.

In 2004, 3.1 per cent. of electricity came from renewable energy sources eligible under the Renewables Obligation, enough to supply over 2 million households.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been made available for renewable energy sources in the UK in each year since 1997. [24660]

Malcolm Wicks: It has not been possible to collate all public expenditure and other Government support since 1997 for energy technologies in the time available at proportionate cost. However, it is possible to detail direct DTI and Research Council expenditure on renewables energy. These are set out in the tables.

In addition to this both DEFRA and the Scottish Executive provide funding to the Carbon Trust which conducts research into low carbon energy activities among other activities. DEFRA also funds research into combined heat and power, which is also detailed in the tables as follows.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1997–98 (rounded to nearest thousand)

	Spend							
Programme area	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Bio wastes	75,000	48,000	25,000	56,000	13,000	42,000	25,9000	—
Biomass	1,317,000	1,076,000	1,585,000	1,267,000	1,333,000	1,595,000	1,346,000	974,222
Embedded generation	586,000	530,000	596,000	589,000	776,000	1,424,000	725,000	1,105,640
Fuel cells	900,000	1,197,000	1,168,000	1,410,000	1,249,000	1,200,000	1,701,000	4,907,430
Geothermal—aquifers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geothermal—hot dry rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hydro	57,000	80,000	138,000	60,000	130,000	200,000	85,000	0
Solar	1,660,000	983,000	1,278,000	1,264,000	1,522,000	4,485,000	3,131,000	1,970,340
Tidal	0	0	0	27,000	305,000	1,996,000	2,914,000	1,268,530
Wave	0	91,000	11,000	331,000	662,000	748,000	2,104,000	—
Wind	1,240,000	950,000	801,000	913,000	1,248,000	1,428,000	1,395,000	1,459,600

Notes:
1. From 2000–01, figures do not include spend on contracts placed direct by DTI.
2. For 2004–05, highlighted cells show a combined spend for the two areas.

£

DTI capital grant programmes	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Biomass (DTI and lottery spend)	—	—	—	—	—	—	10,000	1,913,000
Offshore wind capital grants	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15,000,000
Clear skies community renewables	—	—	—	—	—	—	200,000	1,387,000
Major PV demo programme	—	—	—	—	—	960,000	2,880,000	6,450,000
DEFRA CHP programme	1,000,000	1,300,000	1,900,000	2,500,000	2,800,000	1,600,000	2,500,000	2,000,000

Note:
Several indirect measures of state support for CHP were introduced in 2001–02. Of those that can be enumerated, climate change levy exemption on fuel inputs to good quality CHP and good quality CHP electricity outputs were valued at up to £80 million per annum, while eligibility for enhanced capital allowances is worth in the region of 10m per annum to the industry. Capital grants for community energy programme schemes were introduced in 2002–03 and the spend on schemes including CHP was: £427,000 in 2002–03, £4,315,000 in 2003–04 and £4,896,000 in 2004–05.

Research council spend

Programme area	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Biofuel	0	0	0	21,540	51,545	143,990	134,929	92,325
Biomass	446,665	870,970	736,434	600,811	700,790	783,026	1,042,526	1,186,257
CHP	4,382	36,297	63,210	77,166	267,313	356,756	225,905	70,791
CO2 sequestration	0	0	0	22,544	41,589	77,787	30,323	42,461
Fuel cells	887,584	1,011,524	703,128	898,637	1,145,076	1,468,042	1,193,165	917,608
Hydrogen	30,348	135,531	59,169	82,976	318,500	516,560	1,494,155	1,495,130
Solar	1,439,835	1,286,000	1,076,000	1,134,000	1,130,000	1,157,000	1,453,023	1,753,334
Photovoltaic	2,254,756	3,001,835	2,759,517	2,991,977	3,536,428	2,770,354	2,381,044	2,761,866
Wave and tidal	0	157,000	175,000	300,599	605,693	616,694	830,226	1,050,253
Wind	199,847	225,903	177,716	260,596	330,283	490,447	481,572	255,672
Wind/solar[1]	0	21,000	21,000	100,000	0	0	0	0
Wind/wave[2]	0	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000
Waste	66,012	9,985	39,652	39,962	95,718	124,826	169,024	154,474
Geothermal	0	0	0	40,493	64,550	63,550	73,460	79,429
Storage	325,808	649,899	669,617	837,918	888,602	809,871	730,182	499,536
Networks	1,347,678	1,167,695	1,081,132	919,165	1,114,793	1,388,490	1,804,749	2,463,125

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to ensure that there is adequate funding for renewable energy sources in the UK. [24661]

Malcolm Wicks: The Renewables Obligation is the Government's main policy to support renewables. The value of the obligation rises every year and will be worth around £1 billion by 2010. On top of this the Government have also committed to further support renewables with £500 million of support for research, development and demonstration of a range of renewable technologies between 2002 and 2008.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on funding targets set for renewable energy sources in the UK; and whether funding targets have been met. [24707]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Government do not have funding targets for renewable energy. The Government have a target of

10 per cent. of electricity from eligible sources of renewable energy by 2010, with an aspiration to double that by 2020.

To support progress towards the Government's renewables target we introduced the renewables obligation (RO) in 2002. The RO requires electricity suppliers to source an increasing proportion of their electricity sales from renewable sources. The RO, together with exemption for renewables from the climate change levy, is expected to provide support to industry of around £1 billion a year by 2010.

We have also allocated support of around £500 million, between 2002 and 2008, for capital grants and research and development, to help develop renewable and other low carbon technologies.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on *(a)* proposals to replace the Major Photovoltaic Demonstration Programme and the Clear Skies Initiative and *(b)* the resources to be made available for new programmes. [24929]

Malcolm Wicks: A new Low Carbon Buildings Programme will supersede the current programmes. This is due to start in April 2006, subject to State Aids approval, with a budget of £30 million over a 3-year period.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on future investment decisions of his decision not to confirm an extension to the renewables obligation beyond 2015. [25032]

Malcolm Wicks: The renewables obligation already continues beyond 2015 to 2027. Under the ongoing review of the renewables obligation, the Government have set out its position that it do not consider that any additional announcements on obligation levels beyond 2015–16 are necessary at this stage.

Given the current gap between ROC-eligible renewable energy generation (3.1 per cent. in 2004) and the obligation level for 2015–16 (15.4 per cent.), we consider that there remain strong incentives within the RO to make new investments in renewable energy.

This position has been extensively discussed with industry and other stakeholders as part of the ongoing consultation.

Royal Mail

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how much compensation was paid to members of the public for letters lost or stolen while in the possession of the Royal Mail in the last three years for which information is available; [24948]

(2) how many letters *(a)* were lost or stolen and *(b)* had items stolen from inside the letter while in the possession of the Royal Mail in the last three years for which information is available. [24949]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Royal Mail. I have therefore asked Adam Crozier, the chief executive of Royal Mail, to provide a direct reply to my hon. Friend.

Information on complaints and compensation are published on the Royal Mail website: http://www.royalmail.group.com/

Security-sensitive Exports

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for the effectiveness of oversight of security-sensitive exports of the change in the number of posts in his Department's Export Control Office. [23549]

Ian Pearson: The reduction in the headcount of the Export Control Organisation has not so far materially affected its effectiveness or efficiency, as measured by the accuracy and timeliness of its licensing decisions. However I shall be monitoring the situation carefully to ensure consistent levels of service.

Small Businesses

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to help small businesses to expand. [24561]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Government places high priority on helping small business to grow and is pleased that SME productivity growth has exceeded "all firms" productivity growth over the 4-year period 1999–2003 (the most recent period for which statistics have been published.

The Government provides a range of support to encourage small businesses to expand and grow, including help with access to finance, measures to improve skills, promoting innovation and help for businesses to export. The way for any small business to gain access to this support is to contact the local Business Link, while the website www.businesslink.gov.uk provides authoritative information from over 40 Government Departments and agencies. We are also active in reducing the regulatory burden on business, freeing more entrepreneurs' time to focus on growth.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants are available for research and development undertaken by small and medium-sized enterprises. [24555]

Alun Michael: The starting point for any business in England is to contact the local Business Link, which exists to provide advice and help in identifying the help available to meet that business's specific needs. In doing so, the Business Link will draw on assistance funded by Government and by others including local government and by commercial and other providers. The assistance provided by Government is as follows:

Each year the DTI invests over £400 million assisting businesses through grants, loans and subsidised consultancy. DTI provides the following help to small and medium-sized businesses to undertake research and development:

"Grant for Research and Development" provides grants to help individuals and small and medium-sized businesses research and develop technologically innovative products and processes.

"Collaborative Research and Development" provides grants to businesses of all sizes to carry out projects in strategically important areas of science, engineering and technology.

Collaborative Research and Development can also be used to fund collaboration with international partners through EUREKA.

Full details of DTI's support for business can be found on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/bss.

Businesses can find details of further sources of help with starting and growing a business through the Grants and Support Directory on www.businesslink.gov.uk/support but will be given a personal service of advice and help by their local Business Link.

UK Trade and Investment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the annual budget for UK Trade and Investment and its predecessor body was in each year from 1997; and what the staff complement was in each year. [20550]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment (formerly British Trade International) was established in 1999. According to its annual report and accounts the annual spend in support of the organisation's objectives for the period 2000–01 (the first year that information is available) until 2004–05 and the staff complement for each of those years is as follows.

£ million

	Total net resources	*Staff numbers*[1]
2000–01	277	2,224
2001–02	257	2,217
2002–03	279	2,303
2003–04	289	2,305
2004–05	291	2,312

[1] Whole time equivalents.

Note:
For 2004–05 the figures are indicative.

Source:
Except for 2004–05, UK Trade and Investment (Formerly British Trade International) published Resource Accounts.

UK/Uganda Trade

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the volume of trade was between the United Kingdom and Uganda in each year since 2001, broken down by product. [24437]

Ian Pearson: The information is as follows:

£000

	UK Exports	*UK Imports*
2001	34,814	8,542
2002	33,666	10,672
2003	36,765	9,448
2004	36,397	13,174

Product breakdown is as follows:

UK trade in goods with Uganda

£000

Section	*Description*	*UK Exports* 2001	2002	2003	2004
0	Food and live animals	487	468	1,766	1,105
1	Beverages and tobacco	367	451	242	385
2	Crude materials, inedible, except fuels	756	654	241	290
3	Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials	11	13	35	19
4	Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes	0	4	0	14
5	Chemicals and related products nes	6,011	4,817	5,554	4,885
6	Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material	1,722	1,937	2,024	3,392
7	Machinery and transport equipment	19,001	19,436	20,493	18,238
8	Miscellaneous manufactured articles	6,384	5,797	6,226	7,863
9	Commodities and transactions not elsewhere classified	73	91	184	205
	Total trade[1]	34,814	33,666	36,765	36,397

UK trade in goods with Uganda

£000

Section	*Description*	*UK Imports* 2001	2002	2003	2004
0	Food and live animals	3,017	2,936	3,205	3,368
1	Beverages and tobacco	2,948	5,476	3,812	2,816
2	Crude materials, inedible, except fuels	1,160	667	594	557
3	Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials	31	0	0	0
4	Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes	0	0	0	14
5	Chemicals and related products nes	21	6	7	1
6	Manufactured goods classified chiefly by material	10	163	46	283
7	Machinery and transport equipment	599	942	1,126	1,459
8	Miscellaneous manufactured articles	518	234	201	3,920
9	Commodities and transactions not elsewhere classified	237	247	456	758
	Total trade[1]	8,542	10,672	9,448	13,174

[1] Total trade figures rounded up/down.

Source:
Compiled by DTI Statistics from HM Revenue and Customs data.

Universal Banking Service

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the universal banking service on financial inclusion of the residents of small rural communities; and if he will make a statement. [22200]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

The move to Direct Payment and the introduction of universal banking services, which have brought banking services into many rural and urban deprived areas for the first time, have resulted in a number of benefits for individuals and the communities in which they live. Many people who were previously financially excluded in these areas now have more choice and improved local access to banking services.

The banking industry have worked with Government to make basic bank accounts, which were specifically designed to address the needs of the financially excluded, more accessible. Since the start of universal banking in April 2003, a net total of around 1.4 million basic bank accounts have been opened—and the majority of these have the facility to withdraw cash at post office counters as well as through bank branches and ATMs. Some 20 million people are able to access their current accounts through post office branches.

In April 2003, only 43 per cent. of DWP customers were paid directly into an account—following the move to Direct Payment and the introduction of universal banking services that figure has now increased to over 97 per cent.

Wholesale Gas Prices

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the likely variability of wholesale gas prices during winter 2005–06. [24058]

Malcolm Wicks: Variability, or volatility, is a normal part of the working of a well-functioning commodity market. Current UK wholesale spot gas prices are determined by the price of oil and the day-to-day balance between demand and supply in the UK gas market.

When the market is tight small changes in demand and supply will have a bigger impact on price volatility than if the market were over-supplied. The balance of demand and supply, and thus the volatility of prices, will depend on many external factors, including the weather and the availability of storage facilities or import infrastructure on a day-to-day basis. In view of the unpredictability of many of these factors it is not possible to make accurate estimates of future price volatility.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the practice of straddling, whereby a domestic retail supplier sells gas at a fixed price and buys gas at a variable wholesale price. [24059]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have not undertaken an assessment of this practice.

Pricing decisions in the retails gas market are a commercial matter for suppliers.

Wind Energy

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what capital grants have been allocated to *(a)* onshore and *(b)* offshore wind projects in each of the last five years. [23013]

Malcolm Wicks: The following table gives a breakdown of capital grants that have been allocated to offshore wind projects in each of the last five years. The information is based on the contract offer letter issued by the DTI.

Project		*Capital grant (£ million)*
North Hoyle	2003	10
Scroby Sands	2003	10
Kentish Flats	2003	10
Robin Rigg (OERL)	2003	9
Robin Rigg (SOL)	2003	9
Lynn	2003	10
Rhyl Flats	2003	10
Burbo	2003	10
Barrow Offshore	2004	10
Inner Dowsing	2004	10
Gunfleet Sands	2005	9
Norfolk Offshore	2005	10
Total	—	117

The Big Lottery funded the capital grant for Burbo. No capital grants have been allocated to onshore wind projects.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the merits of the construction of wind turbines on electricity pylons. [25722]

Malcolm Wicks: No consideration has been given by the Department to the construction of wind turbines on electricity pylons. This would be a question for transmission operators/National Grid and project developers to consider.

World Trade Organisation

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure full account is taken of the interests of developing countries during the World Trade Organisation negotiations on agriculture. [24440]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Yes. The Government continues to work for an ambitious, pro-development outcome to the World Trade Organisation negotiations, including on agriculture.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the European Commissioner for External Trade regarding *(a)* the forthcoming World Trade Organisation meeting in Hong Kong in December and *(b)* economic partnership agreements with developing nations. [24234]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State and I have discussed progress in both the World Trade Organisation negotiations and the economic partnership agreements with Trade Commissioner Peter

Mandelson on a regular basis and will continue work with him to secure an ambitious, pro-development outcome to these negotiations.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the outcome of discussions held on 19 and 20 October with World Trade ministers on the preparations for the World Trade summit in Hong Kong on 13 December. [25174]

Ian Pearson: Pascal Lamy, Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) gave a report to the General Council Meeting of 19 and 20 October on the progress in Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations. He stated that positions were still far apart on agriculture, and identified an urgent need for progress on NAMA, services and rules. He said that he hoped to circulate draft texts for the Hong Kong ministerial by mid-November.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will support at the World Trade summit measures to allow developing countries the right to set their own level of tariff reductions in accordance with their own development needs. [25175]

Ian Pearson: Yes. The Government believe that it is for developing countries to make their own decisions on the timing, pace, sequencing and product coverage of any market opening in line with their own national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisoners

13. **Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes have been committed by people who have been released from prison before the end of their sentence in each of the last eight years. [24802]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In the year ending 31 March 2005, 3,794 prisoners were released on parole licence and 265 prisoners were charged with a further offence.

In the same period, 18,799 prisoners were placed on the home detention curfew scheme and 965 prisoners were charged with a further offence.

I have placed information relating to the period 1997–98 to 2003–04 in the Library.

Mr. Goodwill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department What projections he has made of the prison population in the next 12 months; and what steps he is taking to ensure projected numbers are accommodated. [24804]

Fiona Mactaggart: The most recent published update to the prison population projections was in July 2005. It indicated a range of estimates for 10 scenarios up to 2011.

Current population levels are higher than the projected estimates. The situation is being closely monitored. We are managing the population by increasing the operational capacity of the prison estate by bringing accommodation back into use more quickly from refurbishment and through additional places built at existing prisons.

Terrorism Bill

14. **Dr. Kumar:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with ethnic minorities on the Terrorism Bill. [24803]

Paul Goggins: Following the events of the 7 July and 21 July, Home Office Ministers and officials have been involved in ongoing discussions with a range of communities, and in particular with the Muslim communities through the Preventing Extremism Together workgroups. Draft clauses of the Terrorism Bill were made public on 15 September and further revised clauses were made available on 6 October so that everyone with an interest had an opportunity to comment.

Domestic Violence

16. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that measures in place to protect children and mothers from domestic violence and abuse are effective. [24805]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Plan for Domestic Violence includes a set of measures to ensure that domestic violence victims and their children are identified, protected and supported. These include, screening within health and social care settings and training for professionals within these sectors and the criminal justice system. The additional measures in the CJS ensure more effective case management of perpetrators giving greater protection for victims.

These measures are also being managed on a quarterly basis by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence.

Illegal Workers

18. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to prevent people who are in the country illegally from working. [24807]

Andy Burnham: The Government are firmly committed to tackling illegal migrant working. We have taken steps to strengthen the relevant legislation by reforming section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 and by supporting my friend's initiative on gangmaster licensing. We are introducing new measures for a civil penalty regime and a tougher criminal offence for employers in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill, currently before the House. Our strategy also involves increasing enforcement, encouraging compliance by business, and developing joint working between agencies responsible for enforcing workplace regulations. We have also increased removals of those in breach of immigration laws.

Violent Crime

19. **Mr. Pelling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department What measures he is taking to tackle Violent Crime. [24808]

Hazel Blears: The Government are currently taking forward a very full range of work which will continue to reduce violent crime. We are introducing new measures which will give police and local communities the powers they need to tackle guns, knives and alcohol-related violence in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which is currently before Parliament.

Identity Cards

20. **Mr. David Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the cost of identity cards. [24809]

Andy Burnham: Our current best estimate of the average unit cost of the combined passport and ID card package is £93; around 70 per cent. of these costs would be incurred anyway because of the worldwide move to biometric passports. Within our current financial estimates for the scheme it will be affordable to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a standalone ID card valid for 10 years.

Young Soldiers (Deaths)

21. **Meg Hillier:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the police inquiry into the deaths of young soldiers at Deepcut. [24810]

Hazel Blears: Devon and Cornwall police have completed their review of Surrey police's investigation into the deaths of the soldiers at Deepcut barracks.

This was submitted to Surrey police on 31 August 2005.

Traffic Offences

22. **Dr. Pugh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward proposals to make it an offence for occupants of cars to refuse to identify the driver after a serious offence has been committed; and if he will make a statement. [24811]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is already an offence to refuse to identify the driver of a vehicle when required to do so by the police. Section 172(2)(a) Road Traffic Act 1988 requires the keeper of a vehicle to give information required by the police about the identity of the driver of his vehicle where the driver is alleged to be guilty of any of a number of offences in road traffic legislation. Section 172(2)(b) requires any other person to give information which is in his power to give and may lead to identification of the driver. Section 172(3) RTA 1988 provides that it is an offence to fail to provide this information.

Asylum Seekers

24. **Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers are being held in detention. [24813]

Andy Burnham: As at 25 June 2005, the most recent date for which published figures are available, there were a total of 2,155 individuals detained. Of these, 1,689 were recorded as having sought asylum at some stage.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the budget for immigration centres designed to hold asylum seekers has been since 2001. [19385]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) budget on running immigration removal centres for each of the years from 2001–02 is supplied in the table.

	£000
2001–02	61,941
2002–03	36,940
2003–04	50,439
2004–05	79,551
2005–06	81,908

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the last five years; and how many failed asylum seekers are awaiting return. [22412]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the destination that failed asylum seekers are returned to is only available since January 2004. The number of asylum seekers returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo between January 2004 and June 2005 is given in the table.

Information on nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo who are removed from the UK as failed asylum seekers are published on the Home Office website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Information on the number of asylum seekers awaiting removal could be ascertained by examination of individual case files only at a disproportionate cost.

Removals, voluntary departures[1], assisted returns of asylum applicants to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2004 to Q2 2005[2,3]

	Principal applicants removed
2004	[3]15
2005[4]	[3]15

[1] Includes enforced removals, persons departing 'voluntarily' following enforcement action initiated against them, and persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest 5.
[3] Provisional figures.
[4] January to June.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what resources are made available to asylum seekers when they arrive in the UK; and what the cost was of the provision of such resources in the last year for which figures are available. [22951]

Mr. McNulty: The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) contracts with both the voluntary sector and/or local authorities to provide services for asylum seekers on arrival in the UK. A network of initial accommodation sites provide a variety of services, including advice on the claim process, the claimant's rights and responsibilities while the claim is under consideration and the provision of health assessments (including TB screening). The cost

of initial accommodation bed spaces during 2004–05 was £52.6 million. A further £11.7 million was spent on associated services.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to remove failed asylum seekers. [23095]

Mr. McNulty: Between 1994 and 2004, the number of failed asylum seekers (principle applicants) removed from the UK has more than trebled.

The Government have introduced a number of measures to ensure that we return those failed asylum seekers who have no basis of stay in the United Kingdom, and who fail to leave voluntarily. These include increased staffing; more intelligence led operations; increasing the use of charter flights; expanding the detention estate; enhancing contact management by introducing measures such as electronic tagging and promoting and increasing the number of voluntary returns and seeking greater co-operation from overseas counterparts to speed up documentation and open up more return routes.

Alcohol-related Crime

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to deal with alcohol-related crime. [23123]

Paul Goggins: The Violent Crime Reduction Bill contains new measures for the police and local communities to tackle alcohol-related violence. The new measures will target both the individual and the collective responsibility of the alcohol industry through Alcohol Disorder Zones, Drinking Banning Orders, 48-hour directions to leave and powers to close premises for up to 48 hours where alcohol is persistently sold to under-18s. The Bill will build on the Licensing Act 2003, which comes into force on 24 November and expands police powers to tackle badly run premises—through more effective reviews and revocation of licences where appropriate—as well as increasing many of the penalties and fines for alcohol-related offences.

We are also taking forward a comprehensive Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme which will tackle a range of alcohol harms, including crime, and is being implemented across Government. Recent activities in the programme have included a series of Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns in which the police have clamped down on binge and under-age drinking. And we have been working closely with the alcohol industry to develop a Principles and Standards document which will help retailers and producers to prevent sales to under-age children and drunks, put an end to irresponsible drinks promotions and put in place end of evening dispersal policies to help drinkers get home safely and quickly.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of antisocial behaviour have been reported to police in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [24285]

Hazel Blears: There is currently no data on the number of incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB) due to the subjective nature of ASB itself. The latest data collected on ASB relates to the public perception of ASB in England and Wales and is measured by the British Crime Survey.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 343W, on antisocial behaviour orders, how many of the 793 individuals who breached their ASBO between 1 June 2000 and 31 December 2003, consequentially received a custodial sentence. [24076]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 343W.

Of the 793 individuals who breached their antisocial behaviour order on one or more occasions between 1 June 2000 and 31 December 2003, 437 received a custodial sentence.

Anti-trafficking Operation (West Midlands)

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the four non-EU national women rescued in the anti-trafficking operation by West Midlands police on 29 September will be granted temporary admission to the UK. [22543]

Mr. McNulty: Of the six non-EEA national women who were brought to the attention of the Immigration Service by the West Midlands Police, four stated that they had not been trafficked. The two women who claim to have been trafficked have been released into the care of a Home Office funded support group.

Avian Influenza (Prisons)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what contingency plans have been put in place by his Department to safeguard the containment of prisoners in the event of an avian influenza epidemic; and if he will make a statement; [19220]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Ministry of Defence concerning the safeguarding of prisons in the eventuality of an avian influenza outbreak. [19221]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The Prison Service is taking advice from the Department of Health, as are all Government Departments, as to the potential effects of an influenza pandemic upon its workforce and the prisoners in its care.

A working group, which includes representatives from external agencies in addition to its own operational and policy personnel, has been formed to draft guidance to assist prison governors prepare local business continuity plans. These plans will be linked to those of local primary care trusts, emergency services and emergency planning authorities. They will continue to reflect security and the safety of the public as a key responsibility.

Bonded Labour

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of bonded labourers in the United Kingdom held by people smugglers. [22838]

Mr. McNulty: No estimate has been made of the number of bonded labourers in the United Kingdom held by people smugglers.

Border Security

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of securing the UK's borders has been since 1997. [22952]

Mr. McNulty: The budget allocated to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate for Border Control for 2005–06 is £178 million.

It is not possible to obtain the previous amounts of funding allocated as this information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Common EU Border Police Force

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy on the creation of a common EU border police force. [23094]

Andy Burnham: Like the majority of EU member states, the UK Government remains unconvinced of the need for a standing EU border force. There are many practical actions and concrete measures that can be taken forward with EU partners without the need to go as far as creating a European border police.

For example we are committed to working together on targeted EU joint operations aimed at strengthening the EU's external borders and to this end we fully support the aims and objectives of the recently-established EU Border Agency (Frontex).

The EU's Hague Programme refers to a feasibility study into a "European system of Border Guards" but makes no commitment to establishing one. The feasibility study will take place in 2007, as part of the review of the Border Agency.

Community Support Officers

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers there have been in *(a)* the South Tyneside area command and *(b)* Northumbria in each year since their inception. [24288]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of community support officers (CSOs) in basic command units (BCUs) has only been collected since June 2005. At 30 June 2005 there were 13 CSOs in the South Tyneside BCD. CSOs were introduced nationally during 2002–03. Northumbria police did not have any CSOs as of 31 March 2003, but had 51 at the end of March 2004, and 129 at the end of June 2005.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 22 September 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester Gorton with regard to Mr. Abdul Khaleq. [24415]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 3 November 2005.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of victims and qualifying applicants eligible for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1995 made an application under the scheme in each of the last five years for which records are available. [21547]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to estimate what proportion of victims of violent crime might have sustained an injury sufficiently serious to qualify for an award of compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme and who might also have satisfied the other qualifying criteria set out in the scheme.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what stage of the legal process victims and qualifying applicants are informed about the possibility of applying for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. [21548]

Fiona Mactaggart: The police provide victims of reported crime with the leaflet "Victims of Crime—the help and advice that's available". This has a section on compensation which includes information about the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, including the CICA website address and other contact details.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23842]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. John Hutton) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Drinking Ban

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many locations a ban on drinking in public places has been imposed; and how many local authorities have bans in place. [23563]

Paul Goggins: 299 separate localities in 56 local authorities have been designated under section 13(2) of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 as public places where the consumption of alcohol is banned under section 12 of the aforementioned Act. This information is available and updated regularly at www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

Drug Rehabilitation

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prison facility funding was spent on drug rehabilitation schemes in the last period for which figures are available. [18696]

Fiona Mactaggart: Out of a total £1,865 million allocated to run prisons during 2005–06, £61 million of additional funding has been provided to deliver drug treatment. This equates to 3.2 per cent. of the total allocation. The baseline figure for drug treatment expenditure is not available centrally.

Drug Smugglers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what punishments are available for drug smugglers who are caught by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. [22955]

Paul Goggins: The maximum penalty for the importation or exportation of class A drugs is life imprisonment; for class B substances it is 14 years. A court may alternatively or additionally impose a fine of any amount. Community penalties are also available.

Where an offender is convicted for the third time of an offence of importation, exportation, production, supply or possession with intent to supply class A drugs the court must impose a sentence of at least seven years save in exceptional circumstances.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much, in *(a)* metric weight and *(b)* street value, of the (i) heroin and (ii) meta-amphetamine supply in the UK he estimates originated in Burma in 2004–05. [23646]

Paul Goggins: Drugs seizures from April to December 2004 show no evidence that any of the heroin and methamphetamine in the UK originated in Burma.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings of the *(a)* EU Committee on the introduction of a uniform format for visas, *(b)* EU Committee for the implementation of the community action programme on preventive measures to fight violence against children, young persons and women (Daphne) and *(c)* EU committee for the european refugee fund are planned for the UK presidency of the EU; who will be presiding over each meeting; which other UK representatives will be present; what provision is in place for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [16462]

Andy Burnham: With respect to the number of working parties and their representatives;

(a) The visa working party takes forward measures on a range of matters connected with the EU common visa policy, including the uniform format visa. There are currently six meetings of this working group planned during the UK presidency. The chair of the group during the UK presidency is an official from the UK Permanent Representation to the European Union (UKREP). Other UK representatives at the meeting will vary depending on the items on the agenda but normally consist of officials from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and UKvisas.

(b) The EU Committee for the implementation of the Community action programme on preventive measures to fight violence against children, young persons and women (Daphne II Programme 2004- 08) met on 8 September and there are no further meetings of the committee scheduled to take place within the UK presidency of the EU. The committee meetings are chaired by officials from the European Commission and the UK is represented on the Committee by a Home Office official (for domestic violence and violence against women), an official from the Department of Health (for child protection issues).

(c) The ERF committee met on 6 October 2005, no further meetings are planned during the UK presidency. The committee meeting was chaired by an official from the European Commission and the UK was represented by officials from the immigration and nationality directorate.

The UK Government take into account the views and interests of the devolved administrations when formulating the UK's policy position on all EU and international issues which touch upon devolved matters. Provision for attendance at EU meetings by Ministers and officials of the devolved administrations is set out in paragraphs 4.12–15 of the Concordat on Co-ordination of European Union Policy Issues (part of the Memorandum of Understanding between devolved Ministers and the UK Government). Ministers from the devolved administrations have attended and do attend Councils, by agreement with the lead Whitehall Minister.

A copy is available on the internet at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/constitution/devolution/pubs/odpm_dev_600629.pdf

Europe Goes Alternative Conference

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if a Minister from his Department will attend the Europe Goes Alternative Conference in Brussels on 7 November. [21389]

Andy Burnham: Due to prior Home Office Parliamentary commitments, a Home Office Minister will not be attending the Europe Goes Alternative Conference in Brussels on 7 November. However we hope that the Home Office Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor Paul Wiles, will be speaking at the meeting. Other Home Office Officials with responsibilities under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and EU Directive 86/609/EEC will be attending.

Historical Sex Abuse Cases

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many strategic management groups have been established in historical sex abuse investigations; and how many were chaired by *(a)* the police and *(b)* social services. [20175]

Paul Goggins: Information on the number of strategic management groups, and who chairs them, is not collected centrally.

Infant Life Preservation Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of the Infant Life Preservation Act 1929; [20095]

(2) if he will make a statement about the operation of the Infant Life Preservation Act 1929. [20629]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 makes it an offence, in England and Wales, to cause the death of an unborn child by any wilful act done with intent to destroy the child's life, if the child was capable of being born alive, unless such an act was done in good faith to preserve the life of the mother. The Act presumes a fetus to be viable at 28 weeks. A conviction under the Act carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Under section 5(1) of the Abortion Act 1967, any medical practitioner who acts in accordance with the Abortion Act will not commit an offence under the 1929 Act.

There have been two cases under the Infant Life (Preservation) Act in the last five years.

Kagho Sebata

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will accede to the request by Kagho Sebata (Home Office reference number S1038309) for the return of his passport; and if he will make a statement. [22858]

Mr. McNulty: The immigration service responded to Mr. Sebata on 28 October 2005. In that letter he was asked to provide flight details to the immigration office in Poole who will then make arrangements for his passport to be available for him to travel.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23432]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department does not collect information centrally on the amount spent on literacy and numeracy development. The Department seeks to embed literacy and numeracy development into a range of training courses offered to staff as well as working in partnership with external providers to offer literacy and numeracy development leading to national qualification which have so far not incurred significant additional cost to the Department. Provision of a breakdown of training costs for literacy and numeracy provision would incur a disproportionate cost.

Marcus Downie

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department plans to take to change the practices and procedures for monitoring the taking of medication by prisoners suffering from mental illness following the verdict from the inquest on the death of Marcus Downie. [19193]

Fiona Mactaggart: We will be studying any findings arising from the inquest very carefully and will then consider any action that may be appropriate.

National Offender Management Service

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects that some probation areas will cease to function under the National Offender Management Service proposals. [23542]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Under the proposals set out in the consultation paper 'Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending', probation 'trusts' will become one of a number of possible providers of probation services. Their continued existence will depend on their ability to contribute to the reduction of re-offending and thereby win business.

This is about finding the best provider for the job, whether from private, voluntary and community or public sector.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the probation boards will be retained under the National Offender Management Service designer model. [23543]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* As we have set out in our consultation paper 'Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending', we propose that probation boards cease to exist in their present form and be reconstituted as new bodies, provisionally termed 'trusts', with whom the Secretary of State may contract for probation services.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff who have been transferred to the National Offender Management Service since January 2004 have subsequently transferred back. [23544]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* In April 2005 28 staff who had transferred to the National Offender Management Service since January 2004 were loaned back at the request of the Prison Service to work on a Prison Service project.

There have been no other large scale transfers of staff back to either the Prison Service or national probation directorate although some individual staff may have chosen to transfer back through normal vacancy advertising procedures. We do not hold central records on individual career moves.

Non-custodial Sentences

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people convicted of crimes received a non-custodial sentence since 1997, broken down *(a)* by ethnicity and *(b)* by offences for which they were convicted. [23481]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of

people convicted for crimes who received a non-custodial sentence, by offence type, England and Wales, 1997–2003 is shown in the table.

Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

The available information on the number of non-custodial sentences for indictable offences at the Crown Court, broken down by ethnicity, England and Wales for 2003 is as follows:

	Number
White	16,134
Black	1,590
Asian	1,224
Other	561
Unknown	9,569
Total	29,081

Ethnicity data for magistrates courts is not available. Data for the Crown Court prior to 2003 is also not available.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts by offence type and sentenced to a non custodial sentence, England and Wales, 1997–2003[1]

	1997		*1998*	
Offence type	*Found guilty*	*Non custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non custodial sentence*
Violence against the person	34,562	24,306	37,050	26,042
Sexual offences	4,523	1,954	4,567	1,903
Burglary	31,703	17,318	30,769	16,540
Robbery	5,589	1,589	5,542	1,600
Theft and handling stolen goods	118,440	98,818	125,743	103,429
Fraud and Forgery	17,006	13,323	19,753	15,511
Criminal damage	10,513	9,327	10,943	9,546
Drug offences	40,666	32,689	48,821	40,324
Other indictable offences	46,255	38,508	48,147	39,990
Indictable motoring offences	9,469	7,838	8,935	7,439
Summary offences (exc motoring)	414,233	406,564	460,475	451,524
Summary motoring offences	641,556	627,303	656,821	642,362
Total	1,374,515	1,279,537	1,457,566	1,356,210

	1999		*2000*	
Offence type	*Found guilty*	*Non custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non custodial sentence*
Violence against the person	35,700	24,945	35,270	24,119
Sexual offences	4,304	1,695	3,943	1,510
Burglary	29,261	14,984	26,222	13,017
Robbery	5,626	1,567	5,891	1,603
Theft and handling stolen goods	131,224	106,221	127,972	101,597
Fraud and Forgery	20,303	16,166	19,222	15,423
Criminal damage	10,872	9,476	10,250	8,937
Drug offences	48,711	40,215	44,621	36,813
Other indictable offences	46,572	38,618	43,265	35,148
Indictable motoring offences	8,083	6,629	7,549	5,931
Summary offences (exc motoring)	431,508	421,596	488,663	479,242
Summary motoring offences	626,107	610,351	600,691	584,661
Total	1,398,271	1,292,463	1,413,559	1,308,001

	2001		*2002*	
Offence type	*Found guilty*	*Non custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non custodial sentence*
Violence against the person	35,298	24,047	37,708	25,981
Sexual offences	4,043	1,637	4,384	1,811
Burglary	24,802	12,179	26,691	13,026
Robbery	6,822	2,071	7,711	1,850
Theft and handling stolen goods	126,986	100,205	127,333	98,772
Fraud and Forgery	18,282	14,380	18,141	14,369
Criminal damage	10,651	9,324	11,000	9,648
Drug offences	45,621	37,180	49,036	40,731
Other indictable offences	42,709	34,632	46,838	37,968
Indictable motoring offences	7,687	5,938	8,239	6,216
Summary offences (exc motoring)	440,266	431,046	485,485	475,808
Summary motoring offences	576,562	559,610	589,635	572,717
Total	1,339,729	1,232,249	1,412,201	1,298,897

Offence type	2003 Found guilty	2003 Non custodial sentence
Violence against the person	38,036	26,563
Sexual offences	4,355	1,828
Burglary	25,726	13,540
Robbery	7,303	2,189
Theft and handling stolen goods	119,098	93,077
Fraud and Forgery	18,019	14,164
Criminal damage	11,233	9,911
Drug offences	51,162	43,072
Other indictable offences	50,023	40,827
Indictable motoring offences	8,696	6,501
Summary offences (exc motoring)	491,755	482,044
Summary motoring offences	655,815	638,426
Total	1,481,221	1,372,142

[1] These data are based on the principal offence basis.

Offences Against the Person Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of sections *(a)* 58 and *(b)* 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861; [20094]

(2) if he will make a statement about the operation of sections 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. [20628]

Fiona Mactaggart: Section 58 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 makes it an offence to administer drugs or any noxious substance, or to use an instrument or other means with the intention of causing a miscarriage. It is also an offence for a pregnant woman to administer a noxious thing to herself or to use other means to cause herself to miscarry.

The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Under section 59 of the 1861 Act it is an offence to supply or procure any noxious thing or instrument knowing it is intended to be used to cause a woman to miscarry her pregnancy.

The maximum penalty is five years imprisonment.

Under section 5(2) of the Abortion Act 1967, any medical practitioner who acts in accordance with the Abortion Act will not commit an offence under the 1861 Act.

There has been one case under section 58 of the 1861 Act in the last five years.

Passports

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will return the passport of Mr. M.J. of Wendover, Buckinghamshire, (case reference J1124857; IA/02413/2005). [22430]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Mr. M.J.'s passport was returned to him with notice of the decision to refuse his application on 21 June 2005. A letter has been sent to Mr. M.J. on 27 October requesting that he return his passport to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), following the decision of the adjudicator to allow his appeal against the refusal. Once IND receive Mr. M.J.'s passport it will be endorsed appropriately and returned to him within one week.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of requests for return of documents resulted in the issuing of a loss of passport letter by the Home Office passport unit in *(a)* 1997–98, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03, *(d)* 2003–04, *(e)* 2004–05 and *(f)* 2005 to date; and if he will make a statement. [18972]

Andy Burnham: The immigration and nationality directorate general group processes all applications for variation of leave to remain from in-country applicants. It also considers all applications for Home Office travel documents from non-British nationals, and issues travel documents where it is appropriate to do so. Please see the table for management information.

Prior to 2001–02 information on lost passport letters issued by General Group was not collected. Information on the proportion of requests for return of documents which subsequently result in the issue of a loss of passport letter is only available from April 2005. From April to September 2005, the Home Office Passport Unit received 6,239 requests for return of documents. In the same period 378 lost passport letters were issued, a proportion of 6.06 per cent.

Period	Decisions made	Lost passport letters issued	Percentage loss against decisions
2001–02	380,000	53	0.01
2002–03	403,000	335	0.8
2003–04	504,000	469	0.8
2004–05	550,097	[1]292	[2]0.05
2005–06[3]	261,011	[4]103	[5]0.04

[1] Plus 530 Royal Mail losses.

[2] Plus 0.09 per cent. Royal Mail losses.

[3] April-September 2005

[4] Plus 275 Royal Mail losses

[5] Plus 0.10 per cent. Royal Mail losses.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many loss of passport letters were issued by the Home Office Passport Unit in *(a)* 1997–98, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03, *(d)* 2003–04, *(e)* 2004–05 and *(f)* 2005 to date; and if he will make a statement. [18973]

Andy Burnham: Immigration and nationality directorate general group processes all applications for variation of leave to remain from in-country applicants. It also considers all applications for Home Office travel documents from non-British nationals, and issues travel documentation where it is appropriate to do so.

Management information provided by General Group is in the following table. Prior to 2001–02 information on lost passport letters issued by General Group was not collected.

Table—PQ 18973

Period	*Decisions made*	*Lost passport letters issued*	*Loss against decisions (percentage)*
2001–02	380,000	53	0.01
2002–03	403,000	335	0.08
2003–04	504,000	469	0.08
2004–05	550,097	[1]292	[2]0.05
2005–06[3]	261,011	[4]103)	[5]0.04

[1] Plus 530 Royal Mail losses.
[2] Plus 0.09 per cent. Royal Mail losses.
[3] April to September 2005.
[4] Plus 275 Royal Mail losses.
[5] Plus 0.10 per cent. Royal Mail losses

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Northern Ireland have a valid British passport. [21242]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service does not hold this information. However between October 2004 and September 2005, 142,101 British passports were issued to persons with addresses in Northern Ireland.

Police

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the areas to which police neighbourhood teams have been allocated in each London local authority area. [24224]

Hazel Blears: The roll-out of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams is a matter for the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service.

A list of areas where Safer Neighbourhoods teams are currently operating has been provided by the Metropolitan Police Service and is contained in the table.

Safer Neighbourhoods Teams

Local authority	*District*
Barking and Dagenham	Abbey
Barking and Dagenham	Chadwell Heath
Barking and Dagenham	Gascoigne
Barking and Dagenham	Goresbrook
Barking and Dagenham	Mayesbrook
Barking and Dagenham	River
Barking and Dagenham	Thames
Barking and Dagenham	Village
Barking and Dagenham	Whalebone
Barnet	Burnt Oak
Barnet	Childs Hill
Barnet	Colindale
Barnet	East Barnet
Barnet	East Finchley
Barnet	Edgware
Barnet	High Barnet
Barnet	West Hendon
Bexley	Belvedere
Bexley	Christchurch
Bexley	Colyers
Bexley	Cray Meadows
Bexley	East Wickham
Bexley	Erith
Bexley	Falconwood and Welling
Bexley	North End
Bexley	St Mary's
Bexley	Thamesmead East
Brent	Dudden Hill
Brent	Fryent
Brent	Harlesden
Brent	Kensal Green
Brent	Kilburn
Brent	Stonebridge
Brent	Wembley Central
Brent	Willesden Green
Bromley	Biggin Hill
Bromley	Bromley Town
Bromley	Copers Cope
Bromley	Cray Valley East
Bromley	Darwin
Bromley	Hayes and Coney Hall
Bromley	Mottingham and Chislehurst North
Bromley	Orpington
Bromley	Penge and Cator
Camden	Caniclowes
Camden	Gospel Oak
Camden	Hampstead Town
Camden	Haverstock
Camden	Kilburn
Camden	Regent's Park
Camden	St. Pancras and Somers Town
Camden	Swiss Cottage
Croydon	Bensham Manor
Croydon	Broad Green
Croydon	Coulsdon East
Croydon	Fieldway
Croydon	New Addington
Croydon	Selhurst
Croydon	South Norwood
Croydon	Thornton Heath
Croydon	Triangle
Croydon	Waddon
Croydon	Woodside
Ealing	Dormers Wells
Ealing	Ealing Broadway
Ealing	East Acton
Ealing	Northolt West End
Ealing	Norwood Green
Ealing	South Acton
Ealing	Southall Broadway
Ealing	Southall Green
Enfield	Edmonton Green
Enfield	Enfield Highway
Enfield	Enfield Lock
Enfield	Lower Edmonton
Enfield	Palmers Green
Enfield	Southbury
Enfield	Southgate
Enfield	Town
Enfield	Upper Edmonton
Greenwich	Abbey Wood
Greenwich	Charlton
Greenwich	Coldharbour and New Eltham
Greenwich	Eltham West
Greenwich	Greenwich West
Greenwich	Middle Park and Sutcliffe
Greenwich	Woolwich Common
Greenwich	Woolwich Riverside
Hackney	Brownswood
Hackney	Chatham
Hackney	Dalston
Hackney	Hackney Central
Hackney	Haggerston
Hackney	Lenbridge
Hackney	New River
Hackney	Queensbridge
Hammersmith and Fulham	Addison
Hammersmith and Fulham	Askew
Hammersmith and Fulham	College Park and Old Oak
Hammersmith and Fulham	Fulham Broadway
Hammersmith and Fulham	Hammersmith Broadway
Hammersmith and Fulham	North End
Hammersmith and Fulham	Parsons Green and Walham
Hammersmith and Fulham	Ravenscourt Park
Hammersmith and Fulham	Sands End
Hammersmith and Fulham	Shepherd's Bush Green
Hammersmith and Fulham	Town
Hammersmith and Fulham	Wormholt and White City

Safer Neighbourhoods Teams

Local authority	District
Haringey	Crouch End
Haringey	Hornsey
Haringey	Muswell Hill
Haringey	Stroud Green
Haringey	Tottenham Green
Haringey	West Green
Haringey	White Hart Lane
Haringey	Woodside
Harrow	Edgware
Harrow	Greenhill
Harrow	Kenton West
Harrow	Marlborough
Harrow	Pinner
Harrow	Roxbourne
Harrow	Roxeth
Harrow	Wealdstone
Havering	Brocklands
Havering	Elm Park
Havering	Heaton
Havering	Hylands
Havering	Rainham and Wennington
Havering	South Hornchurch
Havering	St. Andrew's
Havering	Upminster
Hillingdon	Botwell
Hillingdon	South Ruislip
Hillingdon	Townfield
Hillingdon	Uxbridge North
Hillingdon	Uxbridge South
Hillingdon	West Drayton
Hillingdon	Yeading
Hillingdon	Yiewsley
Hounslow	Bedfont
Hounslow	Cranford
Hounslow	Feltham North
Hounslow	Heston East
Hounslow	Heston West
Hounslow	Hounslow Central
Hounslow	Hounslow West
Hounslow	Osterley and Spring Grove
Islington	Bunhill
Islington	Caledonian
Islington	Clerkenwell
Islington	Finsbury Park
Islington	Hillrise
Islington	Holloway
Islington	Mildmay
Islington	St. Mary's
Islington	Tollington
Kensington and Chelsea	Brompton
Kensington and Chelsea	Colville
Kensington and Chelsea	Courtfield
Kensington and Chelsea	Cremorne
Kensington and Chelsea	Earl's Court
Kensington and Chelsea	Golborne
Kensington and Chelsea	Holland
Kensington and Chelsea	St. Charles
Kingston upon Thames	Berrylands
Kingston upon Thames	Beverley
Kingston upon Thames	Canbury
Kingston upon Thames	Chessington South
Kingston upon Thames	Coombe Hill
Kingston upon Thames	Norbiton
Kingston upon Thames	St. Mark's
Kingston upon Thames	Tolworth and Hook Rise
Lambeth	Bishop's
Lambeth	Clapham Town
Lambeth	Coldharbour
Lambeth	Ferndale
Lambeth	Herne Hill
Lambeth	Oval
Lambeth	Streatham Wells
Lambeth	Vassall
Lewisham	Blackheath

Safer Neighbourhoods Teams

Local authority	District
Lewisham	Brockley
Lewisham	Evelyn
Lewisham	Forest Hill
Lewisham	New Cross
Lewisham	Perry Vale
Lewisham	Sydenham
Lewisham	Telegraph Hill
Merton	Abbey
Merton	Colliers Wood
Merton	Cricket Green
Merton	Figge's Marsh
Merton	Graveney
Merton	Lavender Fields
Merton	Longthornton
Merton	Pollards Hill
Merton	Ravensbury
Merton	St. Helier
Newham	Beckton
Newham	Boleyn
Newham	Canning Town North
Newham	Canning Town South
Newham	Custom House
Newham	East Ham North
Newham	Little Ilford
Newham	Stratford and New Town
Redbridge	Bridge
Red bridge	Church End
Redbridge	Clementswood
Redbridge	Goodmayes
Redbridge	Hainault
Redbridge	Loxford
Redbridge	Mayfield
Redbridge	Wanstead
Richmond upon Thames	Barnes
Richmond upon Thames	Ham Petersham and Richmond Riverside
Richmond upon Thames	Hampton North
Richmond upon Thames	Heathfield
Richmond upon Thames	Mortlake and Barnes Common
Richmond upon Thames	South Richmond
Richmond upon Thames	Teddington
Richmond upon Thames	Twickenham Riverside
Southwark	Camberwell Green
Southwark	Cathedrals
Southwark	East Walworth
Southwark	Faraday
Southwark	Livesey
Southwark	Peckham
Southwark	Rotherhithe
Southwark	South Bermondsey
Southwark	Surrey Docks
Southwark	The Lane
Sutton	Beddington South
Sutton	Belmont
Sutton	Carshalton Central
Sutton	Carshalton South and Clockhouse
Sutton	Cheam
Sutton	Nonsuch
Sutton	St. Helier
Sutton	Sutton Central
Sutton	Sutton South
Sutton	Wellington South
Sutton	Wandle Valley
Sutton	Worcester Park
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green North
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green South
Tower Hamlets	Blackwall and Cubitt Town
Tower Hamlets	Bow East
Tower Hamlets	Bow West
Tower Hamlets	Bromley-by-Bow
Tower Hamlets	East India and Lansbury

Safer Neighbourhoods Teams

Local authority	*District*
Tower Hamlets	Limehouse
Tower Hamlets	Mile End and Globe Town
Tower Hamlets	Mile End East
Tower Hamlets	Millwall
Tower Hamlets	Shadwell
Tower Hamlets	Spitalfields and Banglatown
Tower Hamlets	St. Dunstan's and Stepney Green
Tower Hamlets	St. Katherine's and Wapping
Tower Hamlets	Weavers
Tower Hamlets	Whitechapel
Waltham Forest	Cann Hall
Waltham Forest	Cathall
Waltham Forest	High Street
Waltham Forest	Lea Bridge
Waltham Forest	Leyton
Waltham Forest	Leytonstone
Waltham Forest	Valley
Waltham Forest	Wood Street
Wandsworth	Graveney
Wandsworth	Latchmere
Wandsworth	Queenstown
Wandsworth	Roehampton
Wandsworth	Shaftesbury
Wandsworth	St. Mary's Park
Wandsworth	Tooting
Wandsworth	West Putney
Westminster	Church Street
Westminster	Churchill
Westminster	Harrow Road
Westminster	Hyde Park
Westminster	Lancaster Gate
Westminster	Queen's Park
Westminster	St. James's
Westminster	Tachbrook
Westminster	Vincent Square
Westminster	Warwick
Westminster	Westbourne

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what long-term funding has been allocated to *(a)* rural policing, *(b)* community support officers and *(c)* neighbourhood police teams. [18666]

Hazel Blears: We have provided £165 million to police authorities from the Rural Policing Fund since 2000–01. The annual provision is £30 million. We are currently considering rolling up a number of specific grants, including the Rural Policing Fund, into a single pot for each authority, to give police authorities greater financial flexibility. There are no plans to reduce the current level of funding for each authority.

The Neighbourhood Policing Fund will provide £88 million in 2006–07 and £340 million in 2007–08. In addition, we will continue to support the costs of community support officers (CSOs) recruited in the first three rounds from 2002 onwards. The grant will assist the police service to reach our target of 24,000 CSOs by 2008 and will support police authorities in building their own Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were as of 1 April 2005 in each police force in England and Wales; and what the percentage at each rank was of the total establishment. [23933]

Hazel Blears: The breakdown of Police Service strength for 31 March 2005 was published on 25 July 2005 and is available in the Library and on www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb1205.pdf.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to improve *(a)* community engagement and *(b)* neighbourhood policing in Bedfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [24367]

Hazel Blears: The Government is committed to every area in England and Wales benefiting from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams by 2008. A key aim of these teams will be to build more effective engagement with the public.

To support this, the Home Office and the Association of Police Authorities convened the National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement in Policing. The panel has created a Guide to Community Engagement which is a resource for all policing practitioners, and which contains both practical and strategic advice for practitioners who want to develop or improve their approach to engagement. The guide is supported by a database of case studies which showcases recent and ongoing work around the country, and encourages policing practitioners to network with, and learn from, their peers.

The Government is working closely with the police service to develop neighbourhood policing, initially within pathfinder areas in every force. In Bedfordshire, this is Luton Division.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide additional financial and other support to the Northamptonshire police. [24190]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Northamptonshire received an excellent grant settlement this year. General grants increased by 5.5 per cent. to £67.8 million, significantly higher than the 3.75 per cent. minimum increase guaranteed to all police authorities. The force has also received around £7.5 million for specific grants for initiatives such as the crime fighting fund, which has helped maintain the record number of police officers, and for capital.

Details of the provisional police funding settlement for 2006–07, and for 2007–08 as part of the move towards three-year settlements, will be announced in late November/early December.

The police standards unit have been working with Northamptonshire police since spring 2004 on a number of projects to help improve performance and the force has been provided with just under £1 million to support this work.

Prisoner Deaths

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have died as a result of self-inflicted injuries in prisons operating *(a)* above certified normal accommodation (CNA) and *(b)* at or below CNA in each of the past five years. [24052]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is provided in the table.

Calendar year	Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths (SIDs)	Number of apparent SIDs that took place in prisons operating over CNA[1]	Number of apparent SIDs that took place in prisons operating below CNA
2000	81	52	29
2001	[2]73	46	26
2002	95	77	18
2003	[2]94	81	12
2004	95	73	22
Total	438	329	107

[1] Though the holding prisons were, at the end of the month in which the prisoners died, operating over their respective CNAs, this does not necessarily mean that the prisoners who died were accommodated in 'crowded' conditions—for example, one of two prisoners accommodated in a cell certified for one.

[2] One death in 2001 and one death in 2003 occurred in the custody of the Prison Escort and Custody Services.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the extent of drugs being *(a)* taken into prisons by (i) prisoners, (ii) visitors, (iii) governors, (iv) officers and (v) other staff and *(b)* thrown over prison walls; and if he will make a statement. [16372]

Fiona Mactaggart: There has been no such assessment. However, a recent internal review was carried out which looked at methods of entry of illegal drugs into prisons with a view to sharing good practice. Recommendations included giving greater priority to the use of intelligence, targeting the use of mobile phones by prisoners, increased intelligence-led searching, and a managed approach to disrupt the activities of prisoners engaged in drug trafficking.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ease overcrowding in prisons. [17921]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) keeps under review the demand on prison places and the capacity of prisons to accommodate those prisoners sent to them by the courts. It is ensuring maximum use of all spare capacity within the prison estate, increasing useable operational capacity in prisons by building additional places as part of an ongoing funded building programme, and returning to use accommodation at existing prisons.

The Government have introduced credible, intensive community sentences, which courts can tailor to individual offenders who might have otherwise received ineffective short prison sentences. We have also alerted courts to the availability of electronic monitoring to support a curfew imposed as a condition of bail. Courts are being encouraged to use this option instead of a remand in custody in appropriate cases.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to tackle prison overcrowding; and if he will make a statement. [19663]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) keeps under review the demand on prison places and the capacity of prisons to accommodate those prisoners sent to them by the courts. It is ensuring maximum use of all spare capacity within the prison estate, increasing useable operational capacity in prisons by building additional places as part of an ongoing funded building programme, and returning to use accommodation at existing prisons.

The Government have introduced credible, intensive community sentences, which courts can tailor to individual offenders who might have otherwise received ineffective short prison sentences. We have also alerted courts to the availability of electronic monitoring to support a curfew imposed as a condition of bail. Courts are being encouraged to use this option instead of a remand in custody in appropriate cases.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the implications of the ruling in R. *v.* Leonard Cheshire Foundation [2002] H.R.L.R.30 on the applicability of the Human Rights Act 1998 to prisons built and operated under contract by non-public authorities. [20735]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no implications arising from the ruling in R. *v.* Leonard Cheshire Foundation [2002] H.R.L.R.30 for prisons built and operated under contract by commercial organisations.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average amount of purposeful activity undertaken by a prisoner has been in each prison in England and Wales in each year since 1997. [21842]

Fiona Mactaggart: The average number of weekly purposeful activity hours for each establishment during each of the financial years since 1997–98 is shown in the table.

Average number of weekly purposeful activity hours for each establishment during each of the financial years since 1997–98

Establishment	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Acklington	25.5	23.8	23.8	23.5	23.2	23.6	24.4	24.1
Albany	24	23.8	19.2	23.5	24.2	21.6	22.2	20.9
Altcourse	24.6	20.5	25.5	32.9	34.3	32.7	34.4	37.0
Ashfield	n/a	n/a	24	28.3	27.1	25.7	29.3	30.8
Ashwell	32.6	33.3	30.8	31.1	31.7	29.2	31	30.3
Askham Grange	41.8	42	41.6	41.2	41.1	41	41.4	41.5
Aylesbury	22.6	20.9	18.4	15.7	17.4	17.8	19.1	20.9
Bedford	25.6	22.7	22.9	20.9	19.8	17.7	18.1	19.9
Belmarsh	11.8	13.2	12.8	13.3	11	11.3	14.6	16.2
Birmingham	10.9	13.3	15.2	16	19.3	19.9	18.8	18.1
Blakenhurst	20.1	21.8	22.1	23.3	18.9	19.6	19.1	20.8
Blantyre House	34.2	39.5	43.6	47.6	49	40.7	40.5	43.4

Average number of weekly purposeful activity hours for each establishment during each of the financial years since 1997–98

Establishment	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Blundeston	23.2	25.8	24.5	26.2	25.8	23.1	21.9	24.8
Brinsford	15.3	16.3	16.8	21.9	27.5	26.1	28.7	28.7
Bristol	20.1	21.3	20.9	22.6	21.1	21.3	22.3	21.0
Brixton	17.1	15.7	11.1	15.6	16.6	12.7	10.4	15.4
Brockhill	30.7	21.1	18.2	20.8	18.2	16.1	18.1	22.4
Buckley Hall	32.8	26.6	31.7	31.8	30.3	26.8	30.8	31.2
Bullingdon	20.9	21.2	14.4	14.6	13.8	13.7	17.5	18.6
Bullwood Hall	21.6	19	19.6	21.5	27.2	27.9	27.7	27.6
Camp Hill	20.9	19.3	19.9	22	21.4	19.3	19.1	21.3
Canterbury	17.5	18.5	19.9	19.6	18	17.4	21.9	22.0
Cardiff	22	21.3	20.6	23.6	20.4	19.1	21.5	24.3
Castington	23.4	20.7	19.8	24.6	25.1	21.9	22.9	28.2
Channings Wood	29.6	30.5	34.9	33.6	33.5	31.2	28.6	27.3
Chelmsford	16	15.8	16.8	18.2	18.8	15.4	15.8	19.7
Coldingley	38.1	40.7	43.8	40.9	38.2	35.3	34	33.2
Cookham Wood	23.6	22.3	24.4	24.2	22	23	22.5	25.2
Dartmoor	18.8	18.9	19.9	18	21.6	20.9	23.3	24.9
Deerbolt	21.7	19.9	21.1	21.4	21.1	19.9	20.5	22.9
Doncaster	16.7	17	18.3	19.1	20.1	19.6	19.6	21.2
Dorchester	16.2	14.4	19.5	17.2	15.7	18.2	17.6	16.2
Dovegate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27.5	25.7	25.5	29.6
Dover	21.7	21.2	23.4	25.2	27.3	22.5	n/a	0.0
Downview	31.5	30.8	29.8	30.5	23.7	24.7	23.2	28.1
Drake Hall	35.1	34.9	35.9	35.8	35.8	33.5	33.3	35.5
Durham	16.7	20.2	18.7	19.8	20.3	19.1	18	17.8
East Sutton Park	38.4	40.1	40.1	41.2	42	43.1	46.4	46.0
Eastwood Park	19.7	21.6	21.6	23.6	19.4	18.8	17.9	18.5
Edmunds Hill[2]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	21	26.4
Elmley	19	20.2	21.8	21.6	18.6	18.6	20.6	18.8
Erlestoke	29	27.2	28.4	26.8	27.9	27.1	25.5	27.1
Everthorpe	25.8	27	26.3	27.1	28	31.6	28.1	24.9
Exeter	17.9	13.6	15	23	22.9	21.6	22.5	23.0
Featherstone	23.7	24.7	26.1	24.3	24.2	24.4	23	22.0
Feltham	19.6	15.5	15.2	14.4	24.7	22.3	28.1	28.7
Ford	33.7	35.6	38.8	38.3	39.8	39.4	37.6	38.6
Forest Bank	n/a	n/a	18.5	27.5	21.7	19.2	20.9	24.7
Foston Hall	21.3	23.4	25.7	25.4	25.4	25.3	24.5	23.9
Frankland	17	18.4	19.4	21.3	20.9	21.6	22.2	22.0
Full Sutton	18	17.6	18.7	17.8	17.4	16.8	19	19.8
Garth	21	21.2	21.2	23.7	23.4	23.4	24.2	23.5
Gartree	26.5	27	28.4	30.1	30.5	28.9	30.5	29.2
Glen Parva	16.5	16.7	16	18.3	18.2	17.9	17.4	18.0
Gloucester	20.6	26.4	29.4	29.5	20.5	16.2	20.2	20.4
Grendon	33.3	34.2	35.2	37.2	35.6	33.4	32.5	30.8
Guys Marsh	30.9	22.8	27.9	26.5	22.6	22.7	22.4	24.7
Haslar	21.4	18.8	16.1	16.7	15.2	15	15.4	16.4
Hatfield[1]	37.2	32.5	40.6	36.7	37.1	38.4	n/a	n/a
Haverigg	33.8	33.9	33.8	33.6	31.1	30.4	29.9	28.5
Hewell Grange	41.2	42.7	41.8	44.3	42.6	41.1	42.1	41.9
High Down	15.7	13.9	16.4	15.8	15.9	14.1	15.2	14.6
Highpoint[2]	17.7	23.2	20.9	18.9	18.9	18	19.9	22.0
Hindley	20.1	23.8	24	28.6	20.5	34.9	34.5	32.0
Hollesley Bay[3]	28.1	28.1	33.8	36.2	36.5	32.6	38.3	40.7
Holloway	18.7	17.6	15.4	21.9	20.3	15.8	16.9	20.3
Holme House	16	15.8	16.6	16.6	15.5	14.4	15.8	16.7
Hull	18.6	20.1	22.5	21.9	20.5	15.3	15.8	16.1
Huntercombe	25.1	23.8	26.3	23.9	26.7	26.5	30.1	30.9
Kingston	28.6	23.9	23.9	24.2	24.3	23.3	25.1	26.4
Kirkham	54.8	43.5	44.3	43.7	43.4	41.3	40.4	41.7
Kirklevington	48.8	50.1	52.5	54.3	51.6	53	51.7	53.9
Lancaster	22.7	20.7	23.2	28.7	24.9	22.9	23.7	26.6
Lancaster Farms	22.4	20.5	20.6	22.5	22.6	23.3	26.1	25.9
Latchmere House	72.8	70.2	74.1	63.6	61.2	55.6	57.6	59.9
Leeds	15.5	14.8	14.5	16.5	18.7	17.5	18.1	22.1
Leicester	21.4	20.5	19.3	19	21	21.4	23.1	23.2
Lewes	18.5	18.5	18.8	18	18.6	19.5	21	21.5
Leyhill	38.5	39	38.8	39	37.8	39.1	37.9	37.3
Lincoln	19.6	22.9	24.9	24.5	18.6	18.3	19.3	20.9
Lindholme	25.3	24.2	26.9	26.7	27.7	24.3	25.9	27.3
Littlehey	29.8	26	25.5	23.5	23.1	21.5	20.2	20.9
Liverpool	16.5	18.7	22.6	22.9	17.7	14	18.6	21.7
Long Lartin	15.6	17	16.5	17.8	18.3	18.5	15.7	19.1
Low Newton	21.7	20.2	25.5	25.1	23.7	23.9	24.6	24.8
Lowdham Grange	n/a	25.3	24.7	24	27.2	27.5	26.8	26.5

Average number of weekly purposeful activity hours for each establishment during each of the financial years since 1997–98

Establishment	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Maidstone	22.5	21.3	22.3	21.7	21	17.6	19.1	21.7
Manchester	29.4	26.7	22.2	19.4	19.7	19.8	19.6	19.5
Moorland[1]	25.3	24	23.1	24.7	25	25.3	27.6	28.7
Morton Hall	39.1	37.8	41.4	41.7	30.7	32	31.9	31.6
Mount	18.4	18	18.6	18.3	20	19.7	20.4	22.0
New Hall	22.9	23.8	23.1	23.5	22.9	24.1	23.5	24.7
North Sea Camp	42.4	45.1	41	42.3	42.2	41.8	40.4	39.4
Northallerton	14.7	14.5	17.6	18.8	22.1	23.3	22.3	25.9
Norwich	18.1	18	19.2	20	18.9	17.4	17.9	21.5
Nottingham	18.1	15.3	20.6	18.3	17.2	18.1	19.2	20.7
Onley	20	18.4	17.4	18.6	18	23	28.1	27.0
Parc	n/a	30	36.2	25.3	26.8	24.4	26.3	31.3
Parkhurst	20.1	19.5	21.5	20.5	19.1	15.2	20.3	21.4
Pentonville	19.6	20.3	20.4	17.8	15	14.1	14.1	13.3
Portland	29.4	23.1	22.8	23.4	24.5	23.2	20.9	19.1
Preston	17.4	17.1	16.8	21.6	21.1	19.8	21.1	21.0
Ranby	30.2	26.4	25.8	25.4	23.6	24.1	25.1	25.3
Reading	24.2	23.8	31.7	29.2	24.4	19.3	18.3	22.3
Risley	22.7	21.9	22.3	23.8	25.2	22.7	23.7	24.8
Rochester	18.7	19.1	17.5	21.5	23	22.7	20.2	23.0
Rye Hill	n/a	n/a	n/a	26	29.4	28.5	28.5	27.7
Send	35.1	40.6	31.6	31.7	31.4	30	30.6	32.7
Shepton Mallet	23.7	22.7	20.7	23.6	23	23.5	24.6	24.4
Shrewsbury	21.4	22.7	23.2	24.9	23.8	17.8	19.5	20.1
Stafford	25	22.4	24.8	26.5	26.4	26.3	24.1	24.2
Standford Hill	43.7	44.1	39.7	41	39.7	39.8	38.1	37.6
Stocken	27.1	23.2	22.1	23.2	23.2	26.1	26	26.1
Stoke Heath	21.6	21.6	22.5	24.4	25.8	20.4	21.8	23.6
Styal	28.6	28.7	21.7	24.3	24.9	21.9	21	23.2
Sudbury	47.2	44.5	43.4	41.7	41.5	42	42	41.4
Swaleside	22	22.3	21.3	25.2	24.4	24.4	27.2	24.5
Swansea	15	20	20.8	22.4	22	19.7	21.1	22.3
Swinfen Hall	25.5	28.9	30.7	28.9	28	27.2	28.7	25.9
Thorn Cross	50.3	50.3	45.3	42.7	43.9	42.7	42.8	43.1
Usk/Prescoed	35.5	34.9	37.5	38.8	37.9	37.1	35.9	35.8
Verne	30.9	27.2	30.9	27.6	28.4	31.6	30.9	31.4
Wakefield	17.8	18.2	20	19	18.2	18	16	16.7
Wandsworth	22	18.9	18.4	18.1	17.1	16.7	16.8	20.5
Warren Hill[3]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26.2	24.6
Wayland	24.6	24	24	23.3	20.8	24.7	24.8	26.1
Wealstun	33.7	30.6	32.9	32.8	32.6	32.5	33	29.8
Weare	19.6	20.8	20.7	19.9	18.8	17.8	18.6	19.8
Wellingborough	25.1	24.9	25	25.3	28.1	25	22.6	22.6
Werrington	36.5	24	37.9	37.1	32.6	30.1	27.3	30.7
Wetherby	29.5	28.3	27.9	26.6	27.1	28.9	29.1	27.8
Whatton	30.6	28.8	29.9	29.9	30.7	29.8	29.8	31.6
Whitemoor	18.5	19.6	21.4	21.6	20.2	20.6	21.2	21.3
Winchester	17.2	15.7	15.2	16.8	19	18.8	20.4	22.2
Wolds	31	29.1	28.9	28.5	28.3	28.7	29.2	30.2
Woodhill	20.9	19.8	17.9	17.6	16	16.2	15.4	16.3
Wormwood Scrubs	13.6	14.2	19.3	21.3	18.5	14.6	18.4	22.2
Wymott	34.4	28.7	29.8	27.3	27.7	28.3	30.9	28.3

[1] Moorland and Hatfield merged in 2003–04.
[2] Highpoint and Edmunds Hill began reporting separately in 2003–04.
[3] Hollesley Bay and Warren Hill began reporting separately in 2003–04.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what was the average waiting time for prisoners to be transferred from their original prison to their next prison in the last period for which figures are available; [22722]

(2) what the average waiting time for prisoners in Her Majesty's prisons to obtain a classification was in the last period for which figures are available. [22723]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not collated centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Private Security Firms

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he gives to local authorities on the use of private security firms; and if he will make a statement. [20633]

Paul Goggins: From March 2004 the Home Office and the Security Industry Authority (SIA) have had extensive discussions with local authority licensing staff in preparation for the introduction of door supervisor licensing. The SIA continues to work in partnership with the police and local authorities to ensure that licensing requirements are met by individuals and companies throughout the private security industry.

Race for Justice Project

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to introduce the race for justice project commissioned by the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Criminal Justice Board across the rest of England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [21978]

Fiona Mactaggart: The race for justice project was commissioned in 2002 to identify the views of the minority ethnic communities about their perceptions of the agencies that work within the Criminal Justice System in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. It was designed to engage with black and minority ethnic communities, increase awareness, address concerns and try to increase confidence in the criminal justice system. In particular, the project has worked with newcomers to the area, producing a booklet 'Welcome to Britain' which addresses some of the main issues for newcomers to the Hampshire area.

It is important that all LCJBs develop projects which reflect their local circumstances and that this is tailored to needs locally rather than seeking to simply introduce the Hampshire and Isle of Wight approach nationally.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what qualifications are held by each of the psychologists employed in each of the secure training centres. [22860]

Fiona Mactaggart: The minimum qualifications for psychologists employed at each secure training centre are defined in the contracts with the operators. The Hassockfield contract requires a degree in psychology leading to graduate registration with the British Psychological Society. The contracts for Medway, Rainsbrook and Oakhill each require a degree in psychology or an approved behavioural science degree.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many times each of the four secure training centres has been inspected in the past six years; [22866]

(2) how often each of the secure training centres received an unannounced visit by inspectors in each of the last six years. [22867]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is given in the following tables.

Unannounced inspections

	Medway	*Rainsbrook*	*Hassockfield*	*Oakhill*
2000	0	0	0	[1]—
2001	0	0	0	[1]—
2002	0	0	0	[1]—
2003	0	0	0	[1]—
2004	0	1	1	1
2005 (to date)	0	0	0	0

Announced inspections

	Medway	*Rainsbrook*	*Hassockfield*	*Oakhill*
2000	1	1	1	[1]—
2001	1	1	1	[1]—
2002	1	1	1	[1]—
2003	2	[2]0	1	[1]—
2004	1	1	1	1
2005 (to date)	[3]0	1	1	1

[1] Opened August 2004
[2] CSCI deferred planned inspection to early 2004.
[3] Planned for December 2005

Sex Offenders

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent changes his Department has made in procedures for checking whether sex offenders are entering the UK; and if he will make a statement. [13248]

Mr. McNulty: All people coming to the UK are required to provide evidence of their identity and nationality. This is usually done by means of a passport or identity card. In addition checks are made against the UK watch list in all cases for non-EEA citizens and on a risk assessed basis for EEA citizens.

In case of any doubts or if information held on immigration service databases indicates that someone is of interest, further inquiries including reference to the other border agencies may be made.

Tagged Offenders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many tagged offenders re-offended while tagged in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Essex in the last period for which figures are available. [22967]

Fiona Mactaggart: The figures requested for the three areas in question are not available centrally and cannot be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what co-operation the police are providing to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to tackle organised fraud in relation to tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [24541]

Paul Goggins: I understand that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) investigators meet regularly with the police to discuss areas of mutual interest including organised fraud in the tax credits system. There are established mechanisms between HMRC and the police for the exchange of information and intelligence in relation to specific criminal activity. Where resources permit the police have been able to assist HMRC both in the arrest of suspects and in searching premises for evidence.

Travellers

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to amend section 62A to E of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to streamline the procedure for the removal of illegally encamped Travellers. [24098]

Paul Goggins: Sections 62A to E of the Criminal Justice and Public Order 1994 were introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 to provide the police with an additional power to deal with unauthorised encampments. The Government keeps all existing enforcement powers under review to ensure that they are adequate and public agencies are using them effectively.

TREASURY

Corporation of London

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what meetings he has had with representatives of the Corporation of London in the last six months. [25083]

John Healey: At the Corporation's invitation, the Chancellor delivered the 2005 Mansion House speech.

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the revaluation of council tax in Bedfordshire. [23805]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

The terms of reference for Sir Michael Lyons' independent inquiry require him to make recommendations on how best to reform council tax, taking into account revaluation of domestic property. My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have agreed with Sir Michael that he will extend his work so that he can consider issues relating to the functions of local government and its future role, as well as, and prior to, making recommendations on local government funding. The Government have introduced into the House the Council Tax (New Valuation List for England) Bill which provides for the postponement of council tax revaluation. This will enable revaluation to take account of the Lyons Inquiry's extended work which will inform the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Employment Statistics

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed in each electoral ward in Cleethorpes constituency in each of the past 10 years. [24754]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Shona McIsaac, dated 7 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. I am replying in her absence. (24754)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. Estimates of unemployment are not available for wards as the survey sample size for such areas is too small.

However, ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming jobseeker's allowance. The attached table shows annual averages for 1996 to 2004 for wards within the Cleethorpes constituency.

These statistics are published on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Jobseeker's allowance claimants resident in electoral wards of the Cleethorpes parliamentary constituency

Annual averages

Electoral wards[1]	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Cleethorpes Alexandra	311	255	217	191	179	171	154	115	97
Cleethorpes Beacon Hill	139	107	94	92	87	77	61	62	53
Cleethorpes Central	181	161	128	122	111	93	84	63	80
Cleethorpes Middlethorpe	78	67	63	50	42	41	37	38	27
Cleethorpes North	316	287	283	266	245	208	185	154	150
Cleethorpes Riverside	137	109	103	98	87	64	58	49	41
Cleethorpes Sidney	290	235	213	201	168	158	141	119	80
Cleethorpes Thrunscoe	147	131	115	107	93	86	75	57	49
Habrough and Stallingborough	44	30	35	35	26	20	18	16	22
Healing	48	40	30	31	30	27	17	18	18
Humberston	117	94	79	82	80	69	43	44	43
Immingham Bluestone	106	78	61	70	61	55	39	35	43
Immingham Central	177	160	145	125	105	108	91	78	86
Immingham Humber	326	294	278	214	168	178	161	123	133
Laceby	72	62	52	52	47	39	33	25	27
New Waltham	100	73	72	67	55	54	48	38	33
Waltham	145	113	94	86	74	62	49	52	42
Wold Parishes	61	54	54	58	44	39	40	35	13
Abbey	115	92	92	83	68	65	52	59	54
Barton-Upon-Humber Bridge	171	131	114	113	78	73	58	56	54
Barton-Upon-Humber Park	227	176	161	150	130	114	93	97	71
Goxhill	47	35	30	30	26	27	22	18	23
Humber	96	75	78	64	55	51	48	43	31
Ulceby	68	50	44	41	36	31	28	23	26
Total	3,519	2,909	2,635	2,428	2,095	1,910	1,635	1,417	1,296

[1] Electoral wards are defined on the basis of the boundaries as they were in 1991

Source:

Jobcentre Plus administrative systems

Grant-in-Aid

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much grant-in-aid the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its predecessors spent as a percentage of gross domestic product in each year since 1993; and if he will make a statement. [24115]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

I am unable to provide the exact data sought: accruals based expenditure data has only been available since 1999–2000. The following table sets out the Department's expenditure in each financial year since then as a percentage of GDP.

	DCMS Expenditure (£ millions)	*Percentage of GDP*
1999–2000	1,098	0.12
2000–01	1,135	0.12
2001–02	1,112	0.11
2002–03	1,305	0.12
2003–04	1,434	0.13
2004–05	1,502	0.13

Hemel Hempstead

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of youth unemployment has been in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each of the last five years. [25821]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Michael Penning, dated 7 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about youth unemployment. I am replying in her absence. (25821)

Table 1, attached, shows the total numbers of unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 who were resident in the Hemel Hempstead Parliamentary Constituency. The table covers the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 2001 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability. Changes in the estimates from year to year should be treated with particular caution.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2, attached, shows the annual average number of JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Hemel Hempstead constituency for 2000 to 2004.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Numbers of unemployed, aged 16 to 24, resident in the Hemel Hempstead constituency

	Thousand
12 months ending	*Number*
February 2001	[1]
February 2002	[1]
February 2003	1
February 2004	1
March 2005	1

[1] Disclosive (sample size less than three).

Note:
The estimates for local areas are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Hemel Hempstead constituency—Annual averages

	Number
2000	165
2001	160
2002	215
2003	265
2004	275

Note:
1. Computerised claims only.
2. Data rounded to nearest 5 for disclosure control.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Revenue and Customs

Tim Farron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the future provision of HM Revenue and Customs customer service offices in Cumbria. [25193]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs is preparing business plans to meet its efficiency savings for 2005–08. HMRC have more than 600 offices and there is a constant backdrop of change arising from leases ending and other circumstances beyond their or their estate suppliers control, such as compulsory purchase.

Although there will be changes to some HMRC offices the Department will continue to recognise its Public Service Agreement objectives to improve customer experience, support business and reduce the compliance burden and will continue to provide a face-to-face service to customers for whom it is the most appropriate form of contact.

Illegal Fuel (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money HM Revenue and Customs received through fines and enforcement orders directly related to the illegal use of fuel in motor vehicles in Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [24146]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs does not receive any revenue in connection to fines issued by a court. In 2004–05 there were two fines imposed by the court directly related to the illegal use of fuel totalling £5,000.

In addition HM Revenue and Customs collected on behalf of the Exchequer a total of £354,893 in respect of civil penalties in relation to vehicles seized.

Irish People

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward, of each county, described themselves as Irish in the 2001 census. [25600]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 7 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each *(a)* county and *(b)* ward, broken down by county described themselves as Irish in the 2001 Census. I am replying in her absence. (25600)

The number of people who described their ethnicity to be Irish, broken down by both ward and county, is available in table KS06 on the CD supplement to the *Key Statistics for local authorities in England and Wales*, which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Lisbon Goals

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of progress towards the Lisbon goals for European economic reform. [24308]

John Healey: In "Growth and Opportunity: Prioritising Economic Reform in Europe" (HM Treasury, February 2005) the Government set out their assessment of the Lisbon strategy. While some progress has been made, concerted action is still needed to increase employment and productivity in Europe.

In particular, to meet the Lisbon target of 70 per cent. employment by 2010, 23 million more Europeans will need to find work. This necessitates a comprehensive programme of reform to improve levels of skills in the labour force and to facilitate greater adaptability to change.

In addition, US productivity levels remain substantially above those in the EU. Tackling this requires further structural reform to enhance product market competition in Europe and to create the right climate for enterprise and innovation to flourish.

A further assessment of the structural economic challenges facing Europe was set out in "Global Europe: Full Employment Europe" published by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in October 2005 available at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/international_issues/eu_presidency_2005/eu_presidency_2005_index.cfm

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to use the UK's presidency of the European Union to achieve progress towards the Lisbon goals for European economic reform. [24309]

John Healey: As set out in the Work Programme of the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council, a key priority for the UK presidency of the European Union is to build

"prosperous, dynamic European economies through implementation of the new Lisbon Agenda to deliver sustainable growth and high employment".

At an Informal ECOFIN Council on 10 September in Manchester, Ministers and the European Commission agreed on the need for urgent action—at the European level and nationally in the context of Lisbon National Reform Programmes—to deliver growth and full employment for Europe in a global economy, including through:

modern social and labour market policies that match flexibility with fairness and equip citizens with the skills to succeed;

further regulatory reform to reduce excessive burdens on business;

further progress on completing the Single Market, including in services; and

greater Trade openness, globally and between the EU and its major trade and investment partners.

The Government is using its presidency to promote progress in all of these areas.

Manufacturing, Science and Engineering

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the impact on gross domestic product of changes to the *(a)* manufacturing, *(b)* science and *(c)* engineering sectors of the domestic economy over the next 10 years. [23648]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

The Government do not produce 10-year forecasts for sectors of the economy, but the Government do have a number of policies to assist the manufacturing, science and engineering sectors. These include the Government manufacturing strategy, which is based on applying science and innovation, world-class practice, raising investment, and a high level of skills to create high-value manufacturing and engineering sectors and drive up productivity. By 2007–08 we will have doubled the science budget, from £1.3 billion in 1997–98 to £3.3 billion, with the long-term objective of increasing overall R&D spend to 2.5 per cent. of GDP by 2014 from its current level of around 1.9 per cent.

Oil Companies (Windfall Tax)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of levying a windfall tax on UK oil companies; and if he will make a statement. [24404]

John Healey: All taxes are kept under review as part of the Budget cycle. The Government are committed to delivering a tax regime for the North sea which promotes investment and take a fair share of revenue derived from a national resource.

Oil Prices

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of oil prices on *(a)* revenues to the Exchequer and *(b)* the UK economy. [24322]

John Healey: The impact of higher oil prices on the public finances and the economy is discussed in Box 2.5 in the 2004 pre-Budget report.

As the Chancellor said in his statement to the International Monetary and Financial Committee on 24 September, compared to the Budget forecast the increases in oil prices over the last few months are likely to have dampened activity in the UK economy to some extent.

But the UK's macroeconomic framework today is founded on stability—with inflation expectations well anchored—in contrast to the volatility and high inflation that has dogged the UK economy in the past. The UK is therefore better placed than before to deal with the challenges of the global economy, including those posed by higher oil prices.

The Government will publish an update of the effect of oil prices on the UK's public finances and updated forecasts for the UK and world economies in the 2005 pre-Budget report as usual, taking into account all relevant factors and developments.

Parliamentary Ombudsman

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make available increased resources to the Parliamentary Ombudsman to allow him to appoint more investigating officers. [25636]

John Healey: A three year settlement from 2005–06 to 2007–08 was recently agreed for the Office of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. This settlement funds the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's three year strategic plan and provides for increased resources. The precise application of those resources is a matter for the Ombudsman. The budget for 2005–06 will be included in the Winter Supplementary Estimate which will be laid before Parliament later this month.

Planning Gain Supplement

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1315W, on planning gain supplement, whether Kate Barker's recommendations to his Department stated whether the planning gain supplement should be *(a)* revenue-neutral, *(b)* revenue-raising, *(c)* kept in full by local councils and *(d)* transferred in whole or part to central Government. [24689]

John Healey: Kate Barker's recommendations are set out in her March 2004 Review of Housing Supply.

As set out in the March 2005 economic and fiscal strategy report, the Government will respond later this year.

Plastic Carrier Bags

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Government have to introduce a tax on plastic carrier bags. [24703]

John Healey: The Chancellor continues to keep all taxes under review. The Government have no plans to introduce a plastic bags tax.

Productivity

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the annual change in gross domestic product per hour worked was in each year since 1975; and what assessment he has made of whether productivity trends are improving. [24321]

John Healey: Official statistics for whole economy output per hour is only available from 1993. The annual change in whole economy output per hour for each year since then is:

Annual growth in whole economy output per hour

Percentage

	Annual growth
1994	3.0
1995	1.4
1996	1.7
1997	1.5
1998	2.6
1999	2.2
2000	3.8
2001	1.0
2002	1.8
2003	2.0
2004	2.5

Source:
ONS

The pre-Budget report 2005 will include an updated assessment on productivity performance in the UK. As reported in the HM Treasury Departmental Report 2005, the UK is making progress in boosting its productivity performance: between 1997 and 2001Q3, the UK trend rate of actual productivity growth on an output per worker basis (figures not adjusted for employment growth) is estimated to have grown by 2.5 per cent. a year compared with a growth rate of 2 per cent. a year in the previous economic cycle (1986Q2—1997H1). Adjusting for the effect of employment growth, it is estimated that the underlying trend rate of productivity growth was 2.7 per cent. between 1997H1—2001Q3 compared to 2.2 per cent. over the previous economic cycle (1986Q2—1997H1).

Sustainable Development Strategy

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department has taken to encourage people to live more sustainable lifestyles within the framework of the Government's sustainable development strategy. [24534]

John Healey: Sustainable development must be a thread that runs through all of the Government's policy making. In including sustainable development as a cross cutting theme in the 2004 Spending Review the Treasury has demonstrated how this can be done.

Within the context of the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy each Department agreed to a number of high-level contributions to deliver the strategy. It is within these agreed contributions that HM Treasury seeks to set signals that encourage individuals to live more sustainable lifestyles. HM Treasury's five key contributions to delivering the Sustainable Development Strategy are:

Building a strong and productive economy and a fair society where there is opportunity and security for all;

A transparent public expenditure delivery framework, based on public service agreements, that focus on delivering public services in areas integral to achieving Sustainable Development in the UK, such as reducing child poverty and reducing unemployment;

Making use of the fiscal system, where appropriate, to tackle environmental externalities through developing further environmental taxes, such as the recent increases in the standard

rate of landfill tax; creating tax incentives for cleaner technologies through enhanced capital allowances and adding an environmental dimension to transport taxation, for example through fuel duty differentials to encourage the use of cleaner fuels;

A commitment to strong local government, supporting local authorities in their delivery of key public services to all communities, for example through the introduction of the three-year revenue and capital settlements, which will improve local authorities' ability to make sustainable long-term plans; and

Continuing to meet the relevant sustainable development objectives in public procurement by having a consistent approach to value for money and whole life costs of goods and services procured, and by building relevant sustainability issues into the procurement process as early as possible.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department has taken to implement the guidelines on *(a)* water usage, *(b)* travel arrangements and *(c)* procurement in the Sustainable Development Report and Action Plan 2005. [24553]

John Healey: A delivery action plan related to our most significant impacts is summarised in section 1.6 of the Report and Action Plan http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/F2D/19/sustainabledev.pdf. In line with that action plan, our PFI partner, Exchequer Partnership, is working with ADSM in an effort to identify measures for further reducing our water usage; we continue to encourage staff to use telephone and video conferencing as a means of reducing business mileage; and we are working with our procurement service provider, HMRC, to develop a sustainable procurement strategy which will form part of our new Sustainable Development Action Plan.

Tax Credits

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effects of *(a)* research and development tax credits, *(b)* vaccines research relief and *(c)* contaminated land tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [24556]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 14 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 341W on R&D tax credits. The results from the survey of R&D companies mentioned in that reply are expected to be published later this year on the HM Revenue and Customs website.

The impact of contaminated land tax credit (CLTC) is being examined by a research study commissioned by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) that is currently being undertaken by the university of Ulster. Once completed, the findings of this research should be made available on the Departments' websites.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Paymaster General's evidence to the Treasury sub-committee on 26 October, if he will place in the Library a copy of the new and agreed tax credit award notice to be issued from April 2006. [25228]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 53W.

Unemployment

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of adults of working age were *(a)* unemployed and *(b)* economically inactive in each year since 1997, broken down by constituency. [24099]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Julia Goldsworthy, dated 7 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment and economic inactivity. (24099)

Table 1, attached, shows the total numbers and percentages of persons of working age who are unemployed for all constituencies in Great Britain. Note that these are not equivalent to unemployment rates. Table 2, attached, shows the total numbers and percentages of persons of working age who are economically inactive for all constituencies in Great Britain.

The tables cover the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 1998 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA). Table 3, attached, shows the annual average number of ISA claimants for all constituencies in the United Kingdom for 1997 to 2004.

Since the information is so extensive, copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

DEFENCE

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24457]

Mr. Touhig: The use of 0870 numbers in the Department is determined at local level in accordance with individual business requirements. Records of 0870 numbers and the revenue received from them is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Air Support Units

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 659W, on air support units, what air support was available to British forces in northern Afghanistan during the week commencing 24 October. [24493]

John Reid: The United Kingdom Forces in northern Afghanistan serve as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and are based in Mazar-e-Sharif (MeS), northern Afghanistan.

A wide range of air assets were available to ISAF in support of its mission in northern Afghanistan during the week commencing 24 October including: combat and reconnaissance air capability provided by the Belgians, Dutch, French, UK and the US; transport aircraft provided by the French, Germans, Swedes and UK; and, support helicopters for casualty evacuation provided by the German army. During the period in question, the Netherlands also operated a heavy lift helicopter in support of the Afghan election process.

Armoured Vehicles

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his plans are concerning extending the service life of the current fleet of armoured vehicles before the Future Rapid Effect System comes into service. [23043]

Mr. Ingram: FRES, together with the Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle, is planned to replace the Saxon, FV430 and CVR(T) vehicle families. How best to align the removal from service of these vehicle families with the introduction of FRES, while ensuring continuity of the required capability, will be informed by the work conducted during the FRES initial assessment phase.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23722]

Mr. Touhig: Ministry of Defence officials are continuing to discuss with the Carbon Trust what might be appropriate for the Department regarding the Carbon Management Programme within the context of the current partnership agreement.

In August 2004 the MOD entered into a formal partnership agreement with the Carbon Trust. Through the agreement, the Carbon Trust is providing support to the MOD on gaining an overall understanding of climate change and assistance in improving energy efficiency and cutting carbon emissions. A programme of work under the partnership arrangement has been implemented which builds on energy surveys carried out on MOD establishments and funded by the Carbon Trust or its predecessor organisation. Individual projects range from identifying the estate wide opportunities for installing renewable energy technologies through to detailed appraisals of energy use on individual sites.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from the general public. [24770]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1067–68W.

Defence Expenditure

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the trend in real terms expenditure on defence since 1997. [24569]

Mr. Ingram: Under the spending review 2004 settlement, the Ministry of Defence budget will increase by £3.7 billion from £29.7 billion in 2004–05 to £33.4 billion in 2007–08, representing 1.4 per cent. average annual growth in real terms over the next three years. This has cemented the longest sustained increase of the defence budget in 20 years and by 2007–08, planned near-cash defence spending will be some 7.5 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1997; currently it is 4.4 per cent. in real terms above 1997 levels.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's skills development plan. [23852]

Mr. Touhig: The Department's skills development plan is developed by a number of MOD central directorates on behalf of the deputy chief of the Defence staff (personnel) and the Department's personnel director. Implementation is taken forward by central directorates, working closely with the staffs of the principal personnel officers in the single services and the MOD civil service.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23872]

Mr. Touhig: We will place copies in the Library of the House shortly.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23761]

Mr. Touhig: The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force presently use bespoke numeracy and literacy assessments as part of the recruiting process. Both then utilise a nationally recognised literacy and numeracy assessment tool during initial training. The Army uses the Basic Skills Agency's paper-based literacy and numeracy tests during the recruiting process and is currently assisting the DfES to develop new literacy and numeracy initial assessment tools. It is intended to use the new DfES assessment tool, once available, in the recruiting process across all of the armed services from 1 April 2006.

Assessment of the literacy and numeracy skills of recruits to the Ministry of Defence civil service may form part of the educational qualifications required or be part of a competency-based interview.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to make substantive responses to the questions about the future aircraft carriers tabled by the hon. Member for New Forest East for answer on 27 October 2005, references *(a)* 21707, *(b)* 21706, *(c)* 21705, *(d)* 21704 and *(e)* 21703. [25044]

Mr. Ingram: I replied to the hon. Member on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1068–69W.

Iraq

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many trainers NATO member states have contributed to training the Iraqi Security Forces; and if he will make a statement. [23041]

John Reid: All 26 NATO countries have agreed to provide support to the NATO Training Mission-Iraq by providing personnel, equipment or funding to train the Iraqi Security Forces in and outside Iraq. There are 166 NATO personnel in Iraq assisting with training and equipping the Iraqi Security Forces under the auspices of the NATO Training Mission-Iraq.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many units of the Iraqi Security Forces are able to conduct counter-insurgency operations without support from the multi-national forces; [23044]

(2) how many Iraqi *(a)* ground combat battalions and *(b)* military and special police forces are conducting operations against insurgency; and if he will make a statement; [23046]

(3) if he will make a statement on progress in recruiting and training of the Iraqi *(a)* army, *(b)* special operations force, *(c)* strategic infrastructure battalions, *(d)* navy, *(e)* air force, *(f)* police service, *(g)* special police forces, *(h)* special police commandos, *(i)* mechanised police, *(j)* public order police, *(k)* emergency response unit, *(l)* border forces and *(m)* highway patrol; [23119]

(4) what estimate the *(a)* Coalition and *(b)* Iraqi Government has made of the total combined force structure for the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of the Interior in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [23126]

John Reid: As part of the Coalition force in Iraq, the United Kingdom's area of responsibility is in Multi-National Division (South East). The US has oversight of all Coalition forces in Iraq and it collates all Iraqi Security Force training figures through the Multinational Security Transition Command—Iraq.

All the requested information is available in the United States Report to Congress, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq". A copy of this report can be found on the internet at usinfo.state.gov

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which body within the Iraqi Government is responsible for recruitment and vetting of Ministry of the Interior employees; and if he will make a statement. [23045]

John Reid: Overall responsibility for recruitment and vetting of Ministry of Interior personnel rests with the Human Resource Administration Department in the Ministry of Interior. The Department comprises two sections—one responsible for dealing with enlisted personnel and the other with officers.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the number of Iraqi instructors is who have completed the Train the Trainer course organised by the NATO Training Mission in Iraq. [23050]

John Reid: The NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) is helping to build the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) by providing training and advisory support. To date 283 Iraqis have been trained by NTM-I which includes 24 Iraqi students who received their diploma to become staff college instructors.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what proportion of time British troops deployed in Multi National Division in Iraq spend in *(a)* barracks and *(b)* on patrols; and if he will make a statement; [23311]

(2) how many *(a)* routine British armed forces patrols and *(b)* joint patrols with Iraqi police forces have been undertaken in Iraq in Multinational Division South East in each month since January; and if he will make a statement. [24581]

Mr. Ingram: The frequency of patrols in Multi National Division (South East) is a matter for local operational judgment and is contingent on the circumstances UK forces find themselves in at any given time. The tasking levels for personnel in theatre are kept under constant review by commanders on the ground.

We do not hold figures on the amount of time UK forces in Iraq spend on patrol or in barracks. UK troops patrol regularly, both independently and with Iraqi forces. We do not comment on the number of patrols they carry out for reasons of force protection.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British Army vehicles are in operation in Iraq; and how many are fitted with electronic countermeasures. [24526]

Mr. Ingram: For reasons of operational security, it is not Government policy to make public details of the military capability—including specific countermeasures—deployed on operations.

Irish Regiments (Posthumous Pardons)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to questions 24129 and 24125 when the Government received the submission of the Irish Government requesting that consideration be given to granting posthumous pardons to 26 soldiers of Irish regiments executed in the great war for cowardice or desertion; on what date discussions were held between the two Governments; and when he expects to announce the UK Government's response. [25619]

Mr. Touhig: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Europe on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1086W, and to the answer I gave on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1070–71W. There have been both formal and informal contacts with the Irish Government on this subject since their first approach in December 2003, offering our assistance before their report was written and keeping them informed of progress on our response, which we will wish to discuss with them before any announcement is made.

Joint Combat Aircraft

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects to have available appropriate naval operating platforms for the joint combat aircraft (JCA) by the time that the United Kingdom's allocation of the JCA is ready to enter service. [24572]

Mr. Ingram: The joint combat aircraft programme remains coherent with the future carrier programme. We intend to introduce the joint combat aircraft progressively, with the expectation that the naval platforms required to operate the aircraft will be available when the joint combat aircraft achieves its in-service date.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many new build units in the married quarters estate are planned by his Department in each of the next three years; and how many houses this will replace from the existing married quarters estate. [23323]

Mr. Touhig: The following new build married quarters are planned in England, Wales and Scotland between now and 2008–09:

Project

Number of new builds

Financial year	*Portsmouth 2*	*Marchwood*	*Credenhill*	*Glencorse*
2005–06	—	[1]40	—	89
2006–07	128	[2]22	45	62
2007–08	20	—	—	—
2008–09	—	—	—	—

[1] Replacing 14 demolished stock
[2] Replacing 22 demolished stock

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's married quarters are empty; what proportion of this represents his Department's management margin required for managing changes; and if he will make a statement. [23324]

Mr. Touhig: 7,905 married quarters are currently empty. The Ministry of Defence aims for a management margin of 10 per cent. Using overall stock levels, this would result in a management margin of some 4,900. The present excess is the result of a number of ongoing studies into future basing requirements and quarters are being held pending decisions.

Members' Visits

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many requests from hon. Members for visits to departmental sites have been refused in each of the last five years, broken down by political party. [18959]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the following table:

	Number of MPs refused	*Party*
2000	0	—
2001	0	—
2002	0	—
2003	0	—
2004	6	Labour
	4	Liberal Democrat
	1	Conservative
2005	0	—

The above figures exclude visit requests to operational theatres. These figures also exclude visits that were turned down in the first instance but arranged at a later date.

Ordnance

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what agreement has been reached between Royal Ordnance and the Government on security of supply of initiators and boxer caps following the announcement on the Chorley Royal Ordnance site. [24705]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Under the terms of the MOD-BAE Systems Land Systems Framework Partnering Agreement BAES are responsible for ensuring security of the supply of initiators and boxer caps. Detailed discussions have taken place regarding the implications of the Chorley closure and we remain confident in the company's ability to maintain security of supply.

QinetiQ

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what revenue guarantees from the Department have been *(a)* indicated and *(b)* requested by QinetiQ's investment bankers in respect of the company's prospective flotation. [23634]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1216W.

RAF Recruitment

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many 16 to 24-year-olds are expected to be recruited following the most recent annual Royal Air Force recruitment campaign. [25261]

Mr. Touhig: The most recent Royal Air Force recruitment campaign comprised two television advertisements that ran between 4 February and 31 March 2005. Data on how many 16 to 24-year-olds were recruited as a result of this campaign is not held. However, during the period the campaign ran, there were around 18,000 enquiries, which included some 1,800 16 to 24-year-olds who directly cited the campaign as the reason they were requesting further information.

Royal Irish Regiment

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans the Government have *(a)* to retrain and *(b)* to prepare for civilian life members of the Royal Irish Regiment; and if he will make a statement; [25159]

(2) how many members of the Royal Irish Regiment who will be made redundant by 2007 reside in the Strangford constituency. [25160]

Mr. Touhig: We are considering the details of resettlement provision for Royal Irish (Home Service) personnel as part of our on-going work to finalise an appropriate overall settlement package.

We recognise that members of the Home Service Battalions are anxious to know the outcome of this work. A substantive announcement will be made as soon as this work is complete but I cannot give a date at this stage.

Currently a total of some 200 members of the Home Service Battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment reside in the Strangford constituency.

Special Nuclear Materials Load Carriers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has *(a)* to replace and *(b)* to upgrade the (Special Nuclear Materials) load carrier vehicles. [19346]

Mr. Ingram: Investigations are currently being undertaken to fully scope the replacement of the existing SNM load carrier vehicles with the intention that replacement vehicles will enter service in 2008. There are no plans to upgrade the existing load carriers. The vehicles were however refurbished some nine months ago to enable them to meet programme requirements until the new vehicles are available.

Territorial Army (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list Territorial Army units located nearest to residents within the Kettering constituency. [23190]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Territorial Army units, located within a 35 mile radius of Kettering Town, are as follows:

Unit

118 Recovery Company Detachment, 104 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

203 Squadron Detachment, 158 Transport Regiment Royal Logistics Corps

C (222) Medical Squadron, 4 General Supply Medical Regiment

B Squadron, Royal Yeomanry

118 Recovery Company Detachment, 104 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

C Company, East of England Regiment

46 Signals Squadron Detachment, 38 Signals Regiment

118 Recovery Company, 104 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

C Company Detachment, East of England Regiment

Regimental Headquarters (RHQ) and Headquarters Sqn, 158 Transport Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps

Royal Anglian Band

89 Signals Sqn, 35 Signals Regiment

201 Transport Squadron, 158 Transport Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps

54 Signals Squadron Detachment, 36 Signals Regiment

E (Royal Green Jackets) Company, Royal Rifle Volunteers

Trident

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of re-fitting each of the Trident submarines was in each year since they were commissioned. [21699]

John Reid *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Trident submarine long overhaul period (refuel)s (LOP(R)s), formerly referred to as refits, are being undertaken progressively. The first LOP(R), on HMS Vanguard, has been completed and the second, on HMS Victorious, began in January 2005. The total cost of the LOP(R)s programme up to the end of the last financial year, rounded to the nearest £1 million is as follows. This includes planning work generic to the class as a whole.

Vanguard class spend profile

£ million

	Vanguard	*Victorious*
2000–01	7	—
2001–02	45	—
2002–03	114	—
2003–04	84	8
2004–05	39	55
Total	289	63

Wind Turbines (Yelland Farm)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons his Department has withdrawn its objections to the proposal to erect three 81 metre wind turbines at Yelland Farm, West Devon. [23759]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* The original objection to the Yelland Farm development lodged by this Department was based on the advice of the local commander at Okehampton Training Area. However, further advice was obtained from the RAF Low Flying Policy Office, Joint Helicopter Command and HQ Army Training Estate. After these authorities had been consulted, it was confirmed that the proposed wind turbines at Yelland Farm would not prevent or restrict the RAF's or Army's ability to operate over the nearby Dartmoor and Okehampton Training Areas. On that basis, MOD withdrew its objection.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what evidence his Department relied upon in stating in a letter from Defence Estates of 26 May, to the West Devon borough council, that the erection of three 81 metre wind turbines at Yelland Farm, West Devon, would *(a)* limit realistic training in the Dartmoor training area and *(b)* constitute a hazard to military aircraft transiting around the Air Danger Area exclusion zone over North Dartmoor. [23760]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence's initial objection to the Yelland Farm planning application was based on the information provided by the local commander at Okehampton Training Area, and is related to the possible implications for the use of helicopters that routinely fly in and out of Okehampton Camp and operate over Dartmoor as part of operational training.

There were also initial concerns about the potential hazard to helicopters and fast jets that transit around the moor. The MOD's objection has now been withdrawn, following more detailed consideration.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academies

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what freedoms academies have been given that do not apply to other schools. [24508]

Jacqui Smith: Academies are state funded independent schools. As such they operate outside the control of the local authority. Academies operate in accordance with their Funding Agreement and Memorandum and Articles of Association. These give them freedoms that do not apply to maintained schools, in particular:

The Academy Trust (set up by the sponsor) appoints the majority of the governing body.

Academies are their own employing body, and so are free to employ their own staff and set their pay and conditions (subject to the requirements of the Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment Regulations 1981 for staff transferring from a predecessor school).

An Academy does not have to follow the national curriculum but is free to develop its own, so long as it is broad and balanced. However, the core subjects of the national curriculum (English, Maths and Science) must be taught to pupils in years 7–11.

Academies control their own assets.

Academies have flexibility in admissions arrangements, but must comply with the School Admissions Code of Practice and provide education for pupils drawn wholly or mainly from the area in which the Academy is situated.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of the expressions of interest that her Department received in establishing academies were from the private sector. [25061]

Jacqui Smith: Out of 68 live academy projects, 31 Expressions of Interest involved sponsorship from a private company or individual. The remainder were sponsored by charitable trusts or faith groups, some of the members of which have had a background business. A further 13 Expressions of Interest involving sponsorship from a private company or individual are currently under consideration.

Adult Education

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Learning and Skills Council has conducted on the (i) ability and (ii) willingness of (A) individuals and (B) employers to pay increased fees for adult education courses. [22288]

Bill Rammell: My Department recently commissioned a public poll asking people about their attitudes towards fees in the learning and skills sector. We intend to publish a report of the findings on the Department's website on the 11 November. Other research includes a study of learners (Study of Learners in Further Education (2003)) to ascertain the financial circumstances of learners in FE; and a Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners survey which includes questions about learner attitudes to contributing to the costs of their learning. We have also commissioned two surveys (Fees in Colleges—A Review Of The Use Of Discretionary Fee Remission In Further Education (2003); and FE Colleges Fee Charging Policy and Practice (1999)) about fee policies and practices from the college's perspective. DfES published research findings are available on the Department's website at dfes.gov.uk/research/.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is currently researching the impact of new fee policies in the further education sector. LSC published research findings are available on their website—lsc.gov.uk.

There has been no specific research into employer attitudes to payment of fees for adult education courses.

A-level Students

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the retention rate was among year two A-level students in Bolton in each year since 2002. [24303]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on retention rates during A level courses in both schools and the FE sector.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the retention rate has been among year two A-level students in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25578]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on retention rates during A level courses in both schools and the FE sector.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes there have been in funding for training organisations providing apprenticeships in the last five years. [24994]

Phil Hope: Apprenticeships in England are funded through the work-based learning for young people budget of the Learning and Skills Council. This budget covers apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships, NVQ learning and entry to employment. The following shows estimated spending by the LSC since it was established in 2001.

£ million

Academic year	*Total WBL budget*	*Estimated apprenticeship spend*
2001/02	673	467
2002/03	828	539
2003/04	791	560
2004/05	1,037	810

Basic Skills

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the percentage of the population who lack basic skills, broken down by *(a)* 18 to 24, *(b)* 25 to 29, *(c)* 30 to 34, *(d)* 35 to 39, *(e)* 40 to 44, *(f)* 45 to 49, *(g)* 50 to 54, *(h)* 55 to 59, *(i)* 60 to 64, *(j)* 65 to 69 and *(k)* 70 to 75 age groups. [25125]

Phil Hope: The "Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills" (DfES, October 2003) provides the latest estimates of literacy and numeracy levels across

England. The survey assessed the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills of around 8,000 adults aged between 16 and 65 in England.

The survey findings are shown in the following tables. The age groups in the published data are slightly wider than those requested, at 10 years rather than five, to ensure sufficient sample in each age group to provide a robust estimate. The data also include adults up to age 65 only.

The assessment levels correspond to the literacy and numeracy National Standards: these were introduced in 2002 to provide a framework for all adult screening tests, diagnostic tools, programmes of study and qualifications. Learners are assessed for levels of literacy and numeracy from Entry Level 1 to Level 2. Level 2 is broadly equivalent to a higher grade GCSE (A*-C).

Overall around 16 per cent. of adults had literacy skills below Level 1 and 47 per cent. had numeracy skills below this level.

Table 1: Age and literacy level

Percentage

	Total (n=7874)	*16 to 24 (n=1057)*	*25 to 34 (n=1774)*	*35 to 44 (n=2044)*	*45 to 54 (n=1509)*	*55 to 65 (n=1488)*
Entry Level 1 or below	3	1	2	2	3	3
Entry Level 2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Entry Level 3	11	9	9	10	12	15
Level 1	40	43	40	39	36	40
Level 2 or above	44	43	47	46	45	38

Table 2: Age and numeracy level

Percentage

	Total (n=8040)	*16 to 24 (n=1092)*	*25 to 34 (n=1764)*	*35 to 44 (n=2092)*	*45 to 54 (n=1551)*	*55 to 65 (n=1538)*
Entry Level 1 or below	5	5	4	5	6	8
Entry Level 2	16	15	14	15	16	19
Entry Level 3	25	29	24	24	24	26
Level 1	28	27	28	29	27	27
Level 2 or above	25	24	29	27	26	20

A copy of the survey report is in the House of Commons Library and on the DfES website: www.dfes.gov.uk

Bridgewater Primary, Northamptonshire

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Bridgewater primary school to be built in Northamptonshire will have kitchen facilities. [24507]

Jacqui Smith: We understand from the authority that the school does not have kitchen facilities.

Departmental school design guidelines and funding allocations allow for the provision of full kitchen facilities if required by the school or authority. Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to £6.3 billion by 2007–08. The primary capital programme of £150 million in 2008–09 and £500 million in 2009–10 will support a programme to renew at least half of all primary schools over the next 15 years.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the timetable is for the latest round of bids under Building Schools for the Future; when the round was announced; and what the closing date is; [24713]

(2) when the next round of bids under Building Schools for the Future is planned to take place. [24714]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Building Schools for the Future is our long-term strategic programme to transform facilities for secondary pupils over 15 years, subject to future public spending decisions. We have grouped investment in annual waves. Wave 1 projects were announced in 2003 and aim to sign contracts in the financial year 2005–06. Wave 2 and 3 projects were announced in 2004 and aim to sign contracts in 2006–07 and 2007–08 respectively. As the projects are large and involve many schools, building work can take several years after contract signature.

We plan to announce the next waves of investment after the coming comprehensive spending review, probably late in 2007. In the meantime, we have told each local authority when their schools may begin in the 15-year programme. On current plans, the Stroud and Cotswold area of Gloucestershire is not due to begin in the programme until waves 13 to 15, i.e. 2017 at the earliest.

This indicative planning information allows local authorities to look ahead strategically, discuss options with schools and communities and agree long-term education visions for schools and their buildings. By doing this, local areas will be well placed to make good use of other investment, as it becomes available, and to use the local flexibilities of the Single Capital Pot and prudential system. In this way, authorities should find that they will be able to achieve much on their critical paths to starting Building Schools for the Future.

We have just announced that, given Gloucestershire's position in Building Schools for the Future, it will receive around £20 million investment between 2006 to 2008 to rebuild one of its worst condition secondary buildings as a school of the future. My officials will be writing to the authority about this shortly.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding she plans to make available under Building Schools for the Future for the refurbishment and re-building of school kitchens. [25277]

Jacqui Smith: Investment provided through Building Schools for the Future will allow school kitchens to be rebuilt or refurbished, where this is needed. Total investment amounts to £6.5 billion (including £3.75 billion PFI credits) over the three financial years 2005–06 to 2007–08. We do not break down our funding to projects for particular parts of schools, such as kitchens, but we are making clear that kitchens are essential.

Challenging Pupils

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures *(a)* secondary schools and *(b)* local education authorities will be required to have in place to deal with hard to place pupils to ensure that no single school takes a disproportionate number of pupils with challenging behaviour. [24510]

Jacqui Smith: We are proposing to change the school admissions code of practice to recommend that all schools and local authorities agree protocols for the admission of hard to place pupils. These protocols should ensure that no school is asked to admit a disproportionate number of pupils with challenging behaviour. All schools and local authorities will have to have regard to this element of the code as to other elements. We want schools and local authorities to enter into these agreements voluntarily and we will be monitoring progress on this. Where agreement on protocols cannot be reached we will consider legislating to impose them.

Child Abuse

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of child *(a)* physical and *(b)* sexual abuse there have been in each year since 1997. [25265]

Maria Eagle: Information reported by councils with social services responsibilities on the number of registrations to child protection registers by category of abuse during the years ending 31 March 2002 to 2004 is shown in the following table. Information prior to this period was collected differently and may be found in Table 1.6 of "Children and Young People on Child Protection Registers, Year Ending 31 March 2001—England". This is available from the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000517/CPR2001.PDF

Registrations[1] to child protection registers during the years ending 31 March 2002 to 2004, by category of abuse

England — *Number*

	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Neglect	10,800	11,700	12,600
Physical abuse	5,300	5,700	5,700
Sexual abuse	2,800	3,000	2,800
Emotional abuse	4,700	5,400	5,600
Multiple	4,100	4,400	4,300

[1] Where a child was registered more than once in the year, each registration has been counted. Registrations include unborn children.

Citizenship Education

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers have been trained as specialists in citizenship education in each year since it was introduced as a statutory part of the national curriculum. [24386]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* In the three academic years between 2001/02 and 2003/04, a total of 534 trainees gained qualified teacher status (QTS) from initial teacher training (ITT) courses, broken down as follows. The first year of recruitment was 2001/02.

Number of trainees gaining QTS from ITT courses for citizenship

	Trainees gaining QTS
2001/02	127
2002/03	187
2003/04	220

Source:
TDA Performance Profiles.

City Academy Students

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in each city academy are children with special educational needs *(a)* with statements and *(b)* without statements. [25027]

Maria Eagle: The answer to your question is detailed in the table below. We only have data for the 17 academies which opened in or before September 2004. All data are from the academic year 2004/05. The data on pupils with SEN in the 10 academies which opened in September 2005 will not be available until after the annual school census in January 2006.

Name of academy	*Number of pupils with SEN but without statements*	*Number of pupils with statements of SEN*
Mossbourne Community Academy	42	9
Lambeth Academy	15	12
City of London (Southwark) Academy	46	22
The Academy at Peckham	446	39
London Academy	406	53
The Business Academy Bexley	585	76
Capital City Academy	225	20
The West London Academy	324	150
Greig City Academy	181	5
Stockley Academy	174	19
The Walsall City Academy	30	17

Name of academy	Number of pupils with SEN but without statements	Number of pupils with statements of SEN
Manchester Academy	97	7
The City Academy, Bristol	266	41
Unity City Academy	359	32
The King's Academy	244	95
Djanogly City Academy Nottingham	416	[1]
Northampton Academy	328	33

[1] Numbers under 5 have been deleted to remove the possibility of identifying individual pupils.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in schools from which each new academy was created were children with special educational needs *(a)* with statements and *(b)* without statements, in the last year for which figures are available. [25028]

Maria Eagle: The answer to the question is detailed in the following table. The pupil data for each school come from the academic year before the school closed.

Name of school	Academic year	Number of students with SEN without statements	Number of students with SEN statements
Kedholme School	01/02	200	18
Langbaurgh School	01/02	120	13
Thamesmead Community College	01/02	250	24
St. David and St. Katherine C of E High School	01/02	212	11
Compton Sports College	02/03	121	18
TP Rilely School	02/03	106	13
Brackenhoe Comprehensive	02/03	137	26
Coulby Newham	02/03	180	76
St. George Community College	02/03	426	61
Warwick Park School	02/03	162	39
Dulcie High School	02/03	52	10
Djanogly CTC (including Forest School)	02/03	256	0
Willesden High School	02/03	181	10
Evelyns Community School	03/04	126	19
Lings Upper School	03/04	202	24
Edgware School	03/04	322	45
Thorne Grammer School	04/05	116	37
St. Pauls RC VA School	04/05	53	29
Canon Williamson C of E School	04/05	145	8
Ramsgate School	04/05	26	14
Macmilan CTC	04/05	85	6
John Penrose School	04/05	92	18
Malory School	04/05	268	23
Haberdashers' Askes Hatcham College	04/05	146	20
Dixons CTC	04/05	234	17
Our Lady's Catholic High School	04/05	134	10

Classroom Assistants

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many classroom assistants have been employed in *(a)* the Kingston and Surbiton constituency and *(b)* London in each year since 2001. [23879]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in service in Kingston and Surbiton constituency and London Government Office Region in each January since 2001.

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants[1] in maintained sector schools[2] and pupil referral units

	Kingston and Surbiton	London
2001	140	14,380
2002	180	15,390
2003	200	17,590
2004	240	19,880
2005	280	22,230

[1] Includes teaching assistants, special needs support staff and ethnic minority support staff.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* classroom assistants and *(b)* full-time equivalent classroom assistant posts there were in schools in the Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [24189]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in maintained sector schools[2], including pupil referral units, in Kettering constituency in January of each year.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching assistant posts in Kettering is not collected centrally.

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants[1] in maintained sector schools[2], including pupil referral units, in Kettering constituency

	Teaching assistant FTE
1997	150
1998	160
1999	180
2000	200
2001	[3]260
2002	220
2003	240
2004	230
2005	250

[1] Includes teaching assistants, special needs support staff and ethnic minority support staff.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] Data for 2001 may be affected by misclassification of support staff roles following major changes to information systems.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census.

Departmental Spending

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was allocated by her Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23509]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested, in cash terms and in £ million, is set out in the following table.

	Capital Allocations	Revenue
2001–02	9.9	114.9
2002–03	20.3	124.4
2003–04	29.1	138.7
2004–05	39.1	152.4
2005–06	30.8	164.0

Notes:

1. Capital allocations to local authorities may differ, in a particular year, from local authority expenditure. This is due to timing differences and to decisions made locally. Figures for 2005–06 are provisional.

2. Revenue allocation figures, from 2003–04, include the pensions transfer to Education Formula Spending and the Learning and Skills Council; the figures prior to 2003–04 have not been adjusted. Total funding includes all revenue grants in the DfES budget relevant to pupils ages three to 19, and excludes Education Maintenance Allowances and grants not allocated at local authority level. Figures for the years 2003–04 to 2005–06 are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what checks the assessment and payment body carry out in respect of claimants of education maintenance allowance on *(a)* declared income and *(b)* attendance on the relevant courses. [25531]

Maria Eagle: The assessment and payment body (APB) accepts a range of income source documents as proof of income, such as the Tax Credit Award Notice/P60. Documents must be originals and these are scrutinised for signs of amendment or tampering as part of the assessment process. The APB also sample completed applications using random selection criteria. These applicants are written to and asked to provide further evidence to confirm the original details.

We obtained powers in the Education Act 2005 to share income and benefit data with HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions. Operational policy responsibility for education maintenance allowances (EMA) lies with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which works with these two Departments to help operate EMAs.

Schools and colleges must record attendance, ensure their systems capture EMA student attendance accurately and initiate stopping payments for unauthorised absences. The LSC conducts regular audits on schools/colleges and checks on attendance form part of those audits.

Education White Paper

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* spelling mistakes and *(b)* grammatical errors in the Education White Paper were identified by her Department after publication. [24081]

Jacqui Smith: Since publication, we have focussed on disseminating the policy ideas in the White Paper and planning their implementation rather than proof-reading again. As with any document of this size, it is inevitable that some minor errors will remain and a small number have been noted that are not significant enough to require clarification.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* powers, *(b)* funding and *(c)* responsibilities that are currently within the remit of local education authorities she expects (i) the Learning and Skills Council and (ii) local Learning and Skills Councils to hold following the implementation of the proposals in the Education White Paper. [24597]

Jacqui Smith: There are no proposals to transfer powers, funding or other responsibilities from local authorities to the Learning and Skills Council made in the 'Higher Standards Better Schools for All' White Paper.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* powers, *(b)* funding and *(c)* responsibilities the proposed (i) School Improvement Partners and (ii) Office of the Schools Commissioner will hold that are currently within the remit of local education authorities. [24602]

Jacqui Smith: The School Improvement Partner of a maintained school works under contract to the local authority that maintains the school. She or he has no powers independent of the local authority and controls no funding. Although there is a degree of central specification of the responsibilities of the School Improvement Partner, no responsibilities are taken from the local authority's remit by the introduction of the School Improvement Partner. Similarly, the Schools Commissioner will hold no powers, funding or responsibilities that are currently within the remit of local education authorities. The Schools Commissioner's role in relation to local authorities will be to support and challenge them in carrying out their new duties to promote choice, diversity and fair access; and to advise the Secretary of State on the exercise of her powers of intervention if they are failing in those duties.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the likely effects of the reforms proposed in the Education White Paper on *(a)* local government finance and *(b)* the budgets of local authorities; and if she will make a statement. [24603]

Jacqui Smith: There will be additional costs to local authorities for some elements of the proposals set out in the Education White Paper and we will make resources available to fund them, so as not to create unfunded new burdens for local authorities, or put any pressure on council tax. We will consider with key stakeholders, including local government, the costs and the best methodology and route for distributing funds as policies are developed further.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the likely effects of the reforms proposed in the Education White Paper on local councils appointing school governors; and if she will make a statement. [24604]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities will continue to appoint some governors to all categories of maintained schools. As now, the governing bodies of all maintained schools—including the new trust schools—will be responsible for the strategic leadership of their schools. As now, local authorities will not appoint the majority of governors to any category of maintained school.

Failing Schools

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are taken to deal with failing schools. [24562]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* When a school is judged, by Ofsted, to be failing the local authority is under a duty to prepare, within 10 working days, an action plan to improve the school. There are then termly visits from Ofsted to monitor the implementation of the action plan and the school's progress. Since 1998 the number of failing schools has more than halved and the average time to turn round such a school has reduced from 24 to 21 months. The Schools White Paper published last month includes proposals to ensure that school failure is remedied even more quickly. In particular, we propose to extend the range of intervention powers available to authorities and to require them to consider the full range of their powers immediately on receipt of an adverse Ofsted inspection report on a school.

Faith Schools (Admissions)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her oral answer of 27 October 2005 to the hon. Member for Barnsley, East and Mexborough (Jeff Ennis), *Official Report*, column 442, on the Education White Paper, whether her policy that looked-after children will have top priority in admissions applies equally to faith schools. [25294]

Jacqui Smith: We are committed to laying regulations before Parliament to require admission authorities to give top priority to looked-after children in their published admission arrangements. We intend that schools designated as having a religious character will, as a minimum requirement, give first priority to looked-after children of their faith, but we expect many of these schools to provide in their admission arrangements for all looked-after children to have priority unless their trust deeds prevent them from doing so.

Further Education

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will initiate a publicity campaign to persuade adults and employers that there is a need to pay higher fees for courses provided by further education colleges; and if she will make a statement. [24409]

Bill Rammell: The recent Learning and Skills Council publication "Priorities for Success: Funding for Learning and Skills" made the commitment that

> "Government and the LSC with partners in the skills alliance will make sure that (adult learning funding) priorities are communicated nationally and locally to explain and reinforce work with learners and employers at institutional level"

(paragraph 70, page 20).

Government, Learning and Skills Council and other partners' publicity campaigns over the coming months will meet this commitment by demonstrating the many different rewards to individual learners, employers and the community that can be achieved through investment of time, effort and money in learning.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to encourage secondary school leavers to go into further education. [25183]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Gas and Electricity Supply Contracts

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have interruptible contracts for gas and electricity supply; and if she will make a statement. [25544]

Jacqui Smith: We have contacted some local authority energy managers and doubt if there are any schools on an interruptible gas tariff due to the relatively low level of consumption in schools. This tariff is usually associated with the business or commercial sectors where there are dual fuels in place.

You cannot interrupt electricity supplies to properties therefore there are no such tariffs for electricity.

GCSE Results

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her oral answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 440, to the hon. Member for Faversham and Mid-Kent (Hugh Robertson), on GCSE results, what the evidential basis is for her statement that improvements in reading, writing and arithmetic followed after 50 years of no progress at all in raising primary school standards. [25295]

Jacqui Smith: The statement made in the answer to the oral question referred to is based on the conclusions from the research "Standards in Literacy and Numeracy" conducted by Greg Brooks, Derek Foxman and Tom Gorman, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), published by the National Commission on Education in December 1992. Updates to this research, "Standards in Literacy and Numeracy 1948–1994" and "Trends in the Standards of Literacy in the United Kingdom: 1948—1996" were published in 1995 and 1996 respectively.

One of the main findings of this research was that in the period between 1948 and 1996 average levels of performance of primary school children had remained much the same.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average number of A and A* grades at GCSE was achieved in all schools in each year from 1997. [23397]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is given in the following table.

Average number of A and A grades at GCSE achieved by 15-year-old pupils*[1]

	A* grades	A grades	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	Average number of A*/A grades per pupil
1997	168,334	484,323	586,766	1.1
1998	187,473	487,413	575,210	1.2
1999	188,597	476,736	580,972	1.1
2000	216,808	528,390	580,393	1.3
2001	239,058	551,729	603,318	1.3
2002	249,963	584,255	606,554	1.4
2003	251,486	586,097	622,122	1.3
2004	282,226	608,509	643,560	1.4
2005[2]	292,910	625,165	637,194	1.4

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other years are final.

Gifted and Talented Youth

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills *(a)* how many and *(b)* what proportion of secondary school pupils are members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (i) in total, (ii) broken down by local education authority and (iii) in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency. [23818]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All" makes clear our commitment to offer membership of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth to the full cohort of eligible 11–19 year olds.

The National Academy has to date recruited 70,982 members from secondary schools. This is 1.78 per cent. of secondary school pupils in England. Figures for local education authorities are in the following table. The Academy has 67 secondary members in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency.

Table 1: Number of NAGTY members by region and local education authority

		Total secondary school population	Number of NAGTY members	NAGTY members as a percentage of total population
	East of England	457,930	9,809	2.142
820	Bedfordshire	44,125.5	586	1.328
873	Cambridgeshire	41,293	1,446	3.502
881	Essex	103,306.5	1,179	1.141
919	Hertfordshire	103,336	3,874	3.749
821	Luton	13,049.5	376	2.881
926	Norfolk	53,358.5	633	1.186
874	Peterborough	13,528	427	3.156
882	Southend-on-Sea	14,043	998	7.107
935	Suffolk	63,022	268	0.425
883	Thurrock	8,868.5	22	0.248
	East Midlands	337,620	7,754	2.297
831	Derby	18,092	324	1.791
830	Derbyshire	56,055.5	1,851	3.302
856	Leicester	21,455.5	782	3.645
855	Leicestershire	52,602	978	1.859
925	Lincolnshire	53,084	1,683	3.170
928	Northamptonshire	54,530.5	583	1.069
892	Nottingham	18,941.5	548	2.893
891	Nottinghamshire	58,389	999	1.711
857	Rutland	4,473.5	6	0.134
	London	568,050	7,453	1.312
	Inner London	197,210	2,158	1.094
202	Camden	17,254	236	1.368
201	City of London	1,920	12	0.625
204	Hackney	13,616	69	0.507
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	12,435	89	0.716
309	Haringey	14,500.5	68	0.469
206	Islington	8,859.5	0	0.000
207	Kensington and Chelsea	14,320	107	0.747
208	Lambeth	10,604	130	1.226
209	Lewisham	15,153.5	39	0.257
316	Newham	18,662.5	235	1.259
210	Southwark	18,273.5	337	1.844
211	Tower Hamlets	15,390	17	0.110
212	Wandsworth	20,080	664	3.307
213	Westminster	16,144.5	155	0.960
	Outer London	370,825	5,295	1.428
301	Barking and Dagenham	12,406	173	1.394
302	Barnet	27,727	154	0.555
303	Bexley	20,632.5	328	1.590
304	Brent	19,296	356	1.845
305	Bromley	27,376.5	601	2.195
306	Croydon	28,402.5	292	1.028
307	Ealing	21,742.5	486	2.235
308	Enfield	23,807.5	134	0.563

Table 1: Number of NAGTY members by region and local education authority

		Total secondary school population	*Number of NAGTY members*	*NAGTY members as a percentage of total population*
203	Greenwich	18,317.5	98	0.535
310	Harrow	14,082.5	167	1.186
311	Havering	17,564	497	2.830
312	Hillingdon	22,010	287	1.304
313	Hounslow	17,889.5	433	2.420
314	Kingston upon Thames	13,297	121	0.910
315	Merton	12,212	1	0.008
317	Redbridge	24,550	660	2.688
318	Richmond upon Thames	15,626	131	0.838
319	Sutton	17,768	258	1.452
320	Waltham Forest	16,123.5	118	0.732
	North East	197,920	4,145	2.094
841	Darlington	7,133.5	251	3.519
840	Durham	35,267	435	1.233
390	Gateshead	14,266.5	159	1.114
805	Hartlepool	6,593	333	5.051
806	Middlesbrough	9,499.5	184	1.937
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	22,239	733	3.296
392	North Tyneside	15,092.5	560	3.710
929	Northumberland	31,272	257	0.822
807	Redcar and Cleveland	10,244	201	1.962
393	South Tyneside	10,362.5	232	2.239
808	Stockton-on-Tees	14,849.5	361	2.431
394	Sunderland	21,095.5	439	2.081
	North West	532,750	9,222	1.731
889	Blackburn with Darwen	13,072	102	0.780
890	Blackpool	10,118	121	1.196
350	Bolton	23,296.5	176	0.755
351	Bury	14,447	65	0.450
875	Cheshire	56,494.5	860	1.522
909	Cumbria	39,062	431	1.103
876	Halton	8,333.5	130	1.560
340	Knowsley	10112	45	0.445
888	Lancashire	84031.5	924	1.100
341	Liverpool	36,222	874	2.413
352	Manchester	31,481	207	0.658
353	Oldham	18,556	620	3.341
354	Rochdale	14,871	227	1.526
355	Salford	15,436	261	1.691
343	Sefton	24,264.5	483	1.991
342	St. Helens	13,046.5	351	2.690
356	Stockport	21,878	304	1.390
357	Tameside	16,267	142	0.873
358	Trafford	18,492	381	2.060
877	Warrington	14273	311	2.179
359	Wigan	21,636	1,076	4.973
344	Wirral	27,358.5	1,131	4.134
	South East	668,965	12,697	1.898
867	Bracknell Forest	8,925.5	48	0.538
846	Brighton and Hove	17,377	457	2.630
825	Buckinghamshire	43,604.5	522	1.197
845	East Sussex	36,856.5	205	0.556
850	Hampshire	89,871.5	1,172	1.304
921	Isle of Wight	13,201	184	1.394
886	Kent	120,702	3,055	2.531
887	Medway	22522	169	0.750
826	Milton Keynes	14,665.5	28	0.191
931	Oxfordshire	53,378.5	1,370	2.567
851	Portsmouth	13,278	123	0.926
870	Reading	8,994	1,367	15.199
871	Slough	9,364.5	77	0.822
852	Southampton	13,858	137	0.989
936	Surrey	98,378	1,718	1.746
869	West Berkshire	15,590.5	499	3.201
938	West Sussex	58,028	286	0.493
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	16,441.5	421	2.561
872	Wokingham	13,924	859	6.169

Table 1: Number of NAGTY members by region and local education authority

		Total secondary school population	Number of NAGTY members	NAGTY members as a percentage of total population
	South West	392,885	6,579	1.675
800	Bath and North East Somerset	17,058.5	371	2.175
837	Bournemouth	11515	33	0.287
801	Bristol, City of	25,863.5	519	2.007
908	Cornwall	36,175.5	824	2.278
878	Devon	51,594	1,017	1.971
835	Dorset	36,513.5	364	0.997
916	Gloucestershire	49,692	457	0.920
420	Isles of Scilly	0	0	0.000
802	North Somerset	14,060.5	406	2.888
879	Plymouth	20,472.5	331	1.617
836	Poole	9,760.5	25	0.256
933	Somerset	42,949	1,315	3.062
803	South Gloucestershire	18,733.5	271	1.447
866	Swindon	11,739	307	2.615
880	Torbay	10,100.5	86	0.851
865	Wiltshire	36,644	253	0.690
	West Midlands	429,710	5,882	1.369
330	Birmingham	79,943.5	371	0.464
331	Coventry	24,658.5	774	3.139
332	Dudley	21,495	438	2.038
884	Herefordshire	12,564.5	35	0.279
333	Sandwell	20,178.5	243	1.204
893	Shropshire	23,272.5	447	1.921
334	Solihull	19,356.5	245	1.266
860	Staffordshire	66,887.5	836	1.250
861	Stoke-on-Trent	15,448.5	381	2.466
894	Telford and Wrekin	12,788	144	1.126
335	Walsall	23,048	279	1.211
937	Warwickshire	41,163	593	1.441
336	Wolverhampton	19,035.5	301	1.581
885	Worcestershire	49,869.5	795	1.594
	Yorkshire and the Humber	386,995	7,441	1.923
370	Barnsley	13,935	536	3.846
380	Bradford	39,836.5	358	0.899
381	Calderdale	17,122	34	0.199
371	Doncaster	22832	410	1.796
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	25,282	633	2.504
810	Kingston Upon Hull, City of	17,651	333	1.887
382	Kirklees	28,787.5	636	2.209
383	Leeds	53,775	702	1.305
812	North East Lincolnshire	11,824.5	107	0.905
813	North Lincolnshire	11,102	291	2.621
815	North Yorkshire	49,031.5	1510	3.080
372	Rotherham	21,037	245	1.165
373	Sheffield	34,920	859	2.460
384	Wakefield	26,978.5	171	0.634
816	York	12,878.5	616	4.783

Grammar Schools (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her oral answer to the hon. Member for South Antrim (Dr. McCrea) of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 441, on the Education White Paper, what the basis was for her statement that the decision to abolish grammar schools in Northern Ireland was taken by the devolved assembly. [25293]

Jacqui Smith: A review of secondary education in Northern Ireland was in progress when the Assembly was suspended in October 2002. The Costello Group subsequently made its recommendations, and the decision to end academic selection was made by the Northern Ireland Office Minister, Jane Kennedy, rather than the devolved Assembly as originally stated. She announced this decision on 26 January, 2004, and the last transfer tests will be held in autumn 2008.

Homework Clubs

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to homework clubs in schools in *(a)* England, *(b)* Kent and *(c)* Sittingbourne and Sheppey in 2005–06. [24659]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available. Homework clubs may form part of a school's or local authority's study support (out of school hours learning) programme, for which funding is available through their base budgets, and the school development grant (SDG). Schools and local authorities may

use their SDG for any purposes linked to school improvement, and it is for them to determine the amount to be allocated to study support.

Study support forms an integral part of the Government's extended services agenda, which will require schools to offer a varied menu of activities from 8 am to 6 pm year round, including during school holidays. Additional funding of £680 million is being made available up to 2008 to support the start up of extended services in schools.

Inner City Academies

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* football and *(b)* cricket matches were played by inner city academies in the academic year 2004/05. [25629]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not hold this information.

Language Teaching

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to encourage more students in secondary schools to take language GCSEs. [25182]

Jacqui Smith: In March 2005 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced a £115 million "Boost for Modern Foreign Languages", providing support for language teaching and learning for this and the next two years.

Part of that funding will support new approaches for teaching and learning for 11 to 18-year-olds, including alternative qualifications to traditional GCSEs and vocational options at key stage 4 which will provide more flexibility for pupils in their studies and meet the needs of a wider range of pupils. We have expanded the list of qualifications that count towards performance table scores to include more language qualifications. We are also funding a range of projects and materials to promote languages and to develop innovative curricular models which will be show-cased to provide schools with delivery ideas and support. For example, we funded CILT, the National Centre for Languages to produce 'Languages Work', a suite of materials designed to promote the value of language learning, support take up of languages beyond key stage 3, and how language skills can enhance future employability.

Last September the new languages recognition scheme, the languages ladder, became available nationally. The scheme can be used by learners of all ages and is available in eight languages. The scheme differs from existing approaches to assessment in that there are separate qualifications in each language for reading, writing, listening and speaking. The scheme can provide motivation and recognition of achievement at key stage 3, thus encouraging take up at key stage 4. Finally, the scheme can support language learning at key stage 4 within a wide range of learning pathways, including vocational and work-related contexts.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what change to the administration costs of the Learning and Skills Council she expects through the planned streamlining operation. [25128]

Bill Rammell: The LSC's core administration costs have fallen steadily from 4.6 per cent. of total funding in 2001–02, to 2.5 per cent. of its planned total budget in 2005–06. The LSC's administration budget for the next two years was set out in the Secretary of State's Grant Letter issued on 31 October 2005. This Grant Letter provides the LSC with just over £252 million (2.4 per cent. of planned total budget) for 2006–07 and just under £240 million (2.2 per cent. of planned total budget) for 2007–08 to cover its administration costs including the cost of capital and depreciation. This reflects efficiency savings already agreed. The overall administration budget will be reassessed when the results of the consultation on the LSC's "Agenda for Change", particularly its restructuring, are finalised. At this stage further savings could be released to the sector.

Maintained Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many independent schools have expressed an interest in joining the maintained sector in the last five years. [25669]

Jacqui Smith: In the last five years, 52 independent schools have registered with the Department their interest in joining the maintained sector; seven independent schools have become maintained schools and another three are approved to become maintained schools in 2006/07.

Offender Learning Schemes

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment her Department has made of the pilot schemes for offender learning. [24991]

Phil Hope: The National Foundation for Educational Research, the largest independent educational research institution in Europe, has been appointed to assess the impact of the new offender learning and skills delivery arrangements in the three development regions (North East, North West and South West England). The research activity has commenced and results will be used to inform roll-out across the rest of England in August 2006, with a full research report published in September 2006.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will take steps to ensure that the forthcoming Green Paper on Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment addresses *(a)* education and training while in custody and *(b)* support for former prisoners after their release; and if she will make a statement; [24992]

(2) when the Green Paper on Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment will be published. [24993]

Phil Hope: The Department for Education and Skills, Home Office and Department for Work and Pensions are working on proposals for a joint reform programme

to build a service that is more effective in improving offenders' skills and qualifications and in getting some offenders into sustainable employment. We hope to publish proposals in the near future. The proposals can be expected to cover issues relating to education and training in custody and in the community.

Parent Councils

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of schools have parent councils. [25660]

Jacqui Smith: We do not collect this information centrally.

Parenting Contracts

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many parenting contracts have been issued in *(a)* Morecambe and Lunesdale and *(b)* England since their inception. [24536]

Jacqui Smith: My Department started to collect data regarding parenting contracts (in cases of non-attendance and exclusions from school) from September 2004. Between September 2004 and 31 July 2005 local authorities in England have reported that 5,717 parenting contracts in cases of non-attendance have been agreed with parents. During the same period 418 parenting contracts in cases of exclusion from school were agreed with parents. This is the latest data we hold—autumn term data will be published in March 2006. We do not collect data below local authority level. Lancashire LA have reported that they did not issue any parenting contracts up to and including 31 July 2005.

Prison Education

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department plans to spend on prison education in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [25436]

Phil Hope: Expenditure on learning and skills for offenders in custody is planned to be £110.9 million in financial year 2005–06. Decisions have yet to be taken on spend in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

School Building Repairs

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the requirement for school building repairs in Leeds, North-West; and what estimate she has made of the cost in each school. [25766]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows requirements for school building repairs in Leeds, North-West, based on data supplied to the Department by the local education authority in 2003. Costs have been updated to current costs. In addition to backlog repair work, the figures cover work needed over a five year period from the dates of the assessments, including cyclical and scheduled maintenance.

Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to £6.3 billion by 2007–08. Progress is being made year-by-year in improving the quality of the school building stock.

Building repairs for schools in Leeds, North-West

£

	Investment
Wigton Moor Primary School	489,364
Chapel Allerton Primary School	138,837
Gledhow Primary School	246,522
Miles Hill Primary School	0
Potternewton Primary School	194,107
Talbot Primary School	308,892
Bracken Edge Primary School	875,350
Kerr Mackie Primary School	24,941
Hillcrest Primary School	572,465
Alwoodley Primary School	718,103
Carr Manor Primary School	17,535
Highfield Primary School	254,559
Moor Allerton Hall Primary School	77,979
Moortown Primary School	80,188
Shadwell Primary School	6,913
Fir Tree Primary School	345,687
Harewood Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	59,087
Roundhay St. John's Church of England Primary School	32,709
St. Urban's Catholic Primary School	3,460
St. Paul's Catholic Primary School	37,388
Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School	52,476
Holy Rosary and St. Anne's Catholic Primary School	182,939
Archbishop Cranmer Church of England Primary School	281,510
St. Matthew's Church of England Aided Primary School	902,020
Brodetsky Primary School	167,473
Allerton High School	1,694,672
Allerton Grange School	1,870,847
Carr Manor High School	305,275
Roundhay School Technology College	752,295
Braim Wood Boys' High School	262,593
John Jamieson School	278,275
Stonegate School	230,139
Penny Field School	116,292
Elmete Wood—BESD SILC	649,777

School Meals

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the average amount spent on school meals per pupil per day in the last period for which figures are available. [25098]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect information on the average amount spent on school meals per pupil per day. However, the recent report from the school meals review panel, concluded that the average cost of ingredients in primary schools was 48.5p; and in secondary schools was 59.8p. We are currently undertaking a national audit of school food provision which asks local authorities for details of average expenditure on ingredients.

School Non-attenders

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the proportion of children between the ages of five and 16 years who do not attend school. [25658]

Jacqui Smith: The Government make no estimates of the proportion of children between the ages of five and 16 years who do not attend school. There is currently no reliable statistical source from which to estimate of the number of children who do not attend school. In due

course, the information sharing index, provided for in Section 12 of the Children Act 2004, would enable more accurate estimates to be made.

In the meantime, the Government are concentrating on improving practice in identifying children missing, or at risk of going missing, from education and placing them in suitable provision. In the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All—More Choice for Parents and Pupils" we announced our intention to introduce a new statutory duty on local authorities to identify children missing education.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what are the most recent truancy levels for *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools in Morecambe and Lunesdale. [24535]

Jacqui Smith: These data are provisional: they are currently in the process of being checked by schools and, therefore, may change as a result of this process.

Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised[1] absence in maintained schools

	Morecambe and Lunesdale	*England*
Primary	0.44	0.43
Secondary	1.34	1.25

[1] Unauthorised absence includes other forms of absence such as lateners, holidays during term time not authorised by the school, absence where reason is not yet established and truancy.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the truancy figures were from colleges of further education *(a)* in England and *(b)* broken down by constituency, in the last year for which figures are available. [24981]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally. Data on pupil absences are collected only in respect of pupils of compulsory school age: i.e. those aged five to 16-years-old.

School Sport

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average number of hours of physical education was undertaken per week in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools, in England in 2004–05. [23534]

Jacqui Smith: The 2004–05 PE and School Sport Survey of schools in School Sport Partnerships found that the average time spent each week on physical education by pupils in partnership schools was 101 minutes for pupils in primary schools and 113 minutes for pupils in secondary schools. The figures for the previous year were 97 minutes for pupils in primary schools and 110 minutes for pupils in secondary schools.

The survey results were published in September and copies have been placed in the House Libraries.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that children in schools undertake more physical exercise. [25184]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are jointly implementing a national school sport strategy. The strategy is delivering an ambitious public service agreement target to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and then 85 per cent. by 2008. The long-term ambition, by 2010, is to offer all children at least four hours of sport every week. In the five years to 2008 over £1.5 billion is being invested (including £686 million lottery funding) to implement the strategy. The 2004–05 school sport survey results found that overall, 69 per cent. of pupils in the 11,498 schools involved, were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport a week. The results were published on 2 September 2005 and copies have been placed in both Houses of Parliament Libraries.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the schools designated as sports hubs in Hemel Hempstead constituency. [25577]

Jacqui Smith: There is one School Sport Partnership in Hemel Hempstead. The hub school for the partnership is The Cavendish School, which is a Specialist Sports College. The partnership will expand next year to include all schools in Hemel Hempstead.

School Trusts

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list categories of companies which would not be permitted to set up a school trust because of the nature of their business. [25416]

Jacqui Smith: All trusts will by law be charities and will be subject to regulation by the Charities Commission. We will require trusts to have specific charitable objects and all members of trusts will be under a statutory duty to conduct the trust in accordance with its objects.

It will be for the governing bodies of individual schools to decide whether to form a partnership with a trust and to publish proposals setting out how that partnership will enhance the school's ethos and character.

The local authority can refer the governing body's decision to the schools adjudicator for determination, if there are serious concerns about the impact of the acquisition of the trust on school standards. We intend to issue guidance to governing bodies and the schools adjudicator in due course about the factors to take into account when considering proposals.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the types of person who would not be permitted to set up a school trust. [25417]

Jacqui Smith: We will produce illustrative regulations to accompany the passage of the forthcoming Bill. The list of persons who would not be permitted to set up a school trust or to be members of such a trust will be similar to the list of individuals who cannot be members of a school company in the School Companies Regulations 2002.

Truancy

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the most recent truancy levels are for *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools in the Hemel Hempstead constituency. [25810]

Jacqui Smith: These data are provisional: they are currently in the process of being checked by schools and, therefore, may change as a result of this process.

Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised[1] absence in maintained schools

	Hemel Hempstead	*England*
Primary	0.29	0.43
Secondary	0.99	1.25

[1] Unauthorised absence includes other forms of absence such as lateness, holidays during term time not authorised by the school, absence where reason is not yet established and truancy.

Science

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many qualified teachers of *(a)* the sciences, *(b)* English, *(c)* modern foreign languages, *(d)* physical education, *(e)* drama, *(f)* media studies, *(g)* mathematics and *(h)* information and communication technology there have been in secondary schools in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement; [22912]

(2) how many qualified teachers of *(a)* biology, including human biology, *(b)* chemistry, *(c)* physics and *(d)* dual science there have been in the state sector in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [22924]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available in the format requested. Information on subject teaching is collected through periodic secondary school staffing surveys. The following table shows the numbers of full-time teachers who provided some tuition in the subjects[1] shown. Information is provided for maintained secondary schools in England, from the two most recent sample surveys.

[1] Teachers are counted once against each subject taught.

	November 1996	*November 2002*
Mathematics	25,200	28,200
English	28,400	29,400
Combined/General Science	27,300	28,300
Biology	5,100	5,600
Chemistry	4,600	5,200
Physics	4,400	4,700
Other Sciences[1]	1,600	1,600
French	16,200	16,000
German	8,100	6,900
Spanish	2,700	3,600
Other Modern Languages	1,300	1,400
Information and Communication Technology	10,700	18,900
Drama[2]	8,900	8,100
Physical Education	20,000	21,400

[1] Includes geology, environmental science, rural science, agricultural science and science in society.

[2] Includes media studies, communication skills and expressive arts

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of existing science teachers will have reached retirement age by *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2008 and *(c)* 2010. [22913]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available in the format requested.

Skills for Life Courses

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of people taking Skills for Life courses have previously taken leisure courses. [24962]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Learners participating in Skills for Life courses may have previously taken leisure courses but evidence suggests that for most Skills for Life learners, their Skills for Life courses will have been their first entry back into education since school.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Skills for Life courses at Entry Level 1 cover elements of the Skills for Life course at Entry Level 2. [24979]

Phil Hope: All Skills for Life courses funded by the Learning and Skills Council for England are referenced to the National Standards for Literacy and Numeracy, which cover Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 and Levels 1 and 2. This ensures that there is consistency in a learner's studies across the country, whatever their environment or situation. The standards are constructed to facilitate progression from one level to the next in order to promote high quality learning which naturally leads the learner through the levels and where each level sets the context for higher level work in the next. Entry Level 2 Skills for Life courses build on the work done at Entry Level 1 but broaden and raise the expected levels of achievement. For instance, in literacy the contexts are extended from "forms, lists, messages, notes and records" at Entry Level 1 to also include "e-mails and simple narratives" at Entry Level 2.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adults on the Skills for Life programme have achieved *(a)* two Skills for Life qualifications, *(b)* three Skills for Life qualifications and *(c)* four or more Skills for Life qualifications since the programme began. [24980]

Phil Hope: From April 2001 to July 2005, a confirmed 1,130,000 adults have achieved a qualification in literacy, language or numeracy and have counted towards the Skills for Life Public Service Agreement (PSA) target. However, the Department currently only has detailed and complete information on Skills for Life achievements from April 2001 until July 2004. During that period approximately 865,000 learners achieved at least one Skills for Life qualification in literacy, language or numeracy and therefore counted once towards the Skills for Life PSA target. The total number

of Skills for Life achievements of these learners was approximately 1,280,000 achievements, which is an average of 1.48 per learner. Therefore, a significant number of learners will have gained two or more achievements. The specific information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Special Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the White Paper, "High Standards, Better Schools for All" what the issues are that arise for special schools from Trust status; and if she will make a statement. [24952]

Maria Eagle: The White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" states that to spread innovation and diversity across the whole school system, we will promote the establishment of self-governing Trust schools. We acknowledge in the White Paper that Trust status for special schools raises a number of complex issues and we will continue to work with schools to decide the best way forward.

Sports Colleges

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many sports colleges there are in England. [25630]

Jacqui Smith: Sports specialism was first introduced in 1997. There are 334 specialist sports colleges. In addition, 10 chose sports as part of a combined specialism and seven chose sports as a second specialism at Redesignation.

Sunbeds

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will undertake a publicity campaign to dissuade children from using sunbeds. [21271]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

SunSmart, the national skin cancer prevention and sun protection campaign, run by Cancer Research UK on behalf of the United Kingdom health departments includes in their printed resources and on the SunSmart website information and advice discouraging the use of sunbeds, especially by young people below the age of 16 years. SunSmart has this year campaigned on raising the awareness of the dangers of skin cancer among children and young people, including the risks associated with sunbeds. The Health and Safety Executive guidelines also recommend that sunbeds should not be used by young people under 16 years and that the guidelines should be available to the public at sunbed establishments.

Teacher Numbers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* full-time equivalent teaching posts there were in schools in the Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [24130]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teachers in service in maintained sector schools, including pupil referral units, in Kettering constituency in each January since 1997.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching posts in Kettering is not collected centrally.

Full-time equivalent number of teachers in maintained sector schools[1], including pupil referral units, in Kettering constituency

	Teachers FTE
1997	940
1998	940
1999	960
2000	980
2001	1,030
2002	1,030
2003	1,030
2004	1,020
2005	1,050

[1] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census

Teachers' Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what account is taken of differences between the value of pension provision of teachers in the public sector and that of teachers in the private sector when setting teachers' pay. [24816]

Jacqui Smith: No account is taken of the value of pension provision for teachers in the private sector when setting teachers' pay. Schools in the private sector are free to join the teachers' pensions scheme and over 50 per cent. do so.

Trust Schools

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the proposed Trust schools will be able to apply for the flexibility to borrow against their assets. [24092]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* The proposed Trust schools will be able to borrow against their assets on the same basis as existing maintained schools. That is, permission to borrow must be approved by the Secretary of State. Borrowing by schools scores as public expenditure and, in coming to a decision, the Secretary of State will have regard as to whether the extra cost can be met by the Department. In addition, the Secretary of State will determine whether or not the extra borrowing constitutes value for money.

Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools offered *(a)* Part One and *(b)* Full General National Vocational Qualification at (i) Foundation and (ii) Intermediate level in each year since 1995. [23454]

Phil Hope: Information on the number of schools offering GNVQs is unavailable. Figures for the number of schools where at least one pupil has achieved this qualification is provided in the following table:

Number of schools where at least one 15-year-old pupil[1] has achieved each qualification type

	Part 1 intermediate	*Part 1 foundation*	*Full intermediate*	*Full foundation*
2005[2]	42	5	1,202	317
2004	146	25	1,087	332
2003	1,479	970	1,010	358
2002	1,186	768	531	241
2001	783	426	181	154
2000	485	285	186	154
1999	403	269	134	128
1998	212	148	102	107
1997	103	85	97	88

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 of August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.
Note:
GNVQs were first introduced into the Achievement and Attainment tables (formerly Performance Tables) in 1996/97, therefore we cannot provide this information for earlier years.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to tackle benefit fraud; and if he will make a statement. [24664]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 453–54W to the hon. Member for Ilford North, (Mr. Scott).

Coventry

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to visit Coventry. [24567]

Mr. Hutton: I have no current plans to visit Coventry but would be happy to discuss the possibility of making a visit in the future.

Disability Living Allowance

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average waiting time has been between the rejection of an application for disability living allowance and an appeal hearing in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17828]

Mrs. McGuire: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, chief executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to respond to your question regarding what the average waiting time has been between the rejection of an application for Disability Living Allowance and an appeal hearing in each of the last five years for which records are available.

The information you have requested is shown in the table below.

Great Britain, DLA appeals 2000–05 by average duration

	Average duration (Weeks)
2000–01	33.08
2001–02	31.81
2002–03	30.38
2003–04	28.88
2004–05	27.68

Notes:
1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. "Lodged" denotes when an appeal is submitted to the first tier agency. Lodged data only enters the GAPS database when the Appeal reaches the Appeals Service.
3. Duration is derived by calculating the time difference from when an appeal is lodged until when it is cleared. It is represented in weeks.
4. Years are represented from April to March in each instance.
Source:
100 per cent. download of the Generic Appeals Processing System.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many appeals there have been as a result of rejected applications for disability living allowance in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17829]

Mrs. McGuire: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, chief executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to respond to your question regarding how many appeals there have been as a result of rejected applications for Disability Living Allowance in each of the last five years for which records are available.

The information you have asked for is not available in the format requested as, due to the way data is gathered, it is not possible to provide figures solely concerning appeals brought as a result of rejected applications. Information is gathered by the total number of appeals received and the table below shows this over the last 5 years.

Great Britain, disability living allowance, appeals and outcomes 2001–05[1]

	Lodged	*Received*	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour of appellant*	*Cleared against appellant*	*Cleared upheld S of S decision confirmed*	*Cleared before hearing*	*Adjourned*	*Postponed*
2001	86,420	86,890	86,285	45,165	100	40,200	825	20,660	14,445
2002	82,535	82,290	72,815	39,495	75	32,510	735	15,785	11,320
2003	87,545	83,560	69,840	36,850	90	32,060	840	16,395	8,220
2004	90,030	87,010	75,080	38,170	115	35,800	995	18,680	7,155
2005	40,720	41,380	35,935	18,190	30	17,190	525	9,955	3,725

[1] Figures are for calendar years (January to December) except 2005 which covers January 2005 to June 2005.

Notes:
1. Data is taken from the Management Information System (MIS) computer system.
2. Figures have rounded to the nearest 5.
3. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
4. Figures for the latest months will rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
5. Figures show all DLA appeals for the dates shown and not just DLA application.
6. Appeals received figures may be higher than lodged figures as a result of lodgement being in a different month/year.

Source:
DWP, Information Directorate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people who have appealed against the withdrawal of a higher rate of disability living allowance have lost all benefit at the appeal in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17831]

Mrs. McGuire: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, chief executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to respond to your question regarding how many people who have appealed against the withdrawal of a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance have lost all benefit at the appeal in each of the last five years for which records are available.

The information you have asked for is not available in the format requested as, due to the way data is gathered, it is not possible to provide figures solely concerning appeals brought as a result of the withdrawal of a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance. Information is gathered by the total number of appeals received and this was set out in my response to you for PQ/05/17829.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many appeals brought as a result of rejected applications for disability living allowance have been upheld in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17832]

Mrs. McGuire: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, chief executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to respond to your question regarding how many appeals brought as a result of rejected applications for Disability Living Allowance have been upheld in each of the last five years for which records are available.

The information you have asked for is not available in the format requested as, due to the way data is gathered, it is not possible to provide figures solely concerning appeals brought as a result of rejected applications. Information is gathered by the total number of appeals received and the table below shows this over the last 5 years.

Great Britain, disability living allowance, number of appeals and appeals where the decision has been upheld in each year from 2001–05

	Cleared at hearing	*Cleared decision upheld*
2001	86,285	40,200
2002	72,815	32,510
2003	69,840	32,060
2004	75,080	35,800
2005	35,935	17,190

Notes:
1. Data is taken from the Management Information System (MIS) computer system.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
3. Figures are for calendar years (January to December) except 2005 which covers January 2005 to June 2005.
4. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
5. Figures for the latest months will rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate

I hope this information is helpful.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total cost is to the disability and carers service of defending decisions to refuse claims for disability living allowance against appeals; [22707]

(2) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total cost is to the disability and carers service of reconsidering claims for disability living allowance that were initially rejected; [22708]

(3) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total cost is to the disability and carers service of processing new claims for disability living allowance. [22709]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the disability and carers service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service (DCS), to reply to your questions concerning the *(a)* average and *(b)* total cost to the DCS of defending decisions to refuse claims for disability living allowance against appeals, of reconsidering claims for disability living allowance that were initially rejected, and of processing new claims for disability living allowance.

The information is not available in the format requested for appeals and reconsiderations.

I am only able to provide the average cost and total cost for all appeal applications and reconsideration requests, not just those that were refused or rejected.

£

	Average cost	*Total cost*[1]
Appeal	100.77	3,320,992
Reconsideration	44.06	1,616,371
Claim	67.63	9,570,156
Special Rules claim	52.62	376,424

[1] Year to July 2005.

Notes:
1. Figures for actual year to date at July 2005.
2. The costs include medical evidence.
3. Includes direct staff costs only for those processing the events.
4. The special rules cover people who suffer from a progressive disease that is so severe that they are not expected to live longer than six months.

I hope you find this information useful and I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 452W, on disability living allowance, what progress has been made in developing a new claim form for disability living allowance; and which groups are being consulted as part of this development. [22710]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 7 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 7th June Official Report column 452W on disability living allowance, what progress has been made in developing a new claim form for disability living allowance; and which groups are being consulted as part of this development. The Secretary of State has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service (DCS), to reply to your question.

The DCS has been developing and testing different disability living allowance (DLA) claim forms since September 2003, in order to address concerns from disabled people and their representative organisations about the difficulties they were experiencing in claiming disability benefits. This has culminated in a claim form for DLA adult working age customers, currently being tested in the areas serviced by the Disability Benefits Centres at Manchester and Bootle. The effectiveness of the claim for both customers and DCS will be evaluated fully before any decisions are made about the way forward.

The establishment of the DCS as an Agency on 1st November 2004 marked an increased focus on understanding the needs of its customers through early proactive and open consultation with customer representative organisations. Consequently, the claim form currently being tested was subject to considerable consultation and input from a wide range of customer groups through the DCS Advisory Forum (formerly the Modern Service Working Group). The Forum provides the DCS' main consultation mechanism through its membership of 14 national Voluntary and Community Sector officers, who represent customers with a wide range of disabilities. Some of the Forum members also sought input from additional organisations, whom they considered could offer valuable input.

The list of organisations is attached at annexe 1.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Annexe 1

Organisation

Macmillan Cancer Relief

Mencap

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

Mind

Disability Alliance

Local Government Association (LGA)

Carers UK

Citizens Advice

Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)

Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Re-Think

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

Age Concern

Contact A Family

Additional information sought by members of the Forum from:

Motor Neurone Disease Association

Coutinho Welfare Benefits Team

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time taken to process new claims for disability living allowance has been in each year since 2001, broken down by region. [22711]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the disability and carers service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, to reply to your question concerning the average length of time taken to process new claims for disability living allowance (DLA) in each year since 2001, broken down by region.

The information requested is only available by Disability and Carers Service Disability Benefit Centre areas as follows:

Scotland and the North East: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds and Newcastle.

Central England: Manchester and Midlands.

Wales and Western England: Cardiff, Bristol and Bootle.

The South: Wembley and Sutton.

Average length of time in days to clear DLA normal rules new claims by disability benefits centre

	April 01–March 02	*April 02–March 03*	*April 03–March 04*	*April 04–March 05*	*April 05–September 05*
Scotland and North East					
Edinburgh	39.3	40.2	37.9	38.0	39.3
Glasgow	37.6	37.4	36.2	32.7	35.1
Leeds	33.1	37.5	37.5	32.3	31.2
Newcastle	39.8	39.5	32.1	34.7	37.7
Central England					
Manchester	34.1	35.9	35.8	34.2	29.3
Midlands	49.7	44.5	35.0	32.4	31.3
Wales and Western England					
Cardiff	35.3	34.1	39.2	35.4	33.7
Bristol	38.7	38.7	39.2	34.5	33.5
Bootle	39.6	36.3	37.5	34.7	32.7
The South					
Wembley	45.2	48.2	43.0	36.0	33.4
Sutton	45.5	40.8	40.3	36.3	34.8

Average length of time in days to clear DLA special rules new claims by disability benefits centre

	April 01–March 02	*April 02–March 03*	*April 03–March 04*	*April 04–March 05*	*April 05–September 05*
Scotland and North East					
Edinburgh	5.8	6.4	5.3	5.5	6.0
Glasgow	7.8	7.1	5.8	5.2	4.9
Leeds	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.4	5.3
Newcastle	7.6	7.4	6.6	6.5	6.7
Central England					
Manchester	5.9	5.5	6.0	5.0	4.4
Midlands	10.6	6.9	4.5	4.9	3.8
Wales and Western England					
Cardiff	6.1	5.8	6.7	6.4	5.2
Bristol	5.8	6.5	6.4	5.9	5.7
Bootle	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.2	5.5

Average length of time in days to clear DLA special rules new claims by disability benefits centre

	April 01–March 02	April 02–March 03	April 03–March 04	April 04–March 05	April 05–September 05
The South					
Wembley	9.4	8.4	7.2	5.7	5.8
Sutton	7.5	7.2	6.4	5.7	5.9

Note:
The special rules cover people who suffer from a progressive disease that is so severe that they are not expected to live longer than six months.

I hope this is helpful.

DNA Bioscience

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what meetings have taken place between the *(a)* owners and *(b)* officials of DNA Bioscience since 5 May and (i) Ministers in his Department, (ii) officials in his Department and (iii) officials in his Department's agencies and non-departmental public bodies; and if he will make a statement. [24563]

Mr. Hutton: No such meetings have taken place.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the claimant off-flow rates from *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability allowance were in each of the last 15 years, broken down by reason for leaving the benefit. [25192]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the tables.

Incapacity benefit off-flows by reason for termination for quarters shown

Thousand

	All	Closed certificate	Death of claimant	Award of state pension	Failed OOT	Failed PCA	Other reason
May 1995	198.1	—	—	[1]0.1	—	—	198.0
August 1995	239.7	—	—	—	—	—	239.7
November 1995	266.4	—	—	—	—	—	266.4
February 1996	259.8	—	—	[1]0.1	—	—	259.7
May 1996	272.1	—	—	[1]0.1	—	—	272.0
August 1996	244.6	—	—	—	—	—	244.6
November 1996	225.6	104.8	6.1	—	0.5	36.7	77.4
February 1997	230.4	89.3	6.7	5.6	[1]0.2	35.1	93.5
May 1997	247.9	83.1	5.6	15.2	[1]0.4	38.1	105.6
August 1997	233.8	87.4	5.8	17.8	0.6	34.8	87.5
November 1997	238.1	86.6	6.4	17.4	0.7	36.1	90.8
February 1998	223.5	78.7	6.1	18.7	0.9	36J	82.4
May 1998	232.2	83.2	6.5	21.2	0.9	34.1	86.3
August 1998	210.0	69.5	5.1	20.7	1.2	35.0	78.6
November 1998	235.0	65.3	5.9	19.2	1.1	—	143.5
February 1999	189.0	66.5	6.3	19.4	1.4	31.7	63.8
May1999	208.6	60.5	5.7	23.3	1.3	30.0	87.9
August 1999	210.6	57.6	6.1	2[illegible]5	0.8	27.9	94.7
November 1999	207.7	61.0	5.4	22.0	1.0	28.1	90.2
February 2000	205.6	57.2	6.7	22.9	1.2	27.4	90.3
May 2000	187.1	58.8	5.4	17.0	1.2	24.4	80.3
August 2000	169.2	55.6	4.7	9.2	1.6	22.8	75.3
November 2000	174.7	56.0	5.5	8.4	1.4	20.1	83.3
February 2001	177.8	52.2	6.6	8.9	1.3	18.5	90.5
May 2001	181.5	55.4	5.9	11.3	1.3	19.9	87.7
August 2001	170.5	49.6	5.5	10.2	1.3	21.4	82.5
November 2001	182.8	53.5	5.7	10.0	1.3	26.1	86.1
February 2002	171.1	47.7	5.9	11.2	1.1	23.7	81.7
May 2002	176.2	47.7	4.8	12.1	1.0	25.6	85.2
August 2002	172.3	45.1	5.5	12.5	0.8	22.7	85.7
November 2002	181.2	47.2	6.1	11.1	1.2	26.8	88.9
February 2003	166.3	41.0	6.0	13.5	0.8	22.9	82.2
May 2003	161.5	42.7	5.5	15.5	0.9	24.3	72.6
August 2003	178.8	41.5	5.5	9.2	1.1	24.5	97.0
November 2003	182.5	43.3	5.8	6.0	1.0	24.6	101.8
February 2004	168.5	37.1	6.7	12.5	0.7	23.3	88.2
May 2004	171.4	38.5	5.5	16.3	0.8	26.4	83.8
August 2004	173.6	35.3	5.8	16.8	0.7	24.3	90.6
November 2004	172.7	37.6	5.3	14.2	0.8	27.0	87.8
February 2005	174.9	34.9	6.4	16.1	[1]0.4	25.8	91.3
May 2005	130.4	37.6	5.8	15.1	0.7	30.7	40.5

Severe disability allowance off-flows by reason for termination for quarters shown

Thousand

	All	*Closed certificate*	*Death of claimant*	*Award of state pension*	*Failed OOT*	*Failed PCA*	*Other reason*
May 1995	3.3	—	—	—	—	—	3.3
August 1995	5.4	—	—	—	—	—	5.4
November 1995	5.7	—	—	—	—	—	5.7
February 1996	6.4	—	—	—	—	—	6.4
May 1996	5.2	—	—	—	—	—	5.2
August 1996	6.7	—	—	—	—	—	6.7
November 1996	9.2	0.8	1.4	—	—	[1]0.2	6.7
February 1997	13.5	0.6	1.7	—	—	[1]0.4	10.9
May 1997	9.0	[1]0.5	1.3	—	—	[1]0.3	7.0
August 1997	8.0	[1]0.8	1.7	—	—	[1]0.3	5.1
November 1997	7.1	0.7	1.9	—	—	[1]0.2	4.3
February 1998	6.8	0.5	2.0	—	—	[1]0.2	4.0
May 1998	6.2	[1]0.3	1.3	—	—	[1]0.3	4.3
August 1998	5.8	[1]0.5	1.4	—	—	[1]0.3	3.6
November 1998	7.4	[1]0.4	1.5	—	—	—	5.5
February 1999	4.7	[1]0.2	1.8	—	—	[1]0.2	2.5
May 1999	5.7	[1]0.2	1.3	—	—	[1]0.2	4.0
August 1999	6.6	[1]0.4	1.3	—	—	[1]0.2	4.7
November 1999	6.5	0.5	1.7	—	—	[1]0.2	4.2
February 2000	7.6	[1]0.2	2.1	—	—	[1]0.2	5.1
May 2000	6.1	[1]0.3	1.4	—	—	[1]0.2	4.3
August 2000	5.6	[1]0.4	1.6	—	—	[1]0.1	3.5
November 2000	5.6	[1]0.3	1.5	—	—	[1]0.1	3.6
February 2001	5.5	[1]0.3	1.6	—	—	[1]0.2	3.5
May 2001	5.8	[1]0.3	1.4	—	—	[1]0.3	3.8
August 2001	4.6	[1]0.4	1.2	—	—	[1]0.2	2.8
November 2001	5.4	[1]0.2	1.5	—	—	[1]0.2	3.5
February 2002	4.9	[1]0.2	1.6	—	—	[1]0.2	2.9
May 2002	4.6	[1]0.1	1.4	—	—	[1]0.1	2.9
August 2002	4.1	[1]0.1	1.0	—	—	[1]0.1	2.9
November 2002	4.5	[1]0.2	1.5	—	—	[1]0.1	2.8
February 2003	4.0	[1]0.1	1.3	—	—	—	2.5
May 2003	4.4	[1]0.1	1.0	—	—	[1]0.1	3.2
August 2003	4.3	[1]0.1	1.3	—	—	—	2.9
November 2003	4.4	[1]0.2	1.3	—	—	—	2.9
February 2004	4.3	[1]0.1	1.5	—	—	—	2.6
May 2004	3.3	[1]0.1	1.1	—	—	[1]0.1	2.0
August 2004	3.8	[1]0.1	1.3	—	—	[1]0.1	2.4
November 2004	3.5	[1]0.1	1.3	—	—	[1]0.1	1.9
February 2005	4.2	[1]0.1	1.3	—	—	[1]0.1	2.8
May 2005	1.9	[1]0.3	1.4	—	—	—	[1]0.2

'—' means nil or negligible.

[1] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling error and should only be used as a guide.

Notes:

1. These figures have been updated to include late notified terminations, including terminations for retirement pension.
2. All figures back to 1995 have been revised, and may be subject to further change;

(a) Figures prior to 2004 are subject to minor changes

(b) Figures for 2004 include fewer late notifications than previous quarters and will be subject to greater change in future

(c) Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total terminations for May 2004 increased by 33 per cent. in the year following their initial release.

3. "PCA" means Personal Capability Assessment (formerly the 'All Work Test').
4. "OOT" means Own Occupation Test.
5. Due to operational procedures a small number of Personal Capability Assessment terminations appear in 'Other reasons'.
6. Because of changes to the recording system, terminations due to the all work test are unreliable and are included in 'Other reasons'.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Job Clubs

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of *(a)* the impact of the reduction in the number of job clubs and *(b)* the effect of the use of larger contractors to manage services. [22492]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. David Drew, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning his assessment of the impact of the reduction in the number of job clubs and the effect of the use of larger contractors to manage services. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobsearch help has not been provided through Jobclubs for a number of years. The service that Jobclubs used to offer is now delivered through Programme Centres, and these centres continue to play an important role in our portfolio of provision. However,

in planning to make best use of reduced funding this year for our contracted provision, it was important that we gave priority to programmes helping those at greatest disadvantage including, for example, the New Deals. This does mean that, in some areas, Programme Centre contracts have not been extended or referral numbers have been cut this year.

The policy of using fewer, larger, contractors to manage services is being introduced in the current Jobseeker's Allowance New Deal contracting round for contracts due to begin in April 2006. It is too early to judge the effect. However, this policy has been introduced to rationalise a contract portfolio of some several thousand contracts. It should provide better value for money in contract management terms, as well as offering contracts of a size that are a more commercially viable proposition for providers. It aims also to alleviate the burden for smaller providers by offering them the scope to work with other local partners rather than having to bid for separate small contracts.

I hope this is helpful.

Job Creation

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the current review of job creation schemes. [21273]

Margaret Hodge: A review of our welfare to work programmes was commissioned in 2003 to ensure that our programmes were able to help the greatest proportion of economically inactive people into work, as well as those claiming jobseeker's allowance.

Our strategy paper 'Building on New Deal (BoND): Local solutions meeting individual needs' was published on 17 June 2004. The paper sets out our strategy for building on the success of our employment programmes.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the end of job centre contracts in the last funding round, with particular reference to further education colleges. [22491]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Leslie Strathie to Mr. David Drew, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the end of jobcentre contracts in the last funding round, with particular reference to further education colleges. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Most of our contracts were due to expire on 31 March 2005. We initially extended some contracts for six months, to allow decisions to be made on our future contract needs. We further extended some of those contracts from October 2005 to April 2006 to allow sufficient time for the tendering process and for new contracts to start next April. In deciding how to make best use of reduced funding this year, achievement of agreed performance targets was a key criterion for extending contracts.

Of those contracts either terminated early (for reasons of poor performance or quality) or not renewed, current information suggests that approximately 7 per cent. were with further education colleges.

I hope this is helpful.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what large scale redundancies have been notified to the Job Centre Plus in North Staffordshire by the Department of Trade and Industry. [21832]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Joan Walley, dated 7 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about what large scale redundancies have been notified to Jobcentre Plus in North Staffordshire by the Department of Trade and Industry. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Since March 2005, there have been 17 notifications of redundancies across North Staffordshire, involving 1,053 employees. Of these notifications, nine were designated by Jobcentre Plus for large scale redundancy status. These are as follows:

Company	*Number of employees involved*
Strathway Wellies	11
Shires Ltd	220
Dyson Ceramic Systems	30
Faiveley Transport Birkenhead Ltd	24
Leoni Wiring Systems UK Ltd	95
Bloor Potteries Ltd	36
W Moorcroft PLC	47
Sews Components Europe BV	57
Indesit Company UK Ltd	80

I hope this information is helpful.

Lone Parents

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in Edinburgh, North and Leith have received the lone parent work search premium; [22023]

(2) how many people in Edinburgh, North and Leith have received the in-work credit. [22024]

Margaret Hodge: Information is not available for the constituency of Edinburgh, North and Leith, however, in the Edinburgh Jobcentre Plus district, 780 people have received the lone parent in-work credit and 190 people have received the lone parent work search premium.

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on changes in the budget for new deal programmes for 2005–06. [21274]

Margaret Hodge: Our aim is to ensure that all new deal participants have access to the full range of programme options. By actively managing our programme budgets, we will continue to ensure that support through the new deal will be available to those customers who need the most help and support, regardless of where they live. We have adjusted some regional allocations this year to ensure that we deliver our overall priorities.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have *(a)* registered on the new deal for disabled people and *(b)* obtained a sustained (i) part-time and (ii) full-time job through the new deal for disabled people. [14396]

Margaret Hodge: Between July 2001 and May 2005, a total of 144,360 people had registered with a new deal for disabled people (NDDP) job broker. The number of people gaining a job up to May 2005, following registration with an NDDP job broker, was 59,560. Of these, 29,170 were sustained full-time jobs and 8,620 were sustained part-time jobs.

Notes:
1. For the purposes of new deal for disabled people, a job is regarded as sustained when a person, placed into work through an NDDP job broker, remains in work for 13 out of 39 weeks. Prior to October 2003, an NDDP job was regarded as sustained when a person, placed into work through an NDDP job broker, remained in work for 26 out of 39 weeks.
2. NDDP jobs data relate only to the number of individuals gaining a job through an NDDP Job Broker. A measure of sustainability is not available for non-job broker jobs.
3. Although data are now available on people into jobs through NDDP up to the end of August 2005, data provided is up to the end of May 2005, to allow three months for the job to be recorded as sustained.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10

Source:
DWP Information Directorate

Pensions

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average monthly contribution to stakeholder pensions is. [25684]

Mr. Timms: The average individual monthly contribution to stakeholder pensions was £119 for the year ending 5 April 2004—the latest year for which data are available.

Private Finance Projects

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1076W, on private finance projects, what proportion of assets and liabilities for each of the listed private finance initiatives and public private partnerships is recorded on the Government balance sheet. [16132]

Margaret Hodge: The Department has one on-balance sheet contract which is held with ICB Ltd for serviced accommodation and support functions in respect of Health and Safety Laboratories at Buxton. This private finance initiative contract is accounted for as a finance lease, with 100 per cent. of the contract value disclosed as a liability on the balance sheet. On completion of the transfer of the risks and rewards of this asset to ICB Ltd, the Department received an element of the payment in cash terms (40 per cent.) and a proportion in reduced future accommodation payments (60 per cent.). The reduction to future accommodation charges is accounted for as a prepayment, and therefore an asset, on the balance sheet.

The majority of private finance initiative contracts held by the Department for Work and Pensions are recorded as off-balance sheet. These are accounted for as operating leases and expenditure is put straight to the operating cost statement as it is incurred. Where a reduced cash value is received from the contractor, the remaining value of the asset will be disclosed as a prepayment on the balance sheet. The prepayment is then amortised to the operating cost statement over the life of the contract.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1076W, on private finance projects, what the accounting treatment of assets and liabilities for each of the listed private finance initiatives and public private partnerships is; and whether this treatment is compliant with *(a)* UK generally accepted accounting practices and *(b)* international financial reporting standards. [16134]

Margaret Hodge: The Department has one on-balance sheet contract which is held with ICB Ltd for serviced accommodation and support functions in respect of Health and Safety Laboratories at Buxton. This private finance initiative contract is accounted for as a finance lease and is disclosed as a liability on the balance sheet. The reduction to future accommodation charges is accounted for as a prepayment, and therefore disclosed as an asset, on the balance sheet.

The majority of private finance initiative contracts held by the Department for Work and Pensions are recorded as off-balance sheet. These are accounted for as operating leases and expenditure is put straight to the operating cost statement as it is incurred. Where we have consideration for assets transferred to the contractor, this may be received in the form of cash or reduced future rentals. Any of the latter element will be disclosed as a prepayment on the balance sheet. The prepayment is then amortised to the operating cost statement over the life of the contract. This treatment is compliant with HM Treasury guidance detailed in their Resource Accounting Manual, which is based on UK generally accepted accounting practices.

Sure Start

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of extending Sure Start Maternity Grant eligibility to recipients of *(a)* long-term incapacity benefit, *(b)* short-term higher rate incapacity benefit and *(c)* short-term lower rate incapacity benefit. [14479]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In order to qualify for a Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG), claimants must have an award of one of the income related qualifying benefits or tax credits in respect of the date of claim. The qualifying benefits or tax credits are income support, income based jobseeker's allowance, pension credit, child tax credit at a rate higher than the family element and working tax credit that includes a disability or severe disability element. People who receive incapacity benefit qualify for an SSMG if they receive a qualifying benefit or tax credit.

An SSMG can be claimed at any time from the 29th week of pregnancy until three months after the birth. There will be claimants who, although they do not

qualify before the baby is born, will be entitled to a qualifying benefit or tax credit following the birth and as a consequence may be entitled to receive an SSMG.

TRANSPORT

Air Carrier Insolvencies

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the proportion of leisure air passengers who were protected by the Air Traffic Organisers Licence in each year since 1995. [25142]

Ms Buck: Statistics compiled by the Civil Aviation Authority indicate the percentage of UK international leisure air travellers covered by ATOL over the last 10 years (year ending December) were as follows:

	Leisure passengers (million)	*ATOL protected passengers (million)*	*Percentage ATOL protected (percentage)*
1995	23.2	19.1	82
1996	22.2	21.3	96
1997	24.0	23.5	98
1998	27.4	25.0	91
1999	30.3	26.4	87
2000	33.5	28.0	84
2001	35.9	29.1	81
2002	36.8	27.9	76
2003	39.6	27.6	70
2004	42.5	28.1	66

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the proportion of leisure air passengers who will be protected by the Air Traffic Organisers Licence in each year to 2010. [25143]

Ms Buck: The percentage of UK international leisure air travellers who will be covered by ATOL over the next five years is estimated as follows:

Proportion of leisure air travellers with ATOL protection

	Percentage
2004	66
2005	54–61
2006	42–57
2007	32–53
2008	22–50
2009	22–48
2010	22–46

From 2005 the percentage is expressed in terms of a range, which reflects high and low estimates for the decline in ATOL protection.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of leisure air passengers who flew without Air Traffic Organisers Licence protection in each year since 2000. [25144]

Ms Buck: Statistics compiled by the Civil Aviation Authority indicate the number of UK international leisure air travellers not covered by ATOL over the last five years was as follows.

	Leisure passengers not ATOL protected (million)
2000	5.5
2001	6.8
2002	8.9
2003	12.0
2004	14.4

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the total regulatory compliance cost of the Air Traffic Organisers Licence bonding requirements for tour operators. [25145]

Ms Buck: The tour operator industry has estimated that it incurs direct bonding costs of £50-£60 million per annum (i.e. the aggregate amount charged by bond obligors to tour operators).

In addition to this there are costs associated with staff time spent on organising bonding and compliance. The industry estimated these costs at £22 million.

In addition tour operators pay ATOL fees to the Civil Aviation Authority of approximately £5.5 million per annum.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many UK airlines have become insolvent since 2000. [25146]

Ms Buck: There have been five airline insolvencies since 2000. They were Gill Aviation in 2001, British World Airlines and HC Airlines in 2002, Euroceltic in 2003 and Duo in 2004. AB Airlines and Debonair became insolvent in 1999 but their operating licences were revoked by the CAA in 2000.

Concessionary Travel

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what additional funding he is providing *(a)* in England and *(b)* to each of the district councils in Gloucestershire in 2005–06 to cover the cost of providing concessionary travel for the over-60s; how much funding he plans to provide in future years; what percentage of the total costs of providing this travel the funding will represent; and if he will make a statement. [24955]

Ms Buck: The Government will provide an extra £350 million in 2006–07 and £367.5 million in 2007–08 which will be sufficient to fund the cost to local authorities. A decision on how the extra funding will be distributed will be made in due course.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements he is making to enable cross-boundary travel between County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Teeside under the concessionary travel scheme for over-60s; and if he will make a statement. [25696]

Ms Buck: From 1 April 2006, residents who are 60 or over, or disabled will be entitled to free off-peak bus travel within the boundary of the district or unitary council, or the passenger transport executives (PTEs) in metropolitan areas. However, local authorities and PTEs will retain their discretion to work together to provide cross-boundary travel.

Cross London Rail Links

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether a new *(a)* chair and *(b)* chief executive of Cross London Rail Links has been appointed; and if he will make a statement. [23716]

Derek Twigg: There will be an announcement in due course.

Deparatmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23835]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W, by my right hon Friend, the then Minister of the Cabinet Office.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23860]

Ms Buck: The available copies of the Department's Skills Development Plans have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24382]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Secretary of State owns one small plot of land in Kettering, details are as follows:

Narrow waste strip on Rockingham Road.

This land adjoins a recently completely residential estate and details have been entered onto the English Partnerships Register of Public Sector land.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many full-time equivalent employee reductions his Department has made as a result of the Gershon review; what cost savings relating to IT projects were achieved; what value of efficiency savings *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [24331]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Progress on efficiency gains and headcount reductions was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual reports. Further progress will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

The Department has a published efficiency target for 2005–06 of £174.8 million.

Investment in IT projects, for example to open up or extend e-channels, has made a contribution to the Department's Efficiency Programme, but these efficiency gains are not identified or measured in isolation.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21305]

Ms Buck: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual reports. Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance reports and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part Gateway reviews for these projects. [23525]

Ms Buck: 235 IT projects have been developed for DfT from 29 May 2002, when the Department was formed.

A Gateway review is conducted on a confidential basis for the senior responsible owner of each project. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 each request for the release of information contained in a Gateway Review is considered on a case-by-case basis. To date the Department has not received any requests for disclosure of Gateway reports under FOI.

London Olympics

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the role of the British Transport Police in the run-up to the Olympic Games to be held in London in 2012. [22313]

Derek Twigg: British Transport Police (BTP) carries out an important role in maintaining the security of the railways and in deterring potential terrorist activity. The excellent work that it does was demonstrated in its response to events in London on 7 and 21 July.

The Secretary of State for Transport announced to the House on 11 October 2005 that he is to undertake a review of the role of the BTP. The review will be undertaken by the Department for Transport in parallel with the review of the 43 local police forces being undertaken by the Home Secretary. The aim of the review is to examine the functions of the BTP and whether some or all of these are best carried out by a national force, regional forces, or, indeed, by the industry itself.

The future role of the BTP in the run up to the Olympic Games, will depend on the outcome of the review.

Motor Vehicle Emissions

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to address air pollution and emissions from motor vehicles. [25123]

Ms Buck: Since the early 1990s, tighter EU emissions standards (known as Euro Standards) have been adopted for new cars, light and heavy goods vehicles and buses. The latest (Euro IV) standards are being

progressively introduced for all new vehicles over the next 12 months. An additional stage that further tightens the NOx limit for heavy duty vehicles (trucks and buses) is already in place and will come into force in 2008. The European Commission is also giving consideration to further measures that are expected to take effect from the end of this decade. These measures already have, and will continue to play, a major role in further improving air quality.

Noise Pollution

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding noise pollution from cars fitted with double exhausts; and what discussions he has had with manufacturers on this. [25138]

Ms Buck: The answer to both points is none. Since 1996, the noise limit for all new passenger cars registered for on-road use in the European Union has been 74 dB(A). This limit applies to all cars, regardless of the type of exhaust system fitted.

Railways

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to direct Network Rail to start work in developing a scheme to lengthen the platform at Bromsgrove station; and what estimate he has made of the costs of such a scheme. [24838]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail has commenced discussions with Central Trains and Worcestershire county council to investigate proposals for a platform extension scheme at Bromsgrove station. The decision on whether to proceed will be for Network Rail to take.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Department has allocated to the West Midlands for rail transport infrastructure for 2005–06. [24839]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold data on the funding allocated for rail transport infrastructure by region. Spending on railway infrastructure is managed by Network Rail, within the total sums made available to them. This amounts to £22 billion for 2005–06 for the entire rail network, including the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive as a regional transport authority, also allocates funding support for rail related infrastructure schemes. In 2005–06 this amounts to £5.262 million.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which railway lines he expects to close in order to allow more high speed and freight services to run. [25139]

Mr. Darling: There are no plans to close railway lines in order to allow more high speed and freight services to run.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the railway lines being considered for closure by his Department in the next 12 months. [25189]

Mr. Darling: There are two current closure notices in respect of railway lines between Stratford and North Woolwich and Farringdon and Moorgate.

The Stratford to North Woolwich notice is in anticipation of the conversion to light rail and the transfer of services to DLR between Stratford International and Royal Victoria stations in East London.

Rail services between Farringdon and Moorgate are currently provided by main line rail and London Underground (LUL), with LUL being the dominant provider. In connection with the Thameslink 2000 Project, LUL will become the sole provider if proposals are implemented.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what restrictions are in place regarding the sale of alcohol on board trains. [25191]

Mr. Darling: The national railway byelaws allow a train operator or the police to give reasonable notice prohibiting the possession of intoxicating liquor, and therefore also its sale and consumption, on any specified train service or services.

The Licensing Act 2003 will give magistrates courts the power to prohibit the sale of alcohol on trains if requested by a senior police officer.

Road Schemes

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the economic impact of the Bexhill to Hastings link road on the local community; and if he will make a statement. [25238]

Ms Buck: The Economic Impact Report submitted by East Sussex county council in 2004 as part of their bid for funding for the Bexhill to Hastings link road demonstrated that this scheme would make a significant contribution to the strategy for the regeneration of Hastings. This is one of the factors we took into account in giving Provisional Approval for this scheme in December 2004 for funding through the Local Transport Programme.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Council England

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much grant-in-aid funding was allocated by Arts Council England to culture in *(a)* London and *(b)* Croydon in the financial year 2005–06. [24544]

Mr. Lammy: Arts Council England allocates grant-in-aid funding to their portfolio of regularly funded organisations.

The following figures supplied by Arts Council England provide a breakdown of the information requested.

Arts Council England, London—regularly funded organisation budget

2005–06	*£*
London	152,343,445
Of which:	
Croydon—regularly funded organisations	
Croydon Clocktower	82,500
London Mozart Players	153,750
Total	236,250

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much grant-in-aid funding was allocated by Arts Council England to recipients in *(a)* Hertfordshire and *(b)* Dacorum in 2005–06. [25820]

Mr. Lammy: Arts Council England allocates grant-in-aid funding to their portfolio of regularly funded organisations.

The following figures supplied by Arts Council England provide a breakdown of the information requested.

Regularly funded organisation	*Hertfordshire*	*2005–06 (£)*
Old Town Hall, Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum	23,650
SNAP People's Theatre	East Hertfordshire	62,375
Trestle Theatre Company	St. Albans	248,337
Independent Publishers' Guild	North Hertfordshire	25,650
Watford Palace Theatre	Watford	679,752
Total		1,039,764

Big Lottery Fund

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the *(a)* cost to date and *(b)* projected cost is of the merger of the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund to create the Big Lottery Fund. [24927]

Mr. Caborn: The cost to date of the administrative merger of the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund to create the Big Lottery Fund is £4,976,235. The administrative merger of the funds is now effectively complete, though some minor costs will be incurred in effecting the legal merger, if the National Lottery Bill before Parliament is passed.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism will reply to the letter of 18 August from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire (Ref: CMS 21066/DC). [22137]

James Purnell *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 26 October 2005.

Departmental Meetings

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what meetings Members of her Department have had with representatives from *(a)* the Natural History museum, *(b)* the Royal Armouries, *(c)* Sir John Soane's museum, *(d)* Sport England, *(e)* the Tate Gallery, *(f)* the UK Film Council, *(g)* the British Library, *(h)* UK Sport, *(i)* the Victoria and Albert museum, *(j)* Visit Britain and *(k)* the Wallace Collection since 1 January; and what issues were discussed in each meeting; [21156]

(2) what meetings *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* Officials of her Department have had with representatives from the (i) National Lottery Commission, (ii) National Maritime museum, (iii) National Museum of Science and Industry, (iv) National Portrait Gallery, (v) National Gallery, (vi) National Heritage Memorial Fund (Heritage Lottery Fund), (vii) Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, (viii) Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, (ix) Museum of London, (x) Millennium Commission, (xi) Imperial War museum, (xii) the Tate, (xiii) Horserace Betting Levy Board, (xiv) Football Licensing Authority, (xv) Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust, (xvi) Historic Royal Palaces, (xvii) Gaming Board, (xviii) Geffrye museum, (ixx) English Heritage, (xx) CABE, (xxi) Big Lottery Fund, (xxii) Arts Council England, (xxiii) Alcohol Education and Research Council, (xxiv) Churches Conservation Trust and (xxv) British Museum since 1 January; and what issues were discussed in each meeting. [21157]

Mr. Lammy: Ministers and Officials hold regular meetings with representatives of the Department's sponsored bodies on a wide range of issues. The detailed information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Digital Switchover

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her plans for help and follow-up support with digital switchover for people aged 75 years and over extend to providing free *(a)* installation, *(b)* equipment and *(c)* telephone helpline advice in relation to digital television reception: [24372]

James Purnell: We have made clear that targeted support will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and to households where someone has a severe disability—defined as those people eligible for either disability living allowance or attendance allowance.

The full details of the scheme are being developed, but the assistance will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one television set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment. This help will be free for the poorest eligible households, those on income support, jobseeker's allowance or pension credit; other qualifying households will pay a modest fee.

Football Funding (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much *(a)* lottery and *(b)* Foundation for Sport and the Arts funding was allocated to (i) soccer and (ii) the Gaelic Football Association in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [24161]

Mr. Caborn: The Sports Council for Northern Ireland has provided the following table that gives a breakdown of figures for lottery funding allocated to (i) soccer and

(ii) the Gaelic Football Association in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. I understand that the Foundation for Sport and the Arts does not currently fund soccer or the Gaelic Football Association in Northern Ireland.

£

	Soccer	Gaelic Football Association
2001-02	442,908	657,869
2002-03	696,561	884,462
2003-04	322,149	118,112
2004-05	765,048	750,947
2005-06	9,000	101,330

Note:
The old lottery capital funding programmes closed during 2004-05. The new programme was launched in January 2005; however no offers were made until October 2005.

Freelance Musicians (National Insurance)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Treasury first informed *(a)* her and *(b)* her Department that freelance musicians would be required to pay higher national insurance contributions. [24926]

Mr. Lammy: Implementation of the regulations on national insurance contributions is normally a matter for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Arts Council England and my officials are working with HMRC to find the most practicable solution while keeping me fully informed.

Lottery Tickets

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many retailers sell National Lottery tickets; and how many of those retailers also sell Olympic Lottery tickets. [25487]

Mr. Caborn: We have been informed by Camelot Group plc. the National Lottery operator, that currently 27,686 retailers sell lottery tickets and 88 per cent. of them hold stocks of "Go For Gold" Olympic Lottery scratchcards.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many retailers selling National Lottery tickets have declined to sell Olympic Lottery tickets. [25488]

Mr. Caborn: Camelot Group plc. have informed us that they do not collect this information. However, they are not aware of any retailers having declined to sell "Go For Gold" Olympic Lottery scratchcards.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance has been given to retailers selling National Lottery tickets on the sale of Olympic Lottery tickets. [25491]

Mr. Caborn: Camelot Group plc. have informed us that guidance for retailers is the same as for other games in the scratchcard portfolio. However, retailers have been informed that Good Cause revenue generated through the "Go For Gold" Olympic Lottery scratchcard would help to raise the funding required to stage the London Games. Camelot maintains on-going dialogue with retailers, who are able to seek help and advice from the operator via the retailer hotline.

Museums and Galleries (London)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether visitor numbers for those museums and galleries in London that are funded by grant in aid have declined since the terrorist attacks in July. [24928]

Mr. Lammy: Yes, the numbers of visits to London-based museums and galleries sponsored by my Department have fallen since the terrorist attacks in July. Compared to the same period last year, visit numbers fell by 20 per cent. in July and by 30 per cent. in August. However, recent figures have shown an improvement, with only a 5 per cent. drop in visits in September.

National Heritage Act

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many undertakings to indemnify objects under section 16 of the National Heritage Act 1980 have been made in each year since 1990 by *(a)* her Department and its predecessors and *(b)* the Museums Libraries and Archives Council and its predecessors; what the contingent liabilities were in each case; and if she will make a statement. [24168]

Mr. Lammy: Information on undertakings to indemnify objects prior to the setting up of the Department of National Heritage in 1992 is no longer available. The information from 1992 is set out in the following table which details all statutory/non-statutory actual and contingent liabilities held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its predecessor, the Department of National Heritage, as at the end of each financial year.

Financial year	Number of indemnities	Contingent liabilities (£)
2004-05	1,034	2,751,808,379
2003-04	687	3,177,492,071
2002-03	714	3,063,354,125
2001-02	629	2,466,655,792
2000-01	647	2,041,341,917
1999-2000	626	1,829,371,639
1998-99	520	2,230,770,568
1997-98	596	1,568,106,674
1996-97	469	1,337,264,837
1995-96	452	1,366,004,790
1994-95	469	2,096,423,871
1993-94	437	1,844,520,914
1992-93	501	1,187,879,848

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what rules govern the staging of other sports fixtures in the UK during the Olympic games in 2012. [25026]

Mr. Caborn: The IOC, as part of the host city contract, ask all host cities to take steps to ensure that no major event that could have an impact on the successful organisation and staging of the games takes place in London or at other competition venues during the period of the games. The Government and LOCOG will be working with the IOC, venue owners, local

authorities and national governing bodies to ensure we take a common sense approach to the application of this particular requirement.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether any member of the English Institute of Sport had discussions with *(a)* candidates, *(b)* potential candidates and *(c)* voting members during the recent elections to the chairmanship of the British Olympic Association. [22610]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The English institute of Sport (EIS) is not a body sponsored by this Department but is grant funded by and therefore accountable to Sport England.

I have been informed by Sport England that the chair of the EIS was asked by a potential candidate for the post of chairman of the BOA for his personal opinion as to whether their possible candidacy had merit. On his behalf, the EIS chairman contacted a voting member of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) about the possibility of a late nomination for the potential candidate being accepted. The potential candidate ultimately did not stand.

I have also been informed that at no stage did the EIS chairman have discussions with, or make suggestions to, NOC members about how they should vote in the election.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many businesses in the Marshgate area need to be resettled to accommodate the London 2012 Olympics; how many have accepted final settlements; and by what date the relocation needs to be completed. [22613]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* There are 284 businesses (of which 96 are in or adjacent to Marshgate Lane) in the Olympic Park area that the London Development Agency is seeking to engage with individually to understand their relocation requirements and to discuss with them the LDA's offer to acquire their premises by agreement.

164 of these have appointed advisers in order to start negotiations and the LDA has reached in-principle agreements with 31 businesses, of which 22 have signed Heads of Agreements.

The majority of the businesses in the Olympic Park area will need to move by mid-2007. However around 53 of the businesses will not be required to relocate until later in the process, as vacant possession of their land is not required until 2009.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how compensation for businesses due to be relocated due to the London 2012 Olympics is calculated ; and on what date the land value is assessed. [22614]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The businesses or parties with an interest in the land to be acquired under a confirmed Compulsory Purchase Order are compensated under the statutory Compensation Code.

They receive the market value of their premises or other land interests. In addition they are entitled to the following: a disturbance payment in terms of either the business' relocation or extinguishment, a statutory loss payment can be made to commercial and residential owners/occupiers based on a percentage of market value of their property or interests. They are also paid the reasonable costs of their legal advisors and surveyors. Each party with a compensateable interest is entitled to appoint a chartered surveyor to negotiate the compensation on their behalf with the acquiring authority. Disputes as to the level of compensation payable are referred to the Lands Tribunal.

If the CPO is confirmed the date of land valuation is either a date the parties agree as appropriate, or the date the acquiring authority takes possession of the land. This will not be before the date on which the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry issues his decision concerning confirmation of the CPO.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what rules govern the use of sports stadiums whose name includes an advertisement as a venue for Olympic Sports in 2012. [25024]

Mr. Caborn: The IOC require all host cities to sign up to a comprehensive "Look of the Games" programme, which includes details of how Olympic venues are presented. All 2012 venues, as part of this programme, have agreed to give LOCOG the exclusive control of all venues naming rights and signage for the period of the Games.

Television Signal

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to provide individuals with assistance with the switchover to digital television. [24050]

James Purnell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, North (Ann McKechin) on 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 614W.

World Cup

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which day in 2006 has been earmarked for the return of the football World Cup trophy to England in the event of victory in Germany. [24817]

Mr. Caborn: In the event of the England football team being victorious at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, suitable arrangements to celebrate this success and to welcome both the team and trophy home will be made with the relevant authorities.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Servants

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what account is taken of differences between the value of civil service pension provision and that of workers in comparable jobs in the private sector in setting the pay of civil servants. [24819]

Mr. Jim Murphy: When making recommendations to Government on pay for the senior civil service, the independent Senior Salaries Review Body reviews all the elements of the total reward package, including pension, and compares them with those available to executives with similar roles in the private and wider public sectors. The Government are not bound to accept the Review Body's advice but always consider its independent views.

Departments and agencies have authority to determine pay and conditions for their staff below the senior civil service which are appropriate for their business needs and are consistent with Government's policies on the civil service and take account of the Government's policies on public sector pay. Her Majesty's Treasury's annual "Pay Remit Guidance" makes it clear that pay is only one element of the total reward package. Accordingly, Departments and agencies are expected to take account of the overall package, including pensions, when benchmarking against pay levels in the wider economy.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cohort life expectancy of *(a)* male and *(b)* female civil servants retiring in normal health at age 60 (i) was in 1972, (ii) is based on the latest available data and (iii) is projected on dates for which estimates are available up to 2045. [24879]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Scheme Actuary to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) has provided the following figures for the expected average life expectancy of civil servants retiring in normal health at age 60:

	Male	*Female*
1972	79.5	83.2
2003[1]	84.4	87.4
Current civil servants	86.8	89.8

[1] The assumptions used for existing pensioners in the last review of employer contributions to the PCSPS.

No projected figures have been made for each year up to 2045.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the literacy and numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21008]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office competence based recruitment system is designed to identify candidates with the most suitable skills and competences for the job. Candidates are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing, and where necessary asked to provide evidence of their numeracy levels. There is also scope, within the selection system, for further testing of candidate's communication and numerical skills through verbal and numerical reasoning tests.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23783]

Mr. Jim Murphy: All new recruits to the Department within the last 12 months have at least a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics.

Duchy Property (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what *(a)* land and *(b)* property the Duchy owns in the Kettering constituency. [24362]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Duchy of Lancaster does not own any land or property in the Kettering constituency, but does have certain manorial rights, mainly relating to minerals.

e-Government

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the level of security on the e-Government network. [25430]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Her Majesty's Government operates the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) which is kept under regular security assessment to ensure that risks are mitigated to an appropriate level. As part of the critical national infrastructure, connections to the GSI are assured through the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre (NISCC) authorisation.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many full-time equivalent employee reductions were made in his Department as a result of the Gershon review; what cost savings relating to IT projects have been made; what value of efficiency savings *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [24638]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Progress in 2004–05 will be reported in the Cabinet Office's Autumn Performance Report.

No savings are planned relating to information technology projects.

The Department has an efficiency target for 2007–08 but no intermediate target for 2005–06.

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has drafted regulations to be laid before Parliament under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 in the event of an influenza pandemic. [25110]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government maintain a set of draft emergency regulations which could be made in the event of any emergency which met the thresholds set out in Part 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The thresholds are that the emergency itself must be sufficiently serious, it must be necessary to take new powers, and that any new powers taken must be proportionate to the situation.

These draft regulations are generic, and so do not include any specific regulations which relate to an influenza pandemic. However, they do include a range of powers in relation to human health and connected matters, which could be quickly adapted to the specific requirements of a pandemic should the need arise.

Staff Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation; to which places they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [24637]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No posts were relocated in 2004–05. 15 posts are expected to move to Warrington in 2005–06 as the first tranche of the relocation of part of the e-Government Unit. Details have yet to be finalised.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum and Immigration Tribunal

Mr. Mudie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average time was between the receipt of papers by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal from the Home Office appeals processing centre and the relevant appeal taking place in the last period for which figures are available. [24872]

Bridget Prentice: The latest provisional information from the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) indicates that, for the period April to end of June 2005, the average time between the AIT receipt of an appeal from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), and the date set for a substantive appeal hearing before an immigration judge, is as follows:

(i) Five weeks for asylum appeals; and

(ii) Nine weeks for immigration appeals (comprising in-country and entry clearance cases but not including family visitor appeals).

This information only applies to appeals received by the AIT from the IND. It does not include appeals lodged directly with the AIT following its commencement on 4 April 2005.

Asylum Seekers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many failed asylum seekers are appealing against a Home Office decision to deport them from Great Britain. [22965]

Bridget Prentice: The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) does not hold information on the current numbers of failed asylum seekers who have appeals before it arising from the service of a notice of the intention to deport, by the Immigration Services, pursuant to s.63 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Checks with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) of the Home Office have confirmed that IND do not collate information on the numbers of failed asylum seekers appealing against these type of decisions.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether her Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23724]

Bridget Prentice: My Department is fully committed to reducing carbon emissions and is signed up to the Government's Energy White Paper which sets targets of reducing absolute carbon from fuel and energy efficiency used in buildings on their estate by 12.5 per cent. by 2010–11 relative to 1999–2000. My Department also fully recognises the need for Government Departments to show leadership on energy efficiency, and has over the past 10 years introduced a rolling programme of energy surveys and energy saving works.

At this time the Department is finalising its sustainable development strategy, which includes targets for reduction of energy consumption and on-going energy savings works. The Department will consider joining the Carbon Trust's scheme as part of its on-going sustainable development action plan.

Court Fines (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been collected in fines at magistrates courts in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [25170]

Bridget Prentice: Fines collected in magistrates courts in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years are as follows:

	£
2002–03	3,577,780
2003–04	4,267,210
2004–05	4,755,490

Court Service (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she expects to report on the outcome of the investigation being carried out into irregularities that may have occurred involving private firms and the Court Service in Northern Ireland. [24774]

Bridget Prentice: The Northern Ireland Court Service asked the Police Service of Northern Ireland to investigate the circumstances surrounding the participation of two of its officials in a sailing holiday at the invitation of a prominent contractor. This investigation is still ongoing.

I am not in a position to indicate when that investigation will be concluded as the conduct of the police investigation is a matter for the PSNI.

In addition to the police investigation the Northern Ireland Court Service also established an independent investigation into the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. As the police investigation necessarily has primacy, the independent investigation will not be completed until after the police investigation has been concluded.

Debt Arrears

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many county court judgments have been *(a)* registered and *(b)* issued on people due to arrears of unsecured debt for each month for which data is available since 1990, broken down by county; and if she will make a statement. [24299]

Bridget Prentice: The Department does not hold all of the information requested and it could be provided only at a disproportionate cost. However, the following table sets out the number of judgments against individual consumers registered each month from January 1990 to September 2005, which is the only information currently available.

Register of county court judgments—consumer judgment registrations

	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*
2005	73,907	62,590	68,125	72,072	62,191	59,758	71,776
2004	41,606	41,098	42,138	34,853	38,202	55,363	47,412
2003	76,178	45,369	50,894	38,761	59,449	40,535	44,187
2002	63,531	56,354	55,259	45,292	60,157	36,424	39,045
2001	68,150	56,607	66,113	48,399	52,255	59,141	49,657
2000	92,243	68,006	77,014	56,113	52,811	59,516	62,739
1999	81,642	86,304	75,699	109,384	62,968	55,070	61,746
1998	93,327	79,002	71,250	77,961	74,483	57,552	82,466
1997	84,926	107,860	76,562	74,719	103,650	63,886	68,007
1996	84,078	98,125	105,669	36,748	105,082	88,898	75,101
1995	88,948	99,593	126,052	83,374	72,427	99,758	74,368
1994	119,135	117,656	106,045	123,136	96,614	87,041	131,611
1993	155,683	120,209	117,931	162,124	113,685	99,263	145,130
1992	183,888	163,795	148,529	133,550	135,080	114,873	195,345
1991	130,910	128,514	181,412	142,848	161,703	88,868	112,879
1990	86,699	87,644	136,615	84,878	72,509	102,516	160,033

	August	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*	*Totals*
2005	89,510	85,144	—	—	—	645,073
2004	55,178	59,160	67,838	82,550	44,985	610,383
2003	72,444	56,496	64,413	44,296	38,346	631,368
2002	66,072	54,120	58,242	59,632	35,841	629,969
2001	78,956	63,768	55,838	63,400	34,705	696,989
2000	72,939	74,776	85,464	68,394	49,785	819,800
1999	67,220	72,948	89,101	69,571	60,437	892,090
1998	72,898	83,082	103,994	85,840	60,238	942,093
1997	97,063	82,921	97,715	84,980	49,856	992,145
1996	116,951	105,238	94,304	89,472	43,054	1,042,720
1995	94,416	118,381	121,355	95,095	72,228	1,145,998
1994	92,508	135,392	99,634	105,535	90,462	1,304,769
1993	114,437	106,082	141,478	108,341	95,498	1,473,861
1992	125,630	129,717	146,182	99,005	112,442	1,688,036
1991	151,409	224,236	187,770	197,800	109,262	1,817,611
1990	178,813	149,651	133,799	184,048	108,803	1,486,008

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent assessment his Department has undertaken of the circumstances in which financial institutions can repossess debtors' homes in order to collect unsecured debts; and if she will make a statement. [24300]

Ms Harman: My Department has not undertaken, nor have any plans to undertake, an assessment of the circumstances by which an individuals' home can be repossessed due to unsecured debts.

Chris Huhne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many proceedings for the repossession of mortgaged property were initiated in each quarter since 1988, broken down by region; and how many repossessions were granted to lenders in each quarter. [24323]

Bridget Prentice: A table setting out the relevant mortgage possession figures from the 1st Quarter 1988 to the 3rd Quarter 2005, broken down by region has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The 2004 and 2005 figures are provisional and therefore liable to revision to take account of any late amendments.

Departmental Property (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24785]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs has two freehold properties within the electoral constituency of Kettering county. These are Kettering magistrates court, located in London Road, Kettering, and Kettering county court, located in Dryland Street, Kettering. We do not hold any land separately within the electoral constituency of Kettering.

DNA Bioscience

Mr. Laws: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether DNA Bioscience is accredited for DNA-related work in the UK. [25226]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Monmouth (David T.C. Davies) on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 8W. I am still investigating the matters raised by the hon. Member's question, and I will write when I am in a position to do so.

Expert Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the training received by individuals who give expert testimony in court. [20181]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

Training for individuals who give expert testimony in court is available from a range of commercial bodies. It is also often supplied by the professional bodies to which many of those who give expert evidence belong. We welcome the recent initiative by the Bar Council clarifying the duty of counsel to ensure that evidence in support of a client's case is presented to best effect.

Great War Medal Index

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Great War Medal Index cards are privately owned. [23656]

Ms Harman: On 6 May 2005, by authority delegated from the Lord Chancellor, The National Archives (TNA) approved the presentation of the bulk of the First World War Army medal rolls' index cards to the Western Front Association (WFA). A small sub-collection, for awards to women, was separately presented to the Imperial War Museum. Approval in both cases was granted by virtue of section 3.6 of the Public Records Act 1958, under which records thus presented lose their "public record" status and pass into the legal ownership of the recipient institution.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what criteria were used in making the decision to pass the original Great War Medal Index Cards to the Western Front Association. [23657]

Ms Harman: The decision to pass the First World War Army medal index cards to the Western Front Association (WFA) was based on the following criteria:

The WFA's ability to provide adequate storage for the whole collection, appropriate in terms of both environmental and physical security

The WFA's preparedness to accept the full collection

The WFA's commitment, and declared wish, to enable access to the information by researchers as soon as practicable

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what tendering process was undertaken for the storage of the Great War Medal Index Cards. [23658]

Ms Harman: Following the agreement in principle to pass the Great War Medal Index cards to the Western Front Association (WFA), it became the WFA's responsibility to find appropriate premises for the storage of the cards. No tendering process was undertaken by The National Archives or by the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list military museums which are classified as National Archive depositories. [23659]

Ms Harman: The regimental and corps museums listed have appointments, under the Public Records Act 1958 section 4(1), as places of deposit for preserved public records:

Airborne Forces Museum

Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre

Cheshire Military Museum Archives

Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst Collection

Tank Museum

Hearings in Chambers

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance she has provided to the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to representation at hearings by justices in chambers. [20743]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

When the police arrest a suspect and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) makes a decision to charge the suspect, the custody officer will decide whether to detain or to admit the suspect to post-charge bail until the first court hearing.

At court, the magistrates will consider the issue of bail afresh, following a bail recommendation by the Crown prosecutor and bail representations by the defence.

Following the introduction of statutory charging, the police now have an additional power to release a suspect on pre-charge bail to obtain a charging decision from a Crown prosecutor.

On 21 May 2004, the Director of Public Prosecutions issued guidance to police officers and Crown prosecutors under section 37A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The guidance sets out the cases which must be referred to prosecutors for charging decisions and the circumstances in which a release on bail before charge may be appropriate in accordance with the amendments to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Further guidance was issued in April 2005 to the CPS and the police on the use of pre-charge bail.

Unsecured Debts

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she plans to bring forward proposals to increase enforcement powers for financial institutions seeking to recover unsecured debts; and if she will make a statement. [24552]

Ms Harman: My Department set out proposals to reform the civil enforcement process in the White Paper "Effective Enforcement", published March 2003.

The introduction of our proposals, which are subject to the availability of parliamentary time for new legislation, seek, among other things, to streamline the charging order process as opposed to increasing powers. In addition, in looking to address the issue of vulnerable debtors and unscrupulous lenders, the proposals aim to tighten the licensing procedure for those involved in enforcement to tackle some of the difficulties experienced within the lending sector. My Department and other Government Departments continue to liaise closely on this.

While looking to protect vulnerable debtors the Government also recognise that responsible creditors who are owed money and having gained valid judgments through the courts should have the right to enforce that judgment by the most appropriate means available.

Voter Registration

Ms Abbott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures she has taken to increase the registration on the electoral register of black and ethnic minorities. [19682]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Commission published its report Understanding Electoral Registration in September this year. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of registration rates and a detailed analysis of non-registration by ethnic group.

The report shows that on 15 October 2000—the date on which the report's analysis is based—the level of non-registration among the eligible all ethnic minority in England and Wales was 17 per cent. My Department is actively working with representatives from black and ethnic minorities groups such as Operation Black Vote, Blink 1990 Trust, The Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim Public Affairs Committee, Hindu Council of Britain, Hindu Forum of Britain to increase awareness on voter registration. My Department is also co-hosting a seminar on under-registration in London and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Convention on Tibet (Edinburgh)

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government will be represented at the International Parliamentary Convention on Tibet in Edinburgh in November. [26190]

Mr. Straw: No. We are aware of the meeting. It is not an official event. The Government have no involvement in it and will not be represented at it.

Our position in respect of Tibet is long-standing and is unchanged.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 7 September from the right hon. Member for Manchester Gorton with regard to Mr. Siddak Ali. [24413]

Dr. Howells: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) replied to my right hon. Friend on 2 November.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 26 September from the right hon. Member for Manchester Gorton with regard to Mrs. Tahira Hussain. [24414]

Dr. Howells: My right. hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 25 October.

Custodial Sentences (Overseas)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals are serving custodial sentences outside the UK, broken down by category of offence. [23699]

Dr. Howells: Records on numbers of British nationals serving custodial sentences overseas broken down by every offence are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, on 31 March 2005, British consular staff were aware of 2,764 British nationals in detention overseas. 1,266 British nationals were detained for drugs-related offences, and 118 for child sex-related offences. These figures include detainees on remand, as well as those serving custodial sentences.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals are serving custodial sentences outside the UK, broken down by country. [23700]

Dr. Howells: Records on numbers of British nationals serving custodial sentences overseas are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, on 31 March 2005, British consular staff were aware of 2,764 British nationals in detention overseas. The breakdown is shown in the following table. This figure includes detainees on remand, as well as those serving custodial sentences.

Country	*Total*
Albania	0
Algeria	0
Angola	0
Antigua and Barbuda	10
Argentina	9
Armenia	0
Australia	190
Austria	5
Azerbaijan	1
Bahamas	0
Bahrain	0
Bangladesh	1
Barbados	16
Belarus	0
Belgium	42
Belize	1
Bolivia	8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Botswana	0
Brazil	37
Brunei	0
Bulgaria	1
Burma	0
Cambodia	5
Cameroon	0
Canada	15
Chile	1
China	24
Colombia	9
Congo (Democratic Rep)	0
Costa Rica	7
Croatia	0
Cuba	1
Cyprus	14
Czech Republic	2

Country	Total
Denmark	12
Dominican Republic	0
East Timor	0
Ecuador	10
Egypt	7
Eritrea	0
Estonia	0
Ethiopia	1
Fiji	0
Finland	1
France	163
Gambia	1
Georgia	0
Germany	119
Ghana	6
Greece	11
Grenada	0
Guatemala	0
Guyana	2
Hungary	0
Iceland	0
India	25
Indonesia	3
Iran	0
Iraq	2
Ireland	86
Israel	2
Italy	16
Jamaica	119
Japan	50
Jordan	2
Kazakhstan	0
Kenya	2
Korea, DPR (North Korea)	0
Korea, Republic of (South Korea)	1
Kuwait	1
Laos	2
Latvia	0
Lebanon	0
Lesotho	0
Libya	0
Lithuania	3
Luxembourg	3
Macedonia	0
Madagascar	0
Malawi	1
Malaysia	3
Malta	3
Mauritius	0
Mexico	11
Moldova	0
Mongolia	0
Morocco	8
Mozambique	0
Namibia	1
Nepal	1
Netherlands	75
New Zealand	15
Nicaragua	1
Nigeria	0
Norway	9
Oman	0
Pakistan	17
Panama	4
Papua New Guinea	0
Paraguay	0
Peru	19
Philippines	27
Poland	1
Portugal	11
Qatar	2
Romania	2
Russian Federation	0
St. Lucia	9
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Senegal	0
Serbia and Montenegro	0
Seychelles	0
Sierra Leone	2
Singapore	21
Slovakia	0
Slovenia	0
Solomon Islands	0
South Africa	26
Spain	268
Sri Lanka	0
Sudan	0
Swaziland	0
Sweden	23
Switzerland	6
Syria	0
Taiwan	20
Tajikistan	0
Tanzania	0
Thailand	114
Tonga	0
Trinidad and Tobago	27
Tunisia	1
Turkey	4
Turkmenistan	0
Uganda	0
Ukraine	0
United Arab Emirates	22
USA	923
Uruguay	0
Uzbekistan	0
Vanuatu	0
Venezuela	24
Vietnam	5
Yemen	2
Zambia	0
Zimbabwe	4
Total	2,764

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals have served custodial sentences outside the UK in each year for the last 10 years. [23701]

Dr. Howells: Records on the numbers of British nationals serving custodial sentences overseas are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the following table provides a figure for the number of new cases of British nationals detained overseas each year for the last nine years. These figures include both those detained and released without charge or acquitted, and those who went on to serve custodial sentences.

	Total
1996	5,639
1997	6,039
1998	6,159
1999	6,501
2000	8,758
2001	7,861
2002	6,501
2003–04	6,744
2004–05	5,975

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23788]

Mr. Straw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 507–08W. Examples of the ability tests used during the recruitment process are available from Capita Recruitment Agency at www.productinfo@.capita.co.uk.

Ethiopia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent shootings in Addis Ababa; and what action he has taken to express the UK's concern to the Ethiopian authorities. [24786]

Ian Pearson: We are extremely concerned about the outbreaks of violence in Ethiopia since 1 November and are monitoring events closely. There have been a number of deaths and injuries and we offer our sincere condolences to the families of the victims. We deplore all types of violence whether by security forces or demonstrators. We have called on all sides to exercise maximum restraint, to desist from confrontation and violence and to respect the laws of Ethiopia.

My noble Lord the Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) summoned the Ethiopian Charge d'Affaires on 1 November to underline the Government's concerns, including at the arrest of Opposition leaders and some civil society representatives. We have urged that all those not to be charged should be released immediately. We have also urged that all detainees should have access to due legal process and the protection afforded by the Constitution. The British Ambassador in Addis Ababa made the same points to the Ethiopian Foreign Minister on 2 November and the Prime Minister on 3 November.

G8 Summit (Gleneagles)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of hosting the G8 Summit in Gleneagles. [24566]

Ian Pearson: An estimate for the organisational costs of the G8 Summit of £12.1 million has been made available on the G8 website at www.g8.gov.uk. A breakdown of this figure for the organisational costs of the Gleneagles Summit is nearly ready for publication. The process has been delayed to allow some suppliers to submit final invoices.

These details will then be placed in the Library of the House and made available on the G8 web site.

Securing the Gleneagles Summit was the responsibility of the Devolved Administration and I understand that Scottish Ministers are separately preparing to release these costs.

Holy See

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 954W, on Holy See, why no advert inviting applications for the post of UK Ambassador to the Holy See was published in any national paper of Scotland. [25075]

Mr. Straw: The advert appeared in broadsheet newspapers and *The Economist* which have a UK-wide distribution to ensure that we reached a wide pool of potential candidates in all parts of the UK.

India

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the strength is of the British Trade Mission in India. [25729]

Ian Pearson: The total number of staff carrying out commercial work in each of the United Kingdom Trade and Investment's offices in India is set out in the table as follows.

Market/Post	*Total*
India	
Ahmedabad	2
Bangalore	7
Bhopal	1
Chennai	7
Hyderabad	3
Kolkata	7
Mumbai	22
New Delhi	25
Pune	2

Iran

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what UK policy is towards Iran; and what changes have been made as a consequence of the deaths of British soldiers in which the Government said there was Iranian involvement. [22549]

Dr. Howells: We have serious concerns about Iran's policies in a number of areas. With other members of the United Nations Security Council, we have condemned President Ahmadinejad's remarks on 26 October about Israel.

The UK's policy towards Iran is one of critical engagement. We aim to support reform in Iran where possible, and at the same time to encourage Iran to address serious international concerns about its policies in areas such as its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, human rights, and its approach towards terrorism and the Middle East Peace Process.

The nature of some explosive devices used against British troops and others in Iraq suggests a connection with elements linked to Iran or with Lebanese Hizbollah, which has close ties to Iran. We continue to investigate. We have pressed the Iranian authorities on many occasions to play a constructive role in Iraq, and cut their links to armed groups. We have called on Iran to do more to live up to its public promises to improve border security, fight terrorism and not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations are being made to the Iranian Government about the statement made by its President on the right of the state of Israel to exist. [23717]

Dr. Howells: The United Nations Security Council has spoken for the whole international community in condemning the remarks about Israel attributed to President Ahmadinejad.

We summoned the Iranian Chargé d'affaires on 27 October to protest. On the same day, we issued a statement on behalf of European Union Heads of Government, which condemned the comments in the strongest terms. The statement emphasised that calls for violence, and for the destruction of any state, are manifestly inconsistent with any claim to be a mature and responsible member of the international community.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will break off diplomatic relations with Iran following its President's remarks about Israel. [23900]

Dr. Howells: The European Union has condemned in the strongest terms the remarks about Israel attributed to President Ahmadinejad. We have also summoned the Iranian Chargé d'Affaires in London to protest.

The UK's policy towards Iran remains one of critical engagement. We aim to support reform in Iran where possible, and at the same time to encourage Iran to address serious international concerns about its policies in areas such as its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, human rights, and its approach towards terrorism and the Middle East Peace Process.

Iraq

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence he has received of Iranian involvement in Iraqi resistance groups operating in the British sector of Iraq. [23929]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, the nature of some explosive devices used, including against British troops, leads us either to Iranian elements or to Lebanese Hezbollah, which has very close links with Iran's Revolutionary Guards. We are unable to provide further details as to do so could prejudice the capability, effectiveness, and security of Iraqi, UK and other coalition armed forces.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on the replacement of stored locally grown seeds traditionally used by Iraqi farmers by annually licensed genetically modified seeds imported from the US; and if he will make a statement. [24443]

Dr. Howells: Ministers have received letters from hon. Members in recent months on behalf of constituents concerned about the impact on Iraqi farmers of the Coalition Provisional Authority's Order no. 81. Other than this correspondence, Ministers have received no representations on the replacement of locally grown seeds in Iraq by genetically modified seeds, imported from the US or elsewhere.

Order 81 concerns the registration and protection of intellectual property rights in new plant varieties. The Order was the subject of consultation and co-ordination with the Iraqi Governing Council, and was consistent with the needs identified by the United Nations for the development of Iraq and its transition from a centrally planned to a market-based economy.

This Order has no effect on existing breeds of plants, such as those used by most Iraqi farmers. It should not therefore affect the ability of Iraqi farmers to save seeds from traditional sources. Farmers will also continue to have a choice of sources for their seed supply, saving their own seeds of traditional and unprotected varieties, or buying seeds which are subject to patent or plant variety rights protection.

Iraq-Niger (Alleged Uranium Deal)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to paragraphs 91 and 92 of the Intelligence and Security Committee Report, Cm 5972, Session 2002–03, whether the Government has been informed as to when the US Federal Bureau of Intelligence investigation ordered by Senator Rockefeller in March 2003 into the source of the forged documents on an Iraq-Niger uranium deal is due to report. [23855]

Dr. Howells: The investigation requested by Senator Rockefeller is continuing. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has still not given an indication of when the investigation will be completed.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23517]

Mr. Straw: There have been 19 major Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) IT projects subject to Office of Government commerce gateway criteria and review since 2001. The FCO has not so far published Gateway reviews of projects.

Libya

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to visit Libya; and what his long-term goals are for Anglo-Libyan relations. [23899]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no current plans to visit Libya.

The UK's work with the US which led to Libya's decision to dismantle its weapons programmes has, we believe, established a relationship of trust. As the Foreign Secretary said in January 2004, for our part, we have recognised our responsibility to enable Libya to come fully into the mainstream of the international community. That is what we will work to achieve, including through increased cooperation between the UK and Libya. We remain aware of Libya's past record, but believe it is right to build on the improvement in relations.

Middle East

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Palestinian authority on the situation in the Middle East; and if he will make a statement. [23715]

Dr. Howells: We have had regular discussions with the Palestinian Authority (PA) leadership on the situation in the Middle East. During my visit to the region in September, I raised with PA representatives the need for the PA to build on the opportunity offered by disengagement, to stop violence, and to show real progress on security reform.

We continue to call on the PA to take further action on security. The PA must act decisively against terrorists who launch rocket attacks and suicide bombings at Israeli targets.

We also believe Israel must meet its own obligations under the Roadmap, including freezing settlements and dismantling outposts. Both parties must move forward in parallel if we are to see real progress.

Spain

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Spanish government about the implementation of Ley Reguladora de Actividades Urbanisticas with respect to the way it applies to British citizens in that country; and if he will make a statement. [24779]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised the implementation of the Ley Reguladora de Actividades Urbanisticas (LRAU) with the Spanish Foreign Minister, Miguel Angel Moratinos, in October 2004. Our Ambassador in Madrid and our Consul in Alicante, have continued to lobby the Central and Regional Governments. They have also made representations both bilaterally and in conjunction with other countries. The Valencia Autonomous Community's (VAC) own Ombudsman has criticised law 6/94. In response to lobbying, the Valencia regional government drew up a new law to replace the LRAU, the Ley Urbanistica Valenciana (LUV). While the proposed new law addresses some of the concerns expressed by interested parties, it does not give the sort of tenure, guarantees and property rights that are enjoyed in other parts of Spain and other European countries: nor does it fully address many of the Ombudsman's criticisms.

We will continue to give as much publicity as we can to the risks of buying property in this part of Spain. We will use every opportunity, including high level visits, to remind the central and autonomous regional governments of our concerns.

UK Embassies (Security)

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the cost of contract security staff in UK embassies in each year since 1990; and if he will make a statement. [22585]

Mr. Straw: We take the security of our staff, both overseas and in the UK, extremely seriously. The level of threat faced by our staff serving in certain parts of the world is high. We need to ensure that our staff working in these high threat areas are protected to enable them to carry out their duties effectively.

For the period before 1 April 1999, the information is no longer available.

For the period from 1 April 1999 to March 2004, the information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. In the financial year 2004–05, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London spent £34.1 million on overseas security contracts. For this financial year, we estimate that we will spend £50.1 million. In addition, many of our overseas missions have guarding contracts with local security companies. These figures are not held centrally and the aggregate value of the contracts could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Architects Registration Board

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will reconstitute the Architects Registration Board so that jurisdiction extends only to practising architects who have chosen not to be a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. [19957]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have no plans to provide two separate registration systems.

Building Regulations

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many building regulations have been put in place over the last five years. [22941]

Yvette Cooper: The Building Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/2531) consolidated all previous building regulations. They have been amended by the following regulations:

The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001/3335), which amended the requirements for Parts H (Drainage and Waste Disposal), J (Combustion Appliances and Fuel Storage Systems) and L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) of the Regulations.

The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/0440), which introduced competent person self-certification schemes for the installation of heat-producing appliances and replacement glazing.

The Building (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/2871), which amended the requirements for Part E (Resistance to the passage of sound) of the Regulations.

The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2692), which amended the requirements for Part M (Access) of the Regulations.

The Building (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1465), which amended Part C (Site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture) and further amended Part E (resistance to the passage of sound) to allow the use of robust details to satisfy the requirements.

The Building (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 (SI2Q04/1808), now entirely revoked.

The Building (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2004 (SI2004/3210), which introduced Part P (Electrical safety) and authorised further competent person self-certification schemes.

Carbon Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the average carbon emissions associated with *(a)* the construction of a new average-sized dwelling and *(b)* the demolition of an existing average-sized dwelling. [25030]

Yvette Cooper: BRE figures suggest that that the embodied energy (which covers the extraction of construction materials, processing, transport and manufacture) associated with the construction of a traditional build house of three bedrooms, 90 sq metres, built under current building regulations, and to the national building specification for England and Wales is 35 tonnes CO_2 equivalent. We are not aware of any such estimates relating to demolition of existing houses.

Council Tax

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when preparations for the current council tax re-banding process began. [23623]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency started preliminary work on council tax revaluation in England in December 2002. As reported to the House on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 5WS, in the written statement by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband), the Government announced on 20 September 2005 that it intended to legislate to postpone the revaluation and that preparatory work was being stood down.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people employed by his Department have been involved in council tax re-banding exercises to date. [23624]

Mr. Woolas: Staff in three posts in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister were working principally on matters related to council tax revaluation in England until the Government's announcement of 20 September that preparatory work was being stood down. A number of others contributed to a lesser degree.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the revaluation of council tax in *(a)* the Kettering constituency and *(b)* Northamptonshire. [24132]

Mr. Woolas: The terms of reference for Sir Michael Lyons' independent inquiry require him to make recommendations on how best to reform council tax, taking into account revaluation of domestic property. My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer have agreed with Sir Michael that he will extend his work so that he can consider issues relating to the functions of local government and its future role, as well as, and prior to, making recommendations on local government funding. The Government have introduced into the House the Council Tax (New Valuation List for England) Bill which provides for the postponement of council tax revaluation. This will enable revaluation to take account of the Lyons Inquiry's extended work which will inform the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Decent Homes Standard

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what date he expects all social rented homes will have met the decent homes standard. [23617]

Mr. Woolas: Work completed and local programmes already in place take us 90 per cent. of the way to meeting our target of bringing all social homes up to the decent homes standard by 2010. We are now focusing our efforts on dealing with the remaining 10 per cent.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22459]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was formed in May 2002. The energy used and costs incurred since this date are:

	Weather corrected energy use (KWh)	*Cost (£)*
2002–03		
ODPM	43,035,355	1,310,609
QEII Conference Centre	11,286,795	271,529
2003–04		
ODPM	50,384,483	1,291,870
QEII Conference Centre	12,493,963	392,903
2004–05		
ODPM[1]	46,870,430	1,136,946
QEII Conference Centre	13,287,478	490,739

[1] Figures for 2004–05 exclude The Rent Service which was transferred to The Department of Works and Pensions in April 2004

The ODPM figure includes Fire Service College and Planning Inspectorate, while for historical reasons QEII is recorded and reported separately. The answer does not include figures for 26 Whitehall which is managed by the Cabinet Office, and for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister pays an agreed proportion of the cost of all services supplied by the Cabinet Office.

This answer does not include the buildings occupied by Government Offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24782]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not own any land or property in the Kettering constituency.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23779]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not keep records of the educational qualifications of its recruited staff and to determine this would be at disproportionate cost. All our recruitment is based on applicants meeting competences and it is possible that recruitment to some grades does not require candidates to have specific qualifications.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23871]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has placed a copy of the Skills Development Plan in the Library of the House.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23474]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not spent any money on the purchase of works of art in 2004–05. Any work of art displayed in our buildings is provided by the Government Art Collection on a loan basis.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Lammy) on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 896W.

East of England Regional Chamber

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of the East of England regional chamber *(a)* was for the last two years and *(b)* is projected to be in the next two years. [24845]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 817W. Figures for Government grant to East of England Regional Assembly for the next two years are not yet available.

English Partnerships

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the level of investment into Milton Keynes via English Partnerships over the next four years. [22716]

Yvette Cooper: Milton Keynes, as part of the Milton Keynes-South Midlands Growth Area, forms an important part of the Government's Sustainable Communities agenda.

Distribution of English Partnerships investment nationally and including that in Milton Keynes is a matter for English Partnerships' Board, and is set out in English Partnerships' annual Corporate Plan once Ministers have agreed it. English Partnerships expenditure in Milton Keynes in 2005–06 is forecast to be in the order of £57 million. We are discussing English Partnerships' future national programme and priorities as part of their current corporate planning round for the years 2005–06 to 2008–09.

Funding for ODPM programmes, including English Partnerships, for 2008–09 to 2010–11 will be dependent on the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Fire Service

Steve McCabe: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what was the average time taken by the West Midlands Fire Service to arrive on scene in response to a 999 call in each of the last 12 months. [22407]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The available information covers attendance at primary fires. The following table shows the average response time to primary fires attended by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service each month during 2004–05. This is measured in minutes from time of first call to the fire and rescue service to time of arrival at the scene.

Primary fires attended by West Midlands FRS: Average response times, 2004–05

	Minutes
April	5.9
May	6.0
June	5.9
July	6.0
August	6.2
September	5.9
October	6.1
November	6.2
December	5.9
January	6.1
February	6.1
March	5.7
2004–05	6.0

Notes:

1. Figures for 2004/05 are provisional.
2. Data exclude late calls, heat and smoke damage only incidents.

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average time taken by Hertfordshire Fire Service to arrive on the scene of an incident in response to a 999 call has been in each year since 1997. [24020]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The available information covers attendance at primary fires only. The following table shows the average response time to primary fires attended by Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service each year since 1997. This is measured in minutes from time of first call to the fire and rescue service to time of arrival at the scene.

Primary fires attended by Hertfordshire FRS: Average response times 1997–2004

	Response time (minutes)
1997	6.8
1998	6.9
1999	7.0
2000	7.2
2001	7.0

Primary fires attended by Hertfordshire FRS: Average response times 1997–2004

	Response time (minutes)
2002	7.2
2003	7.4
2004[1]	6.9

[1] Figures for 2004 are provisional

Note:
Figures are based on sampled, weighted data and exclude late calls, heat and smoke damage only incidents.

Source:
Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect on the number of jobs in *(a)* the parliamentary constituency of Gravesham *(b)* the county of Kent and *(c)* the South East region of establishing a regional fire control room for the South East region. [24174]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Following the establishment of regional fire control centres the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects fewer people to be employed in delivering control room services, both nationally and in individual regions. Work is in hand to define the precise number of staff that will be required to run the new control centres in each region, though final decisions on staff numbers will ultimately be a matter for the employers, not for ODPM. No detailed assessment has been made on the effect on the number of jobs in Gravesham or in Kent.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact on Fire and Rescue Service average response times in Gravesham of establishing a regional fire control room for the South East region. [24176]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects that the establishment of the new national network of control centres will result in response times under normal operating conditions that are as good as or better than now. We expect a significant improvement however during surges in demand or when dealing with particularly large incidents. It is not possible to assess the impact on response times in Gravesham.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what evaluation of the Firelink system will be carried out in advance of the move to regional control centres. [24445]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The competition for the Firelink system for the Fire and Rescue Service has followed EU procurement rules. The specification for the wide area radio communications system was output based to ensure that current functions required by the Fire and Rescue Service could be met, in addition to ensuring a high level of resilience and interoperability both within the Fire and Rescue Service and with the other emergency services. The evaluation of final bids from suppliers has been based on four key areas: technical issues, project management, procurement and whole life costs. The outcome of the competition will be based on the balance of these factors. all of which will enable the Firelink system to be migrated into the regional control rooms.

Fire-related Deaths (Leeds)

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire-related deaths there have been in dwellings in Leeds, north-west in each year since 1997. [25769]

Jim Fitzpatrick: West Yorkshire fire and rescue service have supplied the following information on the number of fire-related deaths in dwellings in Leeds north-west from 1997 to 2004.

	Number of deaths in dwelling fires
1997	2
1998	1
1999	3
2000	0
2001	1
2002	1
2003	0
2004	0

All the fire deaths in the table were fires accidentally started in dwellings, there were no deaths in deliberate dwelling fires.

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 440W, on green belt, if he will list the type of development in each case that was *(a)* refused and *(b)* allowed. [19854]

Yvette Cooper: Further information about the cases referred to in the answer of 11 October has been made available in the Libraries of the House. This information relates to cases decided between 1 April 1999 and 30 September 2005 and indicates the type of development for each case that was refused or allowed.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to establish a national register of *(a)* the total area of land within the existing green belt and *(b)* applications for a change of use for green belt land. [22664]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* A national database has been established to monitor the extent of green belt in England based on digitising green belt boundaries in proposal maps in local development plans. The first results using this methodology were published in April 2000 based on local development plans in existence in 1997. An update was published in September 2004, based on local development plans in 2003. This approach, using digitisation technology provides much more reliable figures than those published prior to 2000. There are no present plans to monitor planning applications for change of use for green belt land.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what total area of land within the green belt has had a change of use status since 1997. [21210]

Yvette Cooper: Estimates for average land area within designated green belt that has assumed a change of use each year are from Land Use Change Statistics as shown as follows.

Annual average area of land within 1997 designated green belt that has changed use 1997–2003

Hectares

	New use		
Previous use	*Undeveloped*	*Developed*	*Total*
Undeveloped	3,573	817	4,390
Developed	556	811	1,367
Total	4,129	1,628	5,757

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government plans to build houses on green belt land in east Tilbury, Thurrock. [25070]

Yvette Cooper: Any proposals for new housing in east Tilbury will have to be considered through the planning system in the normal way. Each individual planning application must be considered on its own merits and determined principally against relevant policies in an adopted development plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. There remains a general presumption against inappropriate development within the green belt. Such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, as set out in planning policy guidance note 2, green belts.

The Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation is currently developing a regeneration framework which will set the context for the likely range of regeneration activities in the for the Thurrock area. It is expected to consult on this shortly.

Highbury

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 15W, on Highbury, what monitoring his Department has undertaken of section 106 agreements relating to the Arsenal stadium, Lough Road and Highbury Square developments. [23290]

Yvette Cooper: Central Government do not monitor the implementation of individual planning obligations (or section 106 agreements), as these are private agreements between local planning authorities and developers. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sets a national policy framework for planning obligations, within which local planning authorities have freedom to establish and implement their own local policies and detailed procedures.

Homelessness

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the levels of child homelessness have been in each Government office region in each year since 1997; [19877]

(2) how many accommodation places are provided for homeless children in each Government office region area. [19878]

Yvette Cooper: Information reported each quarter by local authorities about their activities under homelessness legislation distinguishes the number of households accepted as unintentionally homeless, in priority need and consequently owed a main homelessness duty that contain one, two and three or more children. It is therefore possible to calculate an estimate of the number of children in these households and this information has been made available in the Library of the House.

Also identified, since 2002, are the number of households in temporary accommodation that contain dependent children and/or an expectant mother, on the last day of the quarter and, since 2004, the number of dependent or expected children in these households. This information has been made available in the Library of the House.

Information about the total number of units of temporary accommodation potentially available for use by households with children is not available centrally.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate how many homeless *(a)* 16-year-olds and *(b)* 17-year-olds there have been in Leeds, North West since 1997; and how many have been placed in bed and breakfast accommodation in Leeds, North West in each year. [24001]

Yvette Cooper: As local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation are reported in terms of local housing authority districts, information is collected for Leeds City Council, within which the Leeds, North West constituency is located.

Under the Housing Act 1996, local authorities have a statutory duty to provide assistance to those who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, and a main homelessness duty (to ensure that suitable accommodation is available) is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and within a "priority need" category.

The priority need categories were extended in July 2002 to include all applicants aged 16 or 17. Previously the category "vulnerable young persons" would have included those aged 16 and 17, but these cannot be separately identified. Since that time, the authority has reported 860 applicants aged 16 or 17 and found to be owed a main homelessness duty, as follows:

	All acceptances	*Of which: 16 to 17-year-olds*	*as percentage of All*
July 2002 to March 2003	3,760	264	7
April 2003 to March 2004	4,950	338	7
April 2004 to March 2005	2,780	216	8
April 2005 to June 2005	510	42	8

Applicants with, or expecting, children will be classified under the priority categories "households with dependent children" and "household member pregnant" respectively as the main qualification; these categories may therefore include some 16 and 17-year-old applicants, but these cannot be separately identified.

Upon acceptance some of these applicants will have been provided with a settled housing solution immediately, while others will have been placed in some form of temporary accommodation, which could include bed and breakfast. As information reported about households in the various forms of temporary accommodation does not distinguish the applicant's

age, it is not possible to provide the number 16 and 17-year-olds placed in bed and breakfast. However, Leeds ceased using bed and breakfast to accommodate households after March 2004.

House Competition Costs

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the construction *(a)* strategies and *(b)* costs of the competitors in the £60,000 house competition; and if he will make a statement. [23479]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and English Partnerships are working to prepare a publication drawing out the lessons that have been learned from the Design for Manufacture competition. The consortia that submit bids at stage II and III of the competition will be invited to feed into the publication, which will seek to highlight what was best about each of the bids and what lessons may be drawn from them in terms of best practice for the construction industry as a whole. It will include information about costs, technologies and construction strategies. We aim to be able to publish this document by spring 2006, and are also exploring other ways to ensure that the lessons learnt are disseminated and adopted across the industry.

In addition English Partnerships intend to measure and monitor, using construction industry key performance indicators, the actual construction efficiency (both cost and process) during the construction phase and the whole life cost/occupancy costs while the homes are in habitation. This will be a longer term project, but data will be made available to the construction industry and the regeneration sector in due course.

Housing

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units have been *(a)* built and *(b)* procured in Gravesham since 1997. [19835]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows the number of new homes built or acquired/refurbished in Gravesham from 1997–98 to 2004–05 through the Housing Corporation approved development programme and local authority social housing grant. The number of homes acquired/refurbished includes an element for properties in registered social landlord (RSL) ownership which have been re-improved (such as by providing an extension to the property).

Completions in Gravesham 1997–98 to 2004–05

	(a) New build	*(b) Acquired/refurbished*
1997–98	24	7
1998–99	21	16
1999–2000	18	3
2000–01	20	2
2001–02	24	24
2002–03	64	3
2003–04	21	2
2004–05	92	10

Source:
Housing Corporation.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to increase the number of units of *(a)* social and *(b)* affordable housing in Hartlepool constituency. [20933]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, through Government office for the north-east, is working with a range of bodies in Hartlepool to deal with the issues of social and affordable housing. The borough has considerable reserves of housing land, particularly brown-field land at Victoria Harbour and at Middle Warren, where a wide range of house types and prices can be accommodated.

The New Deal for Communities (NDC) partnership is working in west central Hartlepool to address the issue of market failure which was becoming a problem. One of the biggest challenges for the NDC is to tackle the decline in older terraced housing in the area, to make it an area where young families want to move into and where people want to stay. A plan has been put in place, approved by residents, and a resident led company, Hartlepool Revival, has been set up to put the plan into action. The company has its own legal status and is seen as the sustainable element of NDC in Hartlepool.

Excellent groundbreaking work was undertaken by the NDC, which involved wide participation from NDC residents and local stakeholders. This resulted in the publication of the promised Community Housing Plan in May 2003. The Community Housing Plan is the residents' and NDC's way of tackling the housing market failure that parts of the area have suffered.

The Community Housing Plan was developed by social regeneration consultants, in consultation with local residents, to determine the future of the 113 streets in the NDC area. This ensured community leadership of the creation of a plan which is robust enough to stand up in all necessary legal areas alongside the statutory local plan and the local authority's housing strategy. Hartlepool borough council has an active role in the management of this programme via their presence on the NDC housing sub-group. The plan will establish principles which will guide the "Area Re-Modelling Project" in years 3–10, including establishing areas which may be considered for possible demolition. The plan is expected to transform the NDC area upon completion.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what modelling work his Department is doing to evaluate the infrastructure needs for its housing projections in *(a)* the South East and *(b)* London. [21092]

Yvette Cooper: The Government continue to support work to assess overall infrastructure requirements for housing growth, such as the approach taken in the Milton Keynes Prospectus and in other growth location business plans. For example, partners in Milton Keynes have estimated that the infrastructure required until 2016 to accommodate 15,000 new homes in the expansion areas of Milton Keynes will cost £1.2 billion. We welcome this work and anticipate that partners in other growth locations will undertake similar infrastructure assessment exercises.

Assessing the infrastructure requirements for growth is a complex and evolving process due to both the detailed layout of development and new approaches in the nature of service provision affecting what is needed. Therefore the total cost of infrastructure requirements will vary from one growth location to another.

The Government's aim is to provide as much information as it can on likely future levels of support but this needs to be made in the context of the public expenditure cycle.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working closely with other Government Departments to ensure that planned investment in transport, schools, hospitals, green infrastructure and other facilities supports new housing in the growth areas.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many dwellings have been refurbished under the decent homes standard programme; and how many further dwellings the Government plan to refurbish under the programme. [22972]

Yvette Cooper: Since 1997 we have reduced the number of social homes that do not meet the decent homes standard by more than one million out of a total of 2.1 million. Work completed and plans in place will take us 90 per cent. of the way towards meeting our target of ensuring that all social sector homes meet the standard. We are now focusing our efforts on dealing with the remaining 10 per cent.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the average cost is per dwelling of refurbishment under the Government's decent homes standard programme; [22973]

(2) what have been the 10 most expensive refurbishments under the Government's decent homes standard programme; [22974]

(3) how many refurbishments under the decent homes standard programme cost more than £20,000. [22975]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister holds information on a scheme by scheme basis on the cost of delivering decent homes, but there would be a disproportionate cost in calculating an average cost per dwelling across all schemes, and in analysing all this data to provide the most expensive schemes and those costing more than £20,000.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many *(a)* affordable housing units and *(b)* housing units for special needs he expected to be provided when he gave his consent to the Newcastle Gateshead Pathfinder giving Newcastle city council funds to buy part of the land owned by Newcastle Breweries; [24243]

(2) what conditions he agreed to be placed on Newcastle city council in return for the grant of funding to buy land owned by Newcastle Breweries; and on what date he gave his consent for this expenditure. [24244]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister does not give consent to specific pathfinder projects. However, given the significance of the proposals relating to the Newcastle Breweries site, officials from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) were consulted and kept informed by the pathfinder throughout the process leading to the purchase. In order to maintain compliance with the Pathfinder's funding agreement, the land purchased will need to be redeveloped for residential or mixed use. Any profit from the disposal of the land will need to be used for regeneration activities within the pathfinder area or returned to ODPM.

No decisions have yet been taken by the Pathfinder on the numbers of affordable housing units or housing units for special needs that will be built on the Newcastle Breweries site. The Pathfinder will need to consider a number of factors, including the views of the community, housing market intelligence, technical surveys and detailed work on the identification of options for housing provision to secure optimum design, type, and tenure.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will change the building regulations to ensure that each new build property *(a)* includes renewable energy facilities and *(b)* is energy efficient. [24405]

Yvette Cooper: Part L of the Building Regulations sets levels for energy performance in ways that offer designers the flexibility to choose solutions that best meet their needs, are cost-effective and practical, and enable innovation. Without prescribing solutions this enables builders to take up the benefits of renewable and other "low and zero carbon" technologies. In September the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced further improvements to these energy efficiency requirements that will come into effect next April and will encourage greater take-up of renewable systems.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which 25 local authorities had the highest number of households on the housing register per head of population in the local authority area as at 1st April; and if he will make a statement. [22168]

Yvette Cooper: The 25 local authorities with the highest percentage of households in their local authority that are on the local authority's housing list are provided in the table.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the housing association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a Housing Association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Local authorities with the 25 highest percentage figures for number of households on their housing register at 1 April 2005

Local authority	*Region*	*Number of households on housing register*	*Households on register as a percentage of total households in local authority area*
Sheffield	Yorkshire and the Humber	72,604	33
City of London	London	1,204	30
Newham	London	25,317	26
Tower Hamlets	London	21,183	24

Local authorities with the 25 highest percentage figures for number of households on their housing register at 1 April 2005

Local authority	*Region*	*Number of households on housing register*	*Households on register as a percentage of total households in local authority area*
Mansfield	East Midlands	9,784	24
Haringey	London	19,930	20
Camden	London	16,532	17
Sandwell	West Midlands	19,655	17
Bradford	North West	32,046	17
Corby	East Midlands	3,404	16
Lewisham	London	18,279	16
Brent	London	17,351	15
Bolton	North West	16,096	15
Sunderland	North East	16,222	14
Rotherham	Yorkshire and the Humber	13,903	13
South Tyneside	North East	8,649	13
Bassetlaw	East Midlands	5,750	13
Great Yarmouth	East of England	5,035	13
South Kesteven	East Midlands	6,509	12
Salford	North West	11,216	12
Walsall	West Midlands	12,024	12
Hounslow	London	10,382	12
Wirral	North West	15,524	11
Blackburn with Darwen UA	North West	6,177	11
Rushmoor	South East	4,151	11

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of homes built for key workers have been sold to key workers, broken down by region. [15837]

Yvette Cooper: The percentage of homes built for key workers that have been sold/let or are in the process of being sold/let to key workers is:

64 percent. in London,

65 percent. in the south-east and;

83 percent. in the east.

The remaining units are in the process of being marketed for sale/let. 47 percent. of these key worker units have only been completed in the last three months. A cascade mechanism is in place to deal with any units that are difficult to sell/let.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of tenant involvement in *(a)* registered social landlords after privatisation, *(b)* arms-length management organisations and *(c)* council controlled housing; and what steps he plans to take to strengthen tenant involvement. [17862]

Yvette Cooper: The Audit Commission considers resident involvement in its inspections of local authorities, arms length management organisations and registered social landlords. Inspection reports are available on the Commission's website at:

www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

In addition, RSLs are required to publish an annual tenant involvement impact assessment.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant homes there are in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [24018]

Yvette Cooper: There were 10,980 empty homes in Hertfordshire as at November 2004, the latest date for which figures are available. The data are as reported on CTB1 and CTB1S forms submitted by billing authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each year. The figure includes both long and short-term empty properties.

The Government are introducing new powers from April next year for local authorities to reduce the number of long term empty homes in their area.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23374]

Jim Fitzpatrick: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23427]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Nil. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has not provided in-house training on literacy or numeracy.

ODPM's approach has been to raise awareness of staff and line managers through its induction package for new entrants, introduced in May 2004; and to all staff through various marketing mechanisms including the ODPM intranet and other promotional activities.

Where development advice has been requested on literacy and numeracy, learners have been referred to appropriate providers whose assistance is free of charge.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23785]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not use specific literacy or numeracy tests. All of our recruitment is carried out using a competence based process that requires the candidate to

demonstrate how they meet the skills required for the post(s). This requires a good level of literacy. If we had a post that required specific numeracy skills, we would take advice from our recruitment consultants on the most appropriate method of assessment.

Local Government

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have for the restructuring of local government; and if he will make a statement. [21517]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware of the debate in local government about moving from two tier to unitary local government. This is a debate which is led from within local government. We are following the debate with interest.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Audit Commission's plans to move Comprehensive Performance Assessment to a star rating measure. [24685]

Mr. Woolas: This is an operational matter for the Audit Commission. I will ask the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and ensure the answer is made available in the Libraries of the House.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of unitary status for councils in Hertfordshire. [24019]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no such assessment. We are aware of the debate in local government about moving from two tier to unitary local government but this is a debate which is led from within local government. We are following the debate with interest.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received about the proposal to move to whole council local elections every four years, as outlined in the consultation document "Vibrant Local Leadership". [23209]

Mr. Woolas: Following publication of the discussion document "Vibrant Local Leadership" which indicated that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was minded to agree with the Electoral Commission's recommendation that all English local authorities should hold whole council elections, we have received seven requests from district councils to move to whole council elections and several other representations generally in support of change.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultations have been held with local authorities about the new data being used to calculate the day visitor indicator as part of the formula spending share; and if he will make a statement. [24054]

Mr. Woolas: The option to update the day visitor indicator was part of the wider consultation on changes to the Local Government Finance Distribution system, which ran for a 12 week period between 19 July and 10 October 2005.

The research underlying the option was also disseminated and discussed at the Local Government Finance Settlement Working Group (SWG) to which local authority representatives attend.

Both the consultation papers and SWG papers have been placed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of the new data for day visitor indicators as part of the formula spending share on the financial position of Charnwood borough council. [24056]

Mr. Woolas: No exemplification has been made for any authority on the impact the inclusion of the new day visitors indicator would have on formula spending shares.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* time period and *(b)* methodology was used in amending the day visitor indicator of the formula spending share; and if he will make a statement. [24057]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows:

(a) The proposed update to the day visitors indicator outlined in the recent Formula Grant Distribution consultation paper used data from the 2002–03 Great Britain Day Visits Survey, the 2001 census and the 2003 Labour Force Survey. Data from Visit Britain and the Ordnance Survey were also used.

(b) The methodology on the updated modelling of the day visitor indicator can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's local government finance website at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0607/swg0508/dayvisitors.pdf

Ministers are currently considering whether to use the updated day visitor data in the 2006–07 Formula Spending Shares taking into account representations received during the consultation on this issue. The decision will be announced to the House later this year as part of the provisional local government settlement.

Pathfinder Areas

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many dwellings in each pathfinder area have been *(a)* demolished and *(b)* constructed in each year since 2001. [25031]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows the number of demolitions, constructions and refurbishments funded directly by Housing Market Renewal Funding and are for the year 2004–05 for which we have data. The information comes from core indicator returns submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the pathfinders every six months.

Number

Pathfinder	*Demolitions*	*Constructions*	*Refurbishments*
Birmingham Sandwell	71	47	10
East Lancashire	397	0	674
Hull and east Riding	0	0	0
Manchester Salford	677	2,114	4,304
Merseyside	122	6	2,446
Newcastle Gateshead	409	9	489
North Staffordshire	234	6	141
Oldham Rochdale	78	0	832
South Yorkshire	1,097	0	760
Total	3,085	2,182	9,656

Planning

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance the Government have provided to local planning authorities on informing nearby local residents

that a planning application in their vicinity has been submitted; and what definition of vicinity he uses in this context. [24682]

Yvette Cooper: A local planning authority's duty to publicise planning applications is explained in Department of Environment Circular 15/92, "Publicity for Planning Applications". Within the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, authorities have discretion to decide what level and type of publicity would be appropriate in a particular case. The term "vicinity" is not defined. However, the circular does urge authorities to go beyond the minimum legal requirements when inviting local people to comment on planning applications. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects authorities to make use of their websites in this context. Authorities should also set out, in Statements of Community Involvement, their own policy on consultation about applications; for example, when and how local amenity or residents' groups should be informed.

Railways (Fire Precautions)

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 402W on railways (fire regulations), if he will seek from local fire and rescue authorities the number of railway stations and premises in their areas covered by the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989. [23939]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In the answer to my hon. Friend on 10 October, the latest figures reported by the Fire and Rescue Service at that time showed that 168 such premises are known in England and Wales in 2003–04. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has subsequently been informed by the Cleveland Fire and Rescue Service that they do not have a sub surface railway station. The revised number is therefore 167. These are in each area as follows:

Premises in England and Wales subject to enforcement under the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989

Fire and Rescue Service	*Number*
London	160
Merseyside	5
South Wales	1
West Midlands	1

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 402W, on railways (fire regulations), how many of the premises covered by the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 in 2003–04 were *(a)* metro or underground stations and premises and *(b)* national heavy rail stations and premises. [23940]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The statistics the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister receives from local fire and rescue authorities do not differentiate between *(a)* metro or underground stations and premises, nor *(b)* national heavy rail stations and premises.

Regional Chambers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 340W, on regional chambers, for what reasons the Audit Commission does not audit the other regional chambers; if he will place in the Library copies of the assemblies' most recent business plans; and if he will make a statement. [24686]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to my answers of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 907W, and 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 340W.

The web addresses for the eight regional assemblies in England and their umbrella body the English Regions Network are detailed below:

East of England Regional Assembly—www.eera.gov.uk

East Midlands Regional Assembly—www.emra.gov.uk

North East Assembly—www.northeastassembly.gov.uk

North West Regional Assembly—www.nwra.gov.uk

South East England Regional Assembly—www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

South West Regional Assembly—www.southwest-ra.gov.uk

West Midlands Regional Assembly—www.wmra.gov.uk

Yorkshire and the Humber Assembly—www.yhassembly.gov.uk

English Regional Network—www.ern.gov.uk.

Rossendale Borough Council

Janet Anderson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to public funds has been to date of the corporate recovery of Rossendale borough council since the draft Corporate Governance Inspection Report of May 2002. [23485]

Mr. Woolas: Since May 2002 Rossendale borough council has received £167,000 from the ODPM capacity building fund to assist with areas such as financial management and procurement, project management, risk management, member development and leadership programmes.

Section 106 Agreements

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information he collates on the cash in lieu of developments held under section 106 agreements by each London local authority. [23288]

Yvette Cooper: Information on the contributions made by developers under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is not collected centrally. Local planning authorities, including London boroughs, record this information on their individual planning registers.

Sustainable Buildings

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps are planned to apply the new code for sustainable buildings. [21504]

Yvette Cooper: From April 2006 all new residential homes receiving Government funding will need to meet the new code for sustainable buildings. The new code for sustainable buildings is a voluntary scheme being developed by Government and industry. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue a formal consultation paper in the near future and aim to publish the code early in 2006.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2441W, on telecommunication masts, if he will break down the figures by Government office region. [20649]

Yvette Cooper: The following table gives the number of planning appeals received, decided and allowed for telecommunications (including radio/TV—mast/aerial/dish/antenna), both in total and for each Government office.

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Received in calendar year				
Total	871	637	752	459
East Midlands	38	21	25	17
East of England	69	65	80	41
London	184	168	113	104
North East	50	32	53	11
North West	126	66	93	58
South East	156	144	212	113
South West	76	60	45	37
West Midlands	107	47	102	57
Yorkshire and Humberside	65	34	29	21
Decided in calendar year				
Total	761	705	478	596
East Midlands	34	18	18	19
East of England	63	72	41	67
London	144	187	104	91
North East	45	37	35	31
North West	107	83	55	74
South East	131	144	121	167
South West	80	64	30	50
West Midlands	92	61	51	76
Yorkshire and Humberside	65	39	23	21

	Allowed (percentage) in calendar year							
	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total	517	(67.9)	413	(58.6)	252	(52.7)	328	(55.0)
East Midlands	26	(76.5)	11	(61.1)	11	(61.1)	10	(52.6)
East of England	42	(66.7)	41	(56.9)	22	(53.7)	37	(55.2)
London	88	(61.1)	114	(61.0)	41	(39.4)	49	(53.8)
North East	36	(80.0)	24	(64.9)	24	(68.6)	18	(58.1)
North West	79	(73.8)	47	(56.6)	35	(63.6)	39	(52.7)
South East	78	(59.5)	83	(57.6)	61	(50.4)	90	(53.9)
South West	55	(68.8)	34	(53.1)	14	(46.7)	25	(50.0)
West Midlands	66	(71.7)	33	(54.1)	28	(54.9)	47	(61.8)
Yorkshire and Humberside	47	(72.3)	26	(66.7)	16	(69.6)	13	(61.9)

Tenancies

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many tenancies have ceased at the end of an introductory tenancy, broken down by *(a)* local authority and *(b)* registered social landlord. [24032]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish a draft bill on tenure reform. [24033]

Yvette Cooper: The Law Commission are planning to publish a draft Bill setting out their proposals on tenure reform in 2006.

Thames Gateway

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for the building of the Thames Gateway project. [25068]

Yvette Cooper: "Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway", a strategy document launched earlier this year by my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, sets out the vision for growth and regeneration of this important area over the next 10 years and longer. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's target is to deliver 120,000 new homes by 2016 and alongside this are projects to deliver improvements to roads and public transport, infrastructure for health, education and skills and environmental protection. In addition to these large scale infrastructure projects, Government are funding a range of projects that unlock further regeneration or growth potential—for example by revitalising town centres and bringing brownfield land back into productive use.

Travellers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 24W, on Travellers, what the budget of the new Gypsy and Traveller Unit is for 2005–06; and what its planned *(a)* work programme and *(b)* activities are. [24688]

Yvette Cooper: The Gypsy and Traveller Unit, supported by Government offices in the regions, is working closely with local authorities, local police forces and representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller community, to promote increased site provision alongside effective use of enforcement powers against inappropriate sites. The overall aim is to reduce tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled

community through effective accommodation provision and enforcement on public sites. To help with this it is producing a "plain guide" to enforcement powers and is reviewing what more can be done to make them work effectively.

The unit is also working with other Government Departments and stakeholders to look at the social exclusion and service provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

The budgeted cost of the unit for 2005–06 is £0.5 million.

NORTHERN IRELAND

11-plus Examination

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment and the Department for Education Northern Ireland will evaluate the proposals by Dr. Hugh Morrison of Queen's University, Belfast, for an alternative to the 11-plus examination; and if he will make a statement. [24410]

Angela E. Smith: Following the Government's decision to end academic selection, there are no plans for an alternative testing regime to replace the 11 plus tests. New admissions arrangements will be based on informed parental choice.

The pupil profile will provide an ongoing record of a child's educational progress, and assist parents and children in deciding which post-primary schools to apply to.

CCEA is willing to discuss Dr. Morrison's proposals in the context of planned advice for schools on a range of possible assessment tools that could be used to support teacher assessment and to inform completion of the pupil profile.

A and E Waiting Times

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients were waiting for more than two hours on trolleys in accident and emergency departments of hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year since 1998. [24159]

Mr. Woodward: The number of hospital trolley waits waiting two hours or more is reported to the Department by trusts on a quarterly basis.

Number of hospital trolley waits waiting two hours or more recorded in Northern Ireland 1998–99 to 2004–05

Financial year	*Trolley waits waiting more than two hours*
1998–99	3,943
1999–2000	6,040
2000–01	10,346
2001–02	15,041
2002–03	25,131
2003–04	29,978
2004–05	35,056

Note:
In a small number of cases trusts have returned data for a representative sample of trolley waits.
Source:
Departmental Information Return CH10.

A20

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Road Service expects to commence construction of the A20 Frederick Street Link in Newtownards. [24899]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 7 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding when the Roads Service expects to commence construction of the A20 Frederick Street Link in Newtownards.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service anticipates that work could commence on the construction of the A20 Frederick Street Link in 2007. However, this would be subject to the satisfactory completion of statutory processes and the availability of funding at that time.

I hope this information is helpful.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time for surgery for abdominal aortic aneurysm was in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [25021]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the waiting times for surgery for abdominal aortic aneurysms is not collected centrally. However, patients presenting with this condition generally have their surgery carried out as a matter of urgency.

If an abdominal aorta aneurysm is identified early, elective surgical repair can be carried out. Although this will be a very successful procedure for the majority of those operated upon, it is nonetheless associated with a mortality rate of 6 to 8 per cent.

Screening for abdominal aorta aneurysms is now on the agenda of the UK National Screening Committee, which is chaired by the Department's Chief Medical Officer.

Addictions Service (Strangford)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the addictions service offered to those in Strangford constituency. [24887]

Mr. Woodward: There is a wide range of addiction services currently offered to those in the Strangford constituency covering types of treatment such as detoxification, rehabilitation, substitute prescribing and therapeutic counselling (both adult and young people). These services are provided in peoples' homes, in health and social care facilities and in a hospital in-patient unit.

Alzheimer's

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources have been made available in Northern Ireland for *(a)* sufferers from and *(b)* carers who are affected by Alzheimer's disease in 2005–06. [24775]

Mr. Woodward: Alzheimer's is one of a number of physical and mental conditions that impact seriously upon the lives of older people and their families. In Northern Ireland, resources are allocated by programme of care for different classes of patients andclients rather than by specific conditions. Information on resources for Alzheimer's disease is not therefore available separately. Decisions relating to the treatment and support of clients and their carers are made by health and social services boards in light of local priorities and available resources.

Ards Hospital (Psychiatry)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many admissions to the psychiatry unit at Ards hospital in each of the last five years have been for addictions. [24888]

Mr. Woodward: There have been no admissions to the mental health inpatient unit at Ards hospital for addictions. Addictions inpatient care is provided in ward 15 in Downshire hospital, Down Lisburn Trust. If a patient is admitted to Ards who has an addictions problem it is because they have a concomitant mental health problem. A dual diagnosis worker and inpatient staff then provide treatment.

Armed Robberies

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many armed robberies have taken place in West Belfast since July. [24768]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised by the Police Service of Northern Ireland that 21 armed robberies have taken place in the West Belfast District Command Unit between 1 July and 2 November 2005.

Avian Influenza

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province would be covered by the antiviral drugs stockpiled to counter an outbreak of avian influenza. [24919]

Mr. Woodward: The Department is stockpiling a supply of the anti-viral drug oseltamivir (or tamiflu) that will be sufficient to treat up to 438,000 people or 25 per cent. of the total population ie the predicted attack rate of a pandemic flu outbreak. This is in line with plans in the rest of the UK.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the level of *(a)* detected and *(b)* undetected benefit fraud in Northern Ireland in each year since 1998. [24148]

Mr. Hanson: The information is as follows.

Detected fraud

The information requested is available only from April 2000. The following table shows the number of detected fraud cases for each year since April 2000 and the amount of benefit overpaid in those cases:

	Total number	*Value of overpayments (£ million)*
2000–01	231	0.56
2001–02	492	1.59
2002–03	394	1.58
2003–04	367	1.90
2004–05	485	3.35
2005[1]	306	3.32

[1] To 31 October 2005

Undetected fraud

The estimated value of undetected benefit fraud is set out in the following table. The information requested is available only from 2000–01 year. The table shows the estimate of undetected fraud as a monetary value and as a percentage of benefit expenditure.

Estimated value of undetected benefit fraud

	Total value (£ million)	*Value as percentage of benefit expenditure*
2000–01	46.06	1.5
2001–02	60.45	1.9
2002–03	32.29	1.0
2003–04	36.62	1.2
2004–05	23.74	0.7

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland were convicted of benefit fraud in each year since 1998. [24149]

Mr. Hanson: The Social Security Agency is committed to a robust approach to tackling fraud and deploys a series of sanctions against offenders:

formal cautions;

administrative penalties; and

prosecution.

Acceptance of a caution or administrative penalty is an admission by the person that benefit was claimed illegally. Information on numbers who have been through this process is available only from the 2000–01 financial year, as follows:

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005-year to date*
Successful prosecutions	231	465	322	237	234	107
Administrative penalties	10	11	49	102	168	153
Formal cautions	0	16	23	28	83	46
Total	241	492	394	367	485	306

Blind and Partially-sighted People

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to provide *(a)* enhanced social care and rehabilitation services and *(b)* additional resources in rehabilitation worker training and support to help blind and partially-sighted people in Northern Ireland. [25045]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is currently engaged in a consultation process which will help highlight the steps needed to provide enhanced social care and rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people and determine the resources required.

Breast Cancer

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is taking to promote breast cancer awareness among women aged *(a)* 18 to 25 years and *(b)* 65 to 75 years. [23381]

Mr. Woodward: Women in the age group 65 to 75 years of age will have had the opportunity to participate in the Department's breast screening programme (for women aged 50 to 64) and may continue, if they wish, to be screened after age 65. It is the Department's intention to extend the screening programme to all women in the age group 65–70, as soon as possible.

In March 2003, my Department's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Henrietta Campbell announced the launch of three new leaflets about breast awareness/breast screening. One of these "Looking for Changes" is intended for women of all ages and copies were sent to every GP and practice manager in Northern Ireland, as well as to health promotion units in all four health and social services boards. This leaflet is available in five different languages. Among other things, the leaflet encourages women to make an appointment with their GP if they become aware of any changes in their breasts. Breast cancer is rare in women aged 18–25 years old.

Buckley Report

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the costs incurred in commissioning and producing Sir Michael Buckley's report regarding the University of Ulster. [23079]

Angela E. Smith: I am informed by the University that the estimated cost incurred in commissioning and producing Sir Michael Buckley's report regarding the University of Ulster was £8,560 excluding value added tax. This includes all payments to Sir Michael Buckley.

The University's Council was provided with a legal opinion on the contents of the report at a cost of £900, excluding value added tax.

C8

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the process of evidence location and collation by the policing unit designated C8 has been completed; whether the collection and centralisation of located evidence has commenced; and whether the evidence will be assembled and centralised in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Great Britain. [24013]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that part of the Historical Enquiry Team's (C8) setting up process has been to locate and catalogue all the case papers, correspondence and exhibits that remain from the period under review (between 1968 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998). A thorough search process was required, and the method chosen by the police as the most comprehensive and least disruptive to day to day policing was to employ a team of dedicated searchers, controlled centrally by the HET. This team, comprising of agency staff on short-term contracts, commenced work in March 2005 with a remit to search every police building of the PSNI estate. The Forensic Science Agency of Northern Ireland commenced a parallel search of its own, to complement the HET undertaking.

The search of all 29 PSNI district command units and HQ premises is due for completion by mid November 2005. It has been conducted in close collaboration with the setting up of the PSNI central storage facility, where all items will eventually be stored. The items recovered will be retained in Northern Ireland to facilitate the review process to be completed by the HET.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the staff employed in the policing unit designated C8 are *(a)* serving police officers and *(b)* former members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary; and how many are (i) members and (ii) former members of other police forces. [24030]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that, at present, there are:

(a) five serving police officers on the Historical Enquiry Team (C8); four from the Metropolitan police and one from Strathclyde police. These officers are the senior managers of the team and have been recruited to assist in it's design;

(b) two retired members of the PSNI/RUC employed on a contractual basis; one senior manager to provide local knowledge and intelligence and the other, a specialist in family liaison work. Since inception, 40 former PSNI/RUC staff have also been supplied by an agency to work on the search process and provide administrative support; and

(c) two former members of other police forces; the head of the unit is a recently retired commander from the Metropolitan police, and a retired detective superintendent from the MPS is contracted to advise on establishing a review and family liaison process.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* role and *(b)* task is of the policing unit designated C8; what progress has been made by this unit towards the completion of its task; and how many people are employed within this unit, broken down by rank. [24031]

Mr. Woodward: The role of the Historical Enquiry Team (C8) is to re-examine all unresolved deaths in Northern Ireland attributable to the security situation between 1968 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The HET has defined its task as:

To assist in bringing 'closure', where possible, to the families of victims of an unresolved death, during this period;

To re-examine all deaths attributable to 'The Troubles' and ensure that all investigative and evidential opportunities are examined and exploited in a manner that satisfies the PSNI's obligation of an 'Effective Investigation' (article 2, Code of Ethics for PSNI); and

To do so in a way that commands the confidence of the wider community.

The HET was established in April 2005, and is due to become operational on 9 January 2006. The intervening period has seen preparatory work including refurbishing and equipping the Sprucefield PSNI site as its base; a search process to recover and catalogue case files, correspondence and exhibits; preparation of policies and protocols for conduct of reviews and re-investigations; interviewing and appointing staff and negotiating for their secondment; introducing arrangements with other agencies to gather information, evidence and trace individuals; and working with families who have come forward already. The HET has also been in consultation with many families direct, and with non-government organisations and lawyers representing families.

At present there are 23 staff on HET daily work, including one head of unit, (senior civil servant grade), one detective superintendent, three detective chief inspectors, one detective sergeant, and 17 civilian staff providing administrative and ancillary support. A further 32 agency staff (ungraded) are employed on the search process.

Car Theft

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many car thefts there were in each district command unit in each of the last five years. [25169]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland records theft of vehicles and unauthorised taking of vehicles as a single category. The figures are provided in the following table.

Recorded theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle

	2000-01	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Northern Ireland	8,563	9,005	8,410	5,369	4,456
Urban Region	6,252	6,579	5,981	3,486	2,908
Antrim	209	228	263	188	108
Ards	232	310	275	131	99
East Belfast	461	474	640	267	213
North Belfast	809	1,003	882	568	498
South Belfast	1,717	1,837	1,472	732	646
West Belfast	997	669	610	410	423
Carrickfergus	86	84	118	50	42
Castlereagh	243	354	284	182	143
Larne	43	78	49	45	40
Lisburn	942	820	757	546	415
Newtownabbey	314	390	392	246	182
North Down	199	332	239	121	99
Rural Region	2,311	2,426	2,429	1,883	1,548
Armagh	128	104	128	94	79
Banbridge	85	94	98	100	48
Ballymena	103	129	133	120	66
Ballymoney	36	32	43	27	23
Coleraine	131	136	132	128	97
Cookstown	60	75	60	59	50
Craigavon	307	362	258	241	151
Dungannon and South Tyrone	147	133	150	112	99
Down	270	328	328	205	143
Fermanagh	108	87	92	75	53
Foyle	210	287	265	243	251
Limavady	82	54	35	43	46
Magherafelt	79	46	75	29	22
Moyle	29	45	51	28	23
Newry and Mourne	327	374	404	280	311
Omagh	125	71	90	46	44
Strabane	84	69	87	53	42

Cardiomyopathy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many newly diagnosed cases of cardiomyopathy there were in the Province in each of the last five years. [24856]

Mr. Woodward: The number of newly diagnosed cases of cardiomyopathy in Northern Ireland is not available.

Information is available on the number of cardiomyopathy sufferers admitted as in-patients to hospitals in Northern Ireland. The number of admissions to hospital with a primary or secondary diagnosis of cardiomyopathy is detailed in the following table for each of the last five years available. It should be noted that any individual could have been admitted to hospital more than once over the course of a year or over a number of years and would therefore be counted more than once in the table.

	Admissions for cardiomyopathy
2004–05	593
2003–04	628
2002–03	561
2001–02	552
2000–01	501

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System DHSS&PS

Carers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to implement a pay scale for carers across Northern Ireland. [22768]

Mr. Hanson: Carers have access to the full range of social security benefits, including carers allowance, and tax credits, depending on their individual circumstances, and to a wide range of services from their local Health and Social Services Trust, which are designed to offer practical support for their caring role. The Government are satisfied that targeting help in this way represents the best use of resources, and has no plans to introduce a pay scale for carers.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the administration cost of the Child Support Agency in Northern Ireland has been in each of the past five years; and what the expected expenditure is in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [25167]

Mr. Hanson: Administration expenditure over the past five years is as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	10.256
2001–02	11.380
2002–03	13.500
2003–04	15.023
2004–05	15.046

Estimated expenditure for 2005–06 and 2006–07 is as follows:

	£ million
2005–06	17.464
2006–07	[1]15.817

[1] Based on anticipated budget allocation.

Class Statistics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of those living in each district council area in the Province are *(a)* professionals and *(b)* skilled workers. [24866]

Angela E. Smith: The following table contains estimates from the 2003 Labour Force Survey local area database showing the percentage of all persons in employment in each district council area that are classified as being in professional and skilled trade occupations.

Percentage of all persons in employment classified as being in professional or skilled trade occupations

District council area	*Professional occupations*	*Skilled trade occupations*
Antrim	[1]10	[1]18
Ards	[1]13	19
Armagh	[1]10	[1]14
Ballymena	[1]6	21
Ballymoney	[1]6	[1]25
Banbridge	[1]7	[1]19
Belfast	14	9
Carrickfergus	[1]10	[1]13
Castlereagh	[1]12	[1]9
Coleraine	[1]9	[1]19
Cookstown	[2]—	[1]23
Craigavon	[1]10	[1]17
Derry	[1]14	[1]12
Down	[1]13	21
Dungannon	[1]13	[1]25
Fermanagh	[1]4	28
Larne	[1]9	[1]14
Limavady	[2]—	[1]30
Lisburn	[1]12	15
Magherafelt	[1]12	[1]26
Moyle	[1]14	[1]21
Newry and Mourne	[1]7	23
Newtownabbey	15	[1]11
North Down	[1]12	[1]12
Omagh	[1]18	31
Strabane	[2]—	20
Northern Ireland	11	[1]17

[1] Estimates are based on small sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher than usual degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.
[2] Estimates are not shown as they are potentially disclosive.
Source:
Labour Force Survey, Local Area Database 2003.

Clinical Negligence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the likely costs resulting from clinical negligence in the Province in each of the next five years. [24861]

Mr. Woodward: The cost to the Health and Personal Social Services budget is the net impact of the provision being established for new clinical negligence cases, reduced by the settlement of existing cases. This is estimated at £11 million in each of the three years from 2005–06 to 2007–08. No estimates have yet been made beyond 2007–08.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many clinical negligence cases are pending within each health trust in the Province. [24862]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Compensation Agency

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of cases have been considered by the Compensation Agency in Northern Ireland for more than two years before a decision was arrived at. [22637]

Mr. Hain: The Compensation Agency's electronic database was introduced in 1988. It has only been possible to retrieve information relating to claims which

have been captured on that database. Claims which were in existence prior to this were kept on paper records and files which have subsequently been destroyed through routine destruction procedures.

Analysis of the database shows that the Compensation Agency has made decisions on 309,533 claims since 1988. Of these, 40,336 or 13 per cent. were made after two years.

Conviction Rates

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the conviction rate for *(a)* common assault, *(b)* breach of peace and *(c)* drunkenness in each of the last five years broken down by district command unit. [22755]

Mr. Hanson: The following tables relate to the years 2000–03 and detail the number of persons prosecuted and convicted at court. The tables are based on the police district command unit in which the offender's address falls. Where numbers are small conviction rates for each DCU are not calculated but the number of prosecutions and convictions are presented, along with the overall conviction rates for each year. Due to changes in the way data is collected figures for 1999 are not directly comparable but table four shows Northern Ireland level prosecutions and convictions for that year, for the three offence categories in question. It should be noted that many offences of common assault, breach of peace and drunkenness may be brought to justice via a police caution rather than via a court prosecution.

Table 1: Number of convictions and conviction rates for common assault offences by police district command unit 2000–03[1]

	2000		2001		2002		2003	
DCU[2]	Number	Rate[3] (percentage)	Number	Rate[3] (percentage)	Number	Rate[3] (percentage)	Number	Rate[3] (percentage)
Antrim	27	71	15	60	19	66	10	67
Ards	18	86	31	69	32	80	28	82
Armagh	12	67	7	100	3	18	8	47
Banbridge	13	68	15	79	8	50	15	54
Belfast East	21	78	26	84	16	84	17	68
Belfast North	31	74	29	67	24	63	24	62
Belfast South	14	82	26	74	14	64	19	83
Belfast West	23	79	17	55	13	54	20	69
Ballymena	23	85	21	88	9	56	21	84
Ballymoney	5	38	4	40	4	50	6	67
Carrickfergus	9	69	5	71	8	57	5	63
Coleraine	23	64	31	66	23	74	14	68
Cookstown	11	65	8	67	9	56	3	20
Craigavon	33	77	29	83	19	53	24	69
Castlereagh	15	71	10	71	9	60	10	48
Dungannon	15	51	12	57	10	67	9	60
Down	19	59	24	71	24	77	24	69
Fermanagh	12	60	18	75	20	74	18	62
Foyle	39	67	33	60	33	69	28	78
Larne	16	76	13	72	18	75	11	61
Limavady	31	84	10	77	23	74	18	86
Lisburn	29	74	32	71	18	72	19	70
Magherafelt	13	65	14	78	8	53	8	47
Moyle	6	60	5	63	2	40	4	57
Newtownabbey	16	67	27	64	8	53	5	50
North Down	21	81	24	67	20	74	20	80
Newry and Mourne	29	57	16	50	18	62	10	43
Omagh	23	79	17	68	23	68	16	59
Strabane	16	73	15	71	27	87	12	100
Missing	9	—	5	—	8	—	3	—
Total	563	70	539	68	470	67	432	66

[1] Common assault offences include: common assault, common assault on adult, and common assault on a child/ young person.
[2] Data are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls. Police district command units became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division. Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.
[3] The conviction rate is based on the number of persons found guilty out of those brought to court for the offence. Caution is recommended when interpreting rates, due to small numbers in some categories.

Table 2: Number of prosecutions and convictions for breach of peace offences by police district command unit 2000–03[1,2]

	2000		2001	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Antrim	4	4	1	1
Ards	1	1	1	1
Armagh	0	0	2	2
Banbridge	4	4	4	4
Belfast East	4	3	3	3
Belfast North	12	10	11	4
Belfast South	3	3	2	2
Belfast West	11	10	3	3
Ballymena	13	8	2	2

Table 2: Number of prosecutions and convictions for breach of peace offences by police district command unit 2000–03[1,2]

	2000		2001	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Ballymoney	2	1	0	0
Carrickfergus	1	1	0	0
Coleraine	0	0	5	4
Cookstown	0	0	1	0
Craigavon	7	5	2	2
Castlereagh	1	1	2	1
Dungannon	6	1	1	2
Down	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	4	1	2	0

Table 2: Number of prosecutions and convictions for breach of peace offences by police district command unit 2000–03[1,2]

	2000		2001	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Foyle	20	9	14	12
Larne	3	3	3	3
Limavady	6	1	4	4
Lisburn	2	1	6	3
Magherafelt	4	3	3	3
Moyle	0	0	0	0
Newtownabbey	4	3	3	0
Nortli Down	4	4	0	0
Newry and Mourne	9	4	2	1
Omagh	3	1	0	0
Strabane	1	1	7	5
Missing	4	—	0	0
Total	133	85 (64%)	90	62 (69%)

	2002		2003	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Antrim	0	0	3	3
Ards	1	0	0	0
Armagh	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	0	0	3	0
Belfast East	2	1	0	0
Belfast North	9	7	8	6
Belfast South	1	0	1	1
Belfast West	2	2	4	3
Ballymena	21	1	8	8
Ballymoney	6	1	1	1
Carrickfergus	0	0	3	3
Coleraine	5	4	2	1
Cookstown	0	0	2	0
Craigavon	1	1	3	3
Castlereagh	0	0	0	0
Dungannon	3	1	2	0
Down	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	3	2	0	0
Foyle	12	7	12	10
Larne	9	3	1	1
Limavady	2	1	0	0
Lisburn	1	1	1	1
Magherafelt	1	1	2	0
Moyle	0	0	1	1
Newtownabbey	1	1	0	0
Nortli Down	1	0	1	1
Newry and Mourne	4	1	0	0
Omagh	3	2	0	0
Strabane	1	0	2	2
Missing	0	0	0	0
Total	89	37 (42%)	60	45 (75%)

[1] Breach of the peace offences include behaviour likely to cause breach of the peace, and behaviour likely to cause breach of peace on licensed premises.

[2] Due to the very small numbers in most cells, a conviction rate (based on the number of persons found guilty out of those brought to court for the offence) has not been calculated for each DCU; however, an overall conviction rate is shown for each calendar year.

[3] Data are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls. Police district command units became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division. Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Table 3: Number of prosecutions and convictions for drunkenness of fences by police district command unit 2000–2003[1,2]

	2000		2001	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Antrim	0	0	1	0
Ards	12	12	9	8
Armagh	1	1	1	1
Banbridge	0	0	3	3
Belfast East	4	4	2	2
Belfast North	8	8	7	5
Belfast South	5	5	7	6

Table 3: Number of prosecutions and convictions for drunkenness of fences by police district command unit 2000–2003[1,2]

	2000		2001	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Belfast West	4	2	3	2
Ballymena	2	2	9	8
Ballymoney	4	3	0	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0
Coleraine	6	5	1	1
Cookstown	1	1	2	1
Craigavon	2	2	1	1
Castlereagh	1	1	0	0
Dungannon	0	0	3	2
Down	5	5	1	1
Fermanagh	7	7	4	4
Foyle	7	6	1	1
Lame	1	1	0	0
Limavady	2	2	0	0
Lisburn	1	0	0	0
Magherafelt	1	0	2	2
Moyle	2	2	1	1
Newtownabbey	2	2	1	1
North Down	1	1	3	3
Newry and Mourne	1	1	4	4
Omagh	0	0	2	2
Strabane	4	4	3	2
Missing	1	1	3	3
Total	85	78 (92%)	74	64 (86%)

	2002		2003	
DCU[3]	Prosecuted	Convicted	Prosecuted	Convicted
Antrim	0	0	1	0
Ards	1	1	1	1
Armagh	0	0	1	1
Banbridge	2	1	0	0
Belfast East	0	0	0	0
Belfast North	6	5	2	2
Belfast South	0	0	3	3
Belfast West	0	0	1	1
Ballymena	3	3	4	4
Ballymoney	1	1	0	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0
Coleraine	4	4	1	1
Cookstown	0	0	2	1
Craigavon	0	0	0	0
Castlereagh	1	1	2	1
Dungannon	0	0	2	2
Down	0	0	2	2
Fermanagh	2	2	1	1
Foyle	4	2	0	0
Lame	0	0	0	0
Limavady	1	1	0	0
Lisburn	0	0	2	2
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	0
Newtownabbey	1	1	0	0
North Down	1	1	1	0
Newry and Mourne	1	1	3	3
Omagh	9	7	6	4
Strabane	2	1	0	0
Missing	2	2	1	1
Total	41	34 (83%)	36	30 (83%)

[1] Drunkenness offences include simple drunk, drunk and disorderly, drunk in charge of animal, entering an aircraft when drunk, being drunk when in aircraft, drunk in charge of child, being drunk in licensed premises. Offences relating to drink under road traffic legislation are excluded.

[2] Due to the very small numbers in most cells, a conviction rate (based on the number of persons found guilty out of those brought to court for the offence) has not been calculated for each DCU; however, an overall conviction rate is shown for each calendar year.

[3] Data are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls. Police district command units became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division. Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Table 4: Number of prosecutions, convictions and conviction rates for common assault, breach of peace and drunkenness offences—1999

Offence	Prosecutions	Convictions	Conviction rate[4] (percentage)
Common assaults[1]	1,086	814	75
Breach of peace[2]	205	157	77
Drunkenness[3]	165	141	85

[1] Common assault offences include: common assault, common assault on adult, and common assault on a child/young person.
[2] Breach of the peace offences include behaviour likely to cause breach of the peace, and behaviour likely to cause breach of peace on licensed premises.
[3] Drunkenness offences include simple drunk, drunk and disorderly, drunk in charge of animal, entering an aircraft when drunk, being drunk when in aircraft, drunk in charge of child, being drunk in licensed premises. Offences relating to drink under road traffic legislation are excluded.
[4] The conviction rate is based on the number of persons found guilty out of those brought to court for the offence.

Cultural Events (Funding)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding his Department has provided for *(a)* Ulster Scots and *(b)* Irish cultural (i) groups, (ii) events and (iii) projects in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland. [22761]

Mr. Hanson: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) jointly funds the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish Language Agency. The Ulster-Scots Agency has a statutory remit to promote Ulster-Scots language and culture. Foras na Gaeilge has a statutory remit to promote the Irish language.

The amounts allocated to the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge by DCAL in 2002, 2003 and 2004, which were given to cultural groups, events and projects in Northern Ireland are detailed in the table.

STG

	Foras na Gaeilge (Irish Language Agency) (£)	Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch (Ulster-Scots Agency) (£)
2002[1]	2,862,644	509,208
2003[1]	2,514,262	734,769
2004[1]	2,039,322	962,934

Funding is also available from departmental mainstream programmes for projects which may have an Irish or Ulster-Scots language or culture dimension, which cannot be separated from the primary funding objectives.

Departmental Finance/Genetic Testing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been allocated to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety Research and Development Fund in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement on access to genetic testing for individuals in the Province. [24882]

Mr. Woodward: The amount of funding allocated to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Research and Development Fund in each of the last five financial years was as follows:

£000

	Allocation
2000-01	8,765
2001-02	8,621
2002-03	8,640
2003-04	10,582
2004-05	11,247

The HPSS Research and Development Office have no dealings nor have funded genetic testing for individuals in the Province in the last five years.

Departmental Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding he expects to be allocated to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety Research and Development Fund in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08. [24907]

Mr. Woodward: No decision has as yet been made with regard to the future funding of Research and Development within the HPSS for 2006–07 and 2007–08. A formal consultation process is currently under way in relation to the recently published Draft Priorities and Budget for Northern Ireland. Final decisions on spending allocations will be made following the end of this consultation period, which closes on 5 December 2005.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23839]

Mr. Hanson: The Director of Resources is the individual responsible for developing and implementing the Department's Skills Development Plan.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's skills development plan. [23865]

Mr. Hanson: I have arranged for a copy of the Northern Ireland office skills development plan to be placed in the Library.

Disability Services

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been allocated to learning disability services in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [25212]

Mr. Woodward: Expenditure on learning disability services in each of the last ten years is as follows:

	£ million
1995-96	58
1996-97	77
1997-98	83
1998-99	89
1999-2000	94

	£ million
2000–01	100
2001–02	115
2002–03	136
2003–04	152

Information for 2004–05 is not yet available.

Doctors' Training

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average expenditure on the training of *(a)* a general practitioner registrar and *(b)* a doctor in the year after completing their general practitioner registrar year was in the Province in 2004–05. [24868]

Mr. Woodward: The average expenditure on the training of a general practitioner registrar in the year 2004–05 was £77,866 and average expenditure for a doctor in the year after completing their general practitioner registrar year was £911.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many doctors have completed general practitioner training in the Province in each of the last five years. [24869]

Mr. Woodward: The total number of doctors who have completed general practice training in the Province in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Number
2005	47
2004	46
2003	41
2002	36
2001	34

Domestic Violence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many domestic violence incidents *(a)* were reported in each constituency and *(b)* led to prosecution through the court system in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [22628]

Mr. Hanson: The PSNI are the sole source of reliable information about domestic violence as they capture recorded crimes with a domestic motivation. The information is therefore only available across PSNI District Command Units and is set out in the table for the year 2004–05.

It is believed however that these figures do not reflect the true level of domestic violence in Northern Ireland. In the Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2003–04, 19 per cent. of female respondents claimed they had been the victims of domestic violence at some time in their lives, while 11 per cent. of male respondents made a similar claim.

Area	Total offences recorded
Antrim	235
Ards	345
Armagh	166
Ballymena	311
Ballymoney	122
Banbridge	200
East Belfast	397
North Belfast	630
South Belfast	325
West Belfast	522
Carrickfergus	152
Castlereagh	187
Coleraine	309
Cookstown	196
Craigavon	556
Down	147
Dungannon South Tyrone	122
Fermanagh	151
Foyle	651
Larne	111
Limivady	204
Lisburn	819
Magherafelt	99
Moyle	52
Newry and Mourne	268
Newtownabbey	395
North Down	294
Omagh	219
Strabane	323
Total	8,508

In relation to *(b)* figures relating to domestic violence incidents that led to prosecution through the court system are not available. Domestic violence is not a category against which crime is recorded and therefore it is not possible to directly attribute offences to the cases outlined above.

Education Action Zones

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will publish the education action zone proposals of each education and library board in Northern Ireland; [23662]

(2) what funding has been allocated to each education action zone in Northern Ireland; [23663]

(3) what progress education and library boards have made in seeking and securing inter-agency support for education action zones. [23664]

(4) what the start date is for education action zones in each education and library board area in Northern Ireland. [23667]

Angela E. Smith: The purpose of education action zones (EAZs) was to help schools in specific designated areas become a community resource providing facilities, services and support both in and beyond education. Some £2 million per annum was allocated for EAZs but to date only modest funding has been provided to Education and Library Boards to assist them in developing proposals. Inter-agency support was a requirement for EAZ funding and was included in all of the proposals received. No start dates had yet been determined for EAZs. As the hon. Member will have seen from the draft Budget 2005, we are now proposing to extend these benefits to schools right across Northern Ireland, targeted initially at schools in disadvantaged

areas, through the new investment in extended schools, as part of the Children's and Young People's package. We propose to roll education action zones, into this wider initiative. The Budget proposals are, however, still at draft stage, and views on them are welcome.

Education and Library Boards

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations the Department of Education for Northern Ireland has received regarding accounting procedures at the *(a)* Belfast Education and Library Board and *(b)* South Eastern Education and Library Board. [21234]

Angela E. Smith: Accounting and accountability issues are a central item for discussion at the regular accountability reviews held between the Department and each Board. Board members have expressed concern regarding complexities in operating resource accounting, although all public bodies have for some years, been required to account for the public expenditure allocated to them in line with government accounting procedures and the principles and practice of resource accounting.

The report from the Statutory Inquiry into Financial Management and Control in the Belfast and South Eastern Education and Library Boards pointed to the importance of Board members understanding the financial context in which the Boards operate and probing and challenging officers on issues relating to finance and accountability. As part of the process of enabling Board members to fulfil this role, my Department is providing additional training and support to all Board members to complement existing internal induction arrangements and ensure that all Board members understand standards of public accounting and accountability.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cumulative deficit is for each education and library board; and if he will make a statement. [22640]

Angela E. Smith: The cumulative deficit for each education and library board at 31 March 2005 is as follows:

	£ million
Belfast	10.7
North Eastern	[1]—
South Eastern	20.5
Southern	[1]—
Western	[1]—

[1] None.

In common with all public bodies, the five education and library boards are required to live within the allocations voted by Parliament. I have been assured that this will be the case in 2005–06. Plans are also in place to ensure that the two boards in deficit repay the amounts they overspend in previous years.

Energy Efficient Lightbulbs

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of households that have at least one energy efficient light bulb from an energy efficiency advice centre in Northern Ireland. [25711]

Mr. Hanson: Energy efficiency advice centres, now known as the energy saving trust advice centre, distribute energy efficiency light bulbs, provided by Northern Ireland Electricity, at a rate of one per household, largely through promotional events and energy saving road shows. Information on the number distributed in this way since 2003–04 is as follows:

	Number of light bulbs distributed
2003–04	11,170
2004–05	35,600
2005–06	[1]28,000

[1] Some of these have yet to be distributed.

Eye Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on current research he has funded into retinitis pigmentosa. [24883]

Mr. Woodward: There are a total of three research projects currently being sponsored by the DHSS and PS R and D Office on retinitis pigmentosa. These are listed in the following table along with the start dates and a calculated budget figure for the work.

Research title (short version)	*Start date*	*Budget (£)*
Studentship 2002—The identification and characterisation of novel ion channels within the retina	1 October 2002	48,439
Fellowship 2004—The relationship between measurements of retinal thickness using optical coherence tomography and retinal function using multifocal electroretinography in patients with myopia and retinal disorders	13 September 2004	156,145
RRG 11.13 The application of systematic proteomics to characterise the neuroretina and the inherent subsistence factors that maintain its integrity	1 May 2002	170,292

The total amount spent on these projects is £374,876. Summaries of each project are available if required.

Fair Employment

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will meet the Equality Commission to discuss the implications of the maps presented in chapter six of the Commission's publication, Fair Employment in Northern Ireland A Generation On. [24266]

Angela E. Smith: I am aware of the research published by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in

"Fair Employment: A Generation On". I have asked officials to consider the implications of the maps in chapter six of this publication, to discuss this with the Equality Commission and to keep Ministers advised as necessary.

Fireworks

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many permits have been issued to the public for use of fireworks in each of the last three years. [25223]

Mr. Woodward: The number of applications made in each of the last three years is as follows.

	Number of applications
2002	999
2003	1,257
2004	889

Government Projects

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the projects being undertaken by the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety Research and Development Office. [24881]

Mr. Woodward: There are a total of 248 active/successful projects currently being undertaken by the R&D Office. A table listing these, along with the start dates and a calculated budget figure for the work has been placed in the Library.

Grammar Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* state-controlled grammar schools there are in Northern Ireland. [23819]

Angela E. Smith: There are currently 52 voluntary grammar schools and 17 state-controlled grammar schools in Northern Ireland.

Health Scans

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time for *(a)* emergency and *(b)* routine ultrasound scans was in each health trust in the Province in 2004–05. [24857]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for ultrasound scans is not collected centrally

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are awaiting an ultrasound scan in the Province. [24858]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for ultrasound scans is not collected centrally.

Hospital Readmissions

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of patients discharged from hospitals in the Province were readmitted within two months in the last five years. [24922]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available. It is not possible to identify the number of individuals readmitted to Northern Ireland hospitals.

Hospital Travel Cost Scheme

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the qualifying criteria are for patients wishing to access the hospital travel cost scheme (HTCS); what financial provision is available under the scheme; and what the level of uptake of the HTCS has been in each of the four health board areas in each of the past three years. [23386]

Mr. Woodward: Information on entitlement to hospital travel costs is contained in part 2 of the Travelling Expenses and Remission of Charges Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, which are available on the website www.opsi.gov.uk.

The financial provision available under the scheme is governed by the regulations, which state:

"(5) The amount of any HS travel expenses to which a person is entitled under these Regulations

(a) must be calculated by reference to the cost of travelling by the cheapest means of transport which is reasonable having regard to the person's age, medical condition and any other relevant circumstances; and

(b) where travel is by private car, may include a mileage allowance and car parking expenses."

The level of uptake in monetary terms is included in the following table. It should be noted that the figures for 2002–03 are incomplete.

£

	2002–03[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
NHSSB	81,219.00	89,508.00	88,128.00
SHSSB	55,285.60	59,965.98	60,291.78
EHSSB	349,539.02	554,004.54	626,648.07
WHSSB	173,625.00	196,313.00	207,368.00
Total	659,668.62	899,791.52	982,435.85

[1] Due to a change in computer systems Foyle, Newry and Mourne, Homefirst, South and East Belfast, the Royal Group of Hospitals and Down Lisburn Trusts were not able to provide figures for the year 2002–03.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many infections were acquired *(a)* in hospitals and *(b)* elsewhere within the health service in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [24921]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in the format requested. Current surveillance cannot differentiate between infections that were acquired in hospitals or those that were acquired elsewhere.

Housing Associations

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the average length of time taken to process planning applications for housing associations in Northern Ireland was in each year since 2001; [24064]

(2) how many applications for planning have been made by housing associations in Northern Ireland in each year since 1999; what the average approval time

was; what the average validation time was; and what the annual percentage change in planning fees was. [24065]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is included in the following tables.

Table 1: Number of planning applications from housing associations between 2000 and 2005 with average processing and validation times

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of applications	97	85	81	80	110	81
Average processing times in weeks	23.3	22.7	28.8	28	27.4	29.1
Average processing times to approval in weeks	23.3	22.7	28.8	27.2	27.1	27.7
Average validation times in weeks	2.2	3	2.5	2	3.4	2.7

Notes:

1. It is only possible to provide accurate data for the last five years, as all the information for 1999 is not held electronically by the planning service. It would be possible to extract the information for 1999 but at a disproportionate cost as it would involve a manual examination of approximately 22,182 files.
2. It should be noted that it is not always explicit that an application is on behalf of a housing association as applications may be submitted by an agent without reference to the association on the application forms.

Table 2: Percentage increase in planning fees between 1999 and 2005

	Percentage increase in planning fees
1999	0
2000	0
2001	3
2002	0
2003	14
2004	10
2005	12

Knockmore Link Road

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Roads Service plans to proceed with the proposed new Knockmore Link Road in Lisburn. [25496]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Jeffrey M. Donaldson, dated 7 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what plans Roads Service has to proceed with the proposed new Knockmore Link Road in Lisburn. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service has identified the Knockmore Link scheme within the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015, which was published in November 2004. The scheme, which would provide access to the West Lisburn site as a major employment location, is also included in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP).

Roads Service has no current proposals for the implementation of this scheme and therefore it has not been included in any forward planning programmes. This non-strategic road scheme will be subject to the Area Plan Inquiry which is scheduled for 2006. As stated in the Draft BMAP 2015, developers will be responsible for either full or substantial part funding for the scheme. Therefore, delivery of the scheme will be dependent on developer proposals following the outcome of the Area Plan Inquiry.

I hope this information is helpful.

Lagan Valley Hospital

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Department of Health, social services and public safety has to provide capital funding for improvement works at Lagan Valley hospital. [25033]

Mr. Woodward: The Department received a business case from Down Lisburn Trust dated 9 June for the re-development of Lagan Valley site at an estimated capital cost of £62 million. The Department has since been working with the Trust to develop these plans. In the meantime the Department has recently approved £350,000 capital funding for the upgrading of sterile services at the hospital and is considering further interim proposals which include additional theatre accommodation.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23413]

Mr. Hanson: The Knowledge 'skills for life' programme is a key part of the Northern Ireland Office learning programme. It forms a part of a 'ladder for development' to Modern Apprenticeships and all other training development opportunities offered by the Department. The programme is open to all NIO staff, although it is not expected that those currently holding a GCSE in English and/or maths would typically require this type of support. The programme is promoted during the Induction programme and by means of information flyers. Literacy and numeracy training is also embedded in the Department's general course training programme.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23418]

Mr. Hanson: Since 2002, one member of staff in the Northern Ireland Office has requested training to improve their literacy skills. The applicant was interviewed to assess their training requirement and an appropriate course was identified with a local College. On-going support is being provided to the student throughout the duration of the course. No one has sought assistance with numeracy skills although basic figure work would be included as part of the Department's financial training courses.

Manufacturing Employment

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were employed in the manufacturing sector in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [25150]

Angela E. Smith: Estimates of the number of employee jobs below Northern Ireland level are only available from the Census of Employment on a biennial basis and the most up-to-date figures relate to September 2003. The estimates of employee jobs in the manufacturing sector for the period September 1995 to September 2003 for each parliamentary constituency area within Northern Ireland can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of employee jobs in the manufacturing sector at September 1995, September 1997, September 1999, September 2001 and September 2003 for each parliamentary constituency area

Parliamentary constituency area	*September 1995*	*September 1997*	*September 1999*	*September 2001*	*September 2003*
Belfast East	10,259	9,689	9,506	9,537	7,600
Belfast North	5,209	5,228	4,617	4,377	3,712
Belfast South	3,556	3,279	2,767	2,819	2,557
Belfast West	2,085	2,546	2,785	2,801	2,466
East Antrim	4,690	5,085	4,925	4,883	3,646
East Londonderry	5,446	5,748	5,964	5,276	4,905
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	6,424	7,304	7,541	7,103	7,083
Foyle	8,703	9,015	7,987	6,640	5,765
Lagan Valley	5,755	6,040	6,488	7,322	6,664
Mid-Ulster	5,299	5,682	6,052	6,418	6,876
Newry and Armagh	3,853	4,163	4,075	3,958	4,041
North Antrim	7,699	8,151	8,160	7,201	7,205
North Down	2,872	3,073	2,809	2,399	1,995
South Antrim	6,259	6,706	6,591	6,505	6,218
South Down	3,246	3,496	3,551	3,268	3,408
Strangford	5,343	5,243	4,916	4,624	4,200
Upper Bann	12,604	12,583	12,193	10,494	9,490
West Tyrone	4,666	4,893	4,883	4,561	4,053
Northern Ireland	103,968	107,924	105,810	100,186	91,884

Source:
Census of Employment, DETI

Medical Negligence

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been paid out due to medical negligence in each health board in each of the last 10 years. [25149]

Mr. Woodward: Amounts paid in settlement of clinical negligence claims in relation to the previous four years is detailed in the following table:

£000

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
EHSSB	2,527	3,845	6,395	3,266
NHSSB	1,775	5,633	1,026	3,590
SHSSB	629	962	5,638	3,845
WHSSB	2,484	3,112	2,135	1,020
Total	7,415	13,552	15,194	11,721

The information relating to the previous six years is not readily available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The amount paid in any one year in respect of clinical negligence can vary considerably due to the uncertain timing of the settlement of cases.

Mobile Classrooms

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schools in each education board in Northern Ireland make use of temporary mobile classroom accommodation; and what the timetable is for the replacement of this accommodation in each board. [24155]

Angela E. Smith: The number of schools using temporary accommodation was 694 at 31 March 2005. The following table details the number of schools by board area.

Board area	*Number of schools with temporary classrooms*
Belfast	58
Western	154
North Eastern	165
South Eastern	121
Southern	196
Total	694

Temporary classrooms are removed through a combination of major capital schemes and the Strategic Investment Programme (formerly Reinvestment and Reform initiative) which provides funding specifically to remove temporary classrooms. As a result of the increase in capital funding for major works in recent years around 700 temporary classrooms will be removed from 80 schools as these schemes come to fruition over the next few years. The programme of capital investment is planned to continue over the coming years and it is expected that this will remove further temporary classrooms from the estate. There is no timetable for the removal of all temporary accommodation as temporary classrooms can provide an appropriate solution to meet immediate accommodation needs.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the

impact of prescription price reductions for multiple sclerosis disease modifying treatments (DMTs) since 2002; what change there has been in *(a)* the cost per person in each year, *(b)* the numbers of multiple sclerosis patients receiving DMTs in each board area in each year, *(c)* the waiting lists and waiting times for DMTs in each board area in each year and *(d)* the expenditure by each board on DMTs in each year; and if he will make a statement. [23362]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Since 2002, disease modifying therapies for people with multiple sclerosis have been provided under a UK-wide risk sharing scheme agreed between the UK health departments and the product manufacturers. Costs vary according to which drug a patient is prescribed. The cost per patient per year of the drugs being supplied to the health service for the purposes of the scheme are:

£

	Cost per patient per year
Avonex	8,502
Betaferon	7,259
Copaxone	5,823
Rebif	
Lower dose	7,513
Higher dose	8,942

These costs have remained unchanged since 2002.

(b) The number of patients receiving disease modifying treatments in each board area in each year for which information is available is shown in the following. These figures include patients on break from treatment.

	30 April 2003[1]	*30 April 2004*[1]	*30 April 2005*	*30 September 2005*
Eastern	171	200	220	219
Northern	123	159	176	179
Southern	72	100	104	103
Western	76	74	73	75
Total	442	533	573	576

[1] Information on DMTs was not collected by the Department on a regular basis prior to May 2004; these earlier figures have been provided by Royal Group of Hospitals Trust.

(c) Information on the number of patients waiting for treatment in each board area in each year for which information is available is shown in the following table. Comparable information on waiting lists for disease modifying treatment was not collected on a regular basis prior to September 2004.

	30 September 2004	*31 March 2005*	*30 September 2005*
Eastern	10	30	56
Northern	33	34	56
Southern	11	7	16
Western	16	16	19
Total	70	87	147

Notes:
1. Patients currently suspended from the waiting list are excluded from these figures.
2. Information is not available on waiting times.

(d) The boards have advised that expenditure on DMTs in each year was as shown in the following table.

£

	Eastern	*Northern*	*Southern*	*Western*[1]
2002–03	1,435,745	993,850	558,862	438,132
2003–04	1,544,745	1,150,891	714,420	439,930
2004–05	1,637,315	1,260,089	796,111	565,149

[1] Excludes healthcare at home costs

The Department will continue to seek to improve access to specialist medicines, which offer the potential for significant improvement in patient care. This year, an estimated £4.7 million will be spent on providing disease-modifying therapies for people with multiple sclerosis.

NHS Complaints

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been made against each health trust in the Province in each of the last five years. [24859]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

	2000-01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Newry and Mourne	118	158	112	141	150
N. and W. Belfast	156	130	150	110	143
Homefirst	88	148	185	286	327
Belfast City Hospital	196	163	110	195	153
Down Lisburn	303	274	289	282	299
Royal Group	590	657	490	415	623
Causeway	305	420	506	455	456
Craigavon Area Group	210	225	193	168	220
Armagh and Dungannon	103	86	85	77	69
S. and E. Belfast	250	205	270	284	252
Ulster Comm. and Hospital	515	400	360	382	294
Altnagelvin Hospitals	173	234	200	229	213
Foyle	54	70	55	78	71
Sperrin Lakeland	93	82	96	54	64
Mater	113	119	136	92	98
Greenpark	281	188	132	144	203
Craigavon and Banbridge	97	106	82	90	128

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
United Hospitals	243	191	262	275	310
NIAS	148	168	157	181	144
Total	4036	4024	3870	3938	4217

NHS Outsourcing

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost to each health board in Northern Ireland of contracting procedures out to the private sector has been in each of the last five years. [25225]

Mr. Woodward: The cost of procedures purchased by each health board from the private sector in each of the last five years is as follows:

Cost (£)

Board	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
EHSSB	410,000	1,344,000	2,056,000	1,428,000	1,790,000
NHSSB	[1]n/a	751,765	1,541,423	3,102,800	2,529,301
SHSSB	398,648	429,000	891,784	1,779,502	917,906
WHSSB	780,000	[2]1,513,000	2,106,000	4,324,000	3,807,000
Total	1,588,648	4,037,765	6,595,207	10,634,302	9,044,207

[1] Figures for Northern Board are not available for 2000–01
[2] figure includes MRJ scans

The information provided in the table relates to transfers to and from a number of different hospitals over the five years.

NHS Sickness Absence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees of health trusts in the Province are on sick leave, broken down by profession. [24901]

Mr. Woodward: The number of employees who were on sick leave on 30 September 2005 is set out in the following table:

Staff group	Number of employees on sick leave
Administrative and clerical	549
Works and maintenance	37
Ancillary and general	876
Nursing and midwifery	1,415
Social work staff	333
Professional and technical	240
Medical and dental	50
NI Ambulance Service[1]	[1]83.59

[1] The NI Ambulance Service HSS Trust was only able to provide information in whole time equivalent due to the shift patterns worked by employees. Their figure includes employees in the ambulance, administrative and clerical, ancillary and general and medical staff groups.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the costs resulting from sick leave among NHS employees in the Province in 2004–05. [24902]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not held centrally.

Nurses

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many overseas nurses are employed by each health trust in the Province. [24903]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Nurses from overseas employed by health trust as at 1 November 2005

Trust	Headcount	Whole-time equivalent
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	30	30.00
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.00
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	100	100.00
Causeway HSS Trust	12	12.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	2	2.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	40	38.94
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	51	51.00
Foyle Community HSS Trust	4	4.00
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	57	56.88
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	55	55.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	51	51.00
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	12	12.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	218	218.00
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	25	24.84
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	107	107.00
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	95	95.00
Total	859	857.66

Source:
NI Health Trusts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nursing vacancies there are in each health trust in the Province. [24904]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Number of current vacancies for nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff at each health trust as at 31 March 2005

	Qualified nursing staff[1]		Unqualified nursing staff	
Trust	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	38	37.32	12	11.40
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	16	15.03	5	5.00
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	116	114.19	10	9.20
Causeway HSS Trust	10	9.50	1	1.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	9	6.45	0	0.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	18	15.78	3	2.53
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	19	18.41	0	0.00
Foyle Community HSS Trust	15	14.00	4	4.00
Green Park Healthcare HSS Trust	50	45.24	13	7.97

Number of current vacancies for nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff at each health trust as at 31 March 2005

Trust	Qualified nursing staff[1]		Unqualified nursing staff	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	27	25.43	0	0.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	44	42.95	22	20.67
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	2	2.00	0	0.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	47	41.97	4	2.53
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	137	116.84	34	26.90
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	30	29.33	0	0.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	12	12.00	1	0.80
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	30	27.15	3	1.00
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	20	18.47	12	9.26
Other Agencies and Board Headquarters	2	1.80	0	0.00
Total	642	593.86	124	102.26

[1] Qualified nursing staff include midwives, health visitors and district nurses.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts and Organisations

Number of long-term vacancies for nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff at each health trust as at 31 March 2005

Trust	Qualified nursing staff[1]		Unqualified nursing staff	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	38	37.32	12	11.4
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	6	6.00	0	0.00
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	108	106.19	10	9.20
Causeway HSS Trust	2	2.00	0	0.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	3	2.84	0	0.00
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	7	6.41	0	0.00
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
Green Park Healthcare HSS Trust	32	32.00	0	0.00
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	11	10.50	0	0.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	20	20.00	0	0.00
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	41	37.17	3	2.00
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	14	13.33	0	0.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other Agencies and Board Headquarters	1	0.80	0	0.00
Total	283	274.56	25	22.60

[1] Qualified nursing staff include midwives, health visitors and district nurses.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts and Organisations

Ombudsmen (Police Complaints)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints he has received from police officers regarding *(a)* actions by officers from the Ombudsman's Office and *(b)* investigations carried out by the Police Ombudsman in each of the last five years. [25148]

Mr. Woodward: In light of the Police Ombudsman's independent status, the NIO does not receive and handle complaints made against the Police Ombudsman's Office, except on the very narrow ground of maladministration in the Ombudsman's administrative processes. A complaint about the Ombudsman's handling of an investigation, or its outcome should be pursued through the Ombudsman's own internal complaints mechanism.

Records of complaints of alleged administrative maladministration are available from January 2005. Since then, three such complaints have been received from police officers.

Orthopaedic Surgeons

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultant orthopaedic surgeons there are in Northern Ireland. [24152]

Mr. Woodward: Information is only available for those consultant orthopaedic surgeons working within the Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services workforce. This information is provided in the table.

Number of consultant orthopaedic surgeons employed within the NI HPSS by trust as at 31 October 2005

Trust	Headcount	Whole-time equivalent
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	7	6.91
Green Park Healthcare HSS Trust	16	13.87
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	11	10.00
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	5	5.00
Total	39	35.78

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts

Paramilitary Violence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary *(a)* shootings and *(b)* assaults have been recorded by each Police District Command Unit in the Province in each of the last seven years. [24897]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows.

(a) Casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings

DCU	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005[1]	Total
Antrim	1	1	1	2	2	5	0	12
Ards	0	1	4	8	12	14	12	51
Armagh	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	5
Banbridge	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
East Belfast	5	9	7	12	17	14	12	76
North Belfast	20	35	48	41	30	26	14	214
South Belfast	2	11	16	9	8	3	0	49
West Belfast	10	15	30	16	29	6	3	109
Ballymena	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Ballymoney	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Carrickfergus	3	2	7	12	6	2	0	32
Coleraine	0	2	0	5	4	2	0	13
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Craigavon	2	1	3	3	2	1	1	13
Castlereagh	3	0	3	6	3	10	6	31
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	10
Down	1	3	2	2	2	1	0	11
Fermanagh	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Foyle	2	0	2	3	3	3	1	14
Larne	1	1	2	4	0	2	0	10
Limavady	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lisburn	3	10	12	12	7	2	0	46
Magherafelt	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newtownabbey	9	29	26	28	18	10	9	129
North Down	1	3	13	2	2	5	3	29
Newry and Mourne	1	6	3	4	2	1	0	17
Omagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strabane	3	2	2	1	4	3	2	17
Total	73	136	186	173	156	112	65	901

(b) Casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults

DCU	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005[1]	Total
Antrim	6	5	2	1	4	3	5	26
Ards	8	4	12	9	8	7	5	53
Armagh	0	4	5	2	1	2	1	15
Banbridge	0	2	2	0	3	2	0	9
East Belfast	4	6	9	9	8	4	1	41
North Belfast	10	15	9	11	22	16	12	95
South Belfast	4	9	4	9	6	7	6	45
West Belfast	12	15	13	16	16	6	4	82
Ballymena	1	2	7	2	0	0	0	12
Ballymoney	3	0	3	3	6	0	1	16
Carrickfergus	5	7	8	13	7	3	7	50
Coleraine	2	0	0	3	1	5	2	13
Cookstown	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Craigavon	4	2	2	0	2	3	3	16
Castlereagh	2	2	3	7	6	7	4	31
Dungannon and South Tyrone	2	0	0	2	1	5	2	12
Down	2	4	7	3	3	5	1	25
Fermanagh	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Foyle	17	17	8	4	7	6	7	66
Larne	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	5
Limavady	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4
Lisburn	11	11	16	10	12	4	3	67
Magherafelt	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Moyle	2	1	0	2	2	1	1	9
Newtownabbey	20	18	18	14	12	13	5	100

(b) Casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults

DCU	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005[1]	Total
North Down	7	3	6	4	10	7	2	39
Newry and Mourne	4	1	3	6	6	2	4	26
Omagh	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Strabane	3	3	7	4	2	7	1	27
Total	134	132	146	139	149	115	77	892

[1] To 30 September.

Note:

2005 statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Pedestrian Crossings

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the assessment procedures and criteria are for new pedestrian crossings in Northern Ireland; whether he plans to review them; and if he will make a statement; [24487]

(2) in what locations pedestrian crossings have been requested in each roads service division in the past five years; where they have been provided; and where there are plans for new crossings; [24488]

(3) how much his Department spent on pedestrian crossings in the last five years in each roads service division; what the budgeted expenditure is for 2005–06; and what the planned expenditure is in each of the next five years. [24489]

Mr. Woodward: I have asked the Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to these questions. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

Pension Books

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pension books were issued in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [24153]

Mr. Hanson: In April 2003, Direct Payment became the normal method of payment for social security benefits. Pension order books were phased out in March 2005 and none have been issued since then.

The number of pension order books issued in Northern Ireland in the last five years is shown in the table as follows.

	Number of pension order books
2000	455,500
2001	448,433
2002	437,155
2003	383,917
2004	167,882

Pensioners

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the pensioner population is in each Westminster constituency in Northern Ireland. [24150]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the official estimate of the population of Northern Ireland of pensionable age (65 and over for males, and 60 and over for females), at 30 June 2004 by parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland mid-year population of pensionable age, by parliamentary constituency, 2004

Parliamentary constituency	Population of pensionable age
Belfast East	17,100
Belfast North	16,400
Belfast South	15,100
Belfast West	12,400
East Antrim	14,300
East Londonderry	14,400
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	15,300
Foyle	13,300
Lagan Valley	16,600
Mid Ulster	12,300
Newry and Armagh	15,200
North Antrim	18,400
North Down	17,400
South Antrim	15,300
South Down	16,100
Strangford	16,800
Upper Bann	16,300
West Tyrone	12,500

PFI Hospitals

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what hospital projects have been built in Northern Ireland using private finance initiative schemes in each year since 2001; and where each is located. [25781]

Mr. Woodward: No hospital projects have been built in Northern Ireland using private finance initiative schemes since 2001. However, one construction project has reached financial completion in 2005, and building work has commenced. This project is for a services centre involving new pathology, pharmacy and changing rooms in Altnagelvin hospitals HSS Trust.

Planning Applications

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications were determined by the Planning Appeals Commission in each year since 1999; and how many of these determinations were in favour of the applicant in each local government council in Northern Ireland. [22808]

Angela E. Smith: The Planning Appeals Commission is a tribunal non-departmental public body, and the chief commissioner has written to the hon. Gentleman. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library.

Police Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police cells are in use in each district command unit in Northern Ireland. [25166]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides details of cell provision in designated custody suites across the district command units and the serious crime suite at Antrim. The figures include cells suitable for juvenile detention.

Cells available in each designated custody suite

DCU area	Location	Designated custody suite	Number of available cells
Urban region			
1. Antrim	Antrim DCU	PACE	10
		Serious Crime	10
2. Ards	Newtownards DCU	PACE	6
3. Belfast East DCU	Strandtown DCU	PACE	6
4. Belfast North DCU	Antrim Road DCU	PACE	11
5. Belfast South DCU	Musgrave St. DCU	PACE	13
6. Belfast West DCU	Grosvenor Road DCU	PACE	8
7. Lisburn	Lisburn DCU	PACE	8
Rural region			
8. Armagh	Armagh DCU	PACE	4
9. Ballymena	Ballymena DCU	PACE	4
10. Banbridge	Banbridge DCU	PACE	6
11. Coleraine	Coleraine DCU	PACE	10
12. Cookstown	Cookstown DCU	PACE	2
13. Craigavon	Lurgan DCU	PACE	6
14. Down	Downpatrick DCU	PACE	4
15. Dungannon	Dungannon DCU	PACE	5
16. Fermanagh	Enniskillen DCU	PACE	8
17. Foyle	Strand Road DCU	PACE	9
18.	Waterside Sector Station	PACE	3
19. Limavady	Limavady DCU	PACE	5
20. Omagh	Omagh DCU	PACE	5
21. Strabane	Strabane DCU	PACE	6
Total cell availability			149

Prisons

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners sentenced in courts in Northern Ireland are serving their sentence at prisons in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales. [24157]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently six prisoners sentenced in courts in Northern Ireland who are serving their sentences in English prisons. There are no such prisoners in Scottish or Welsh prisons.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* representations and *(b)* complaints have been made by members of the public to the Prison Service in Northern Ireland in the last two years regarding the location of the prison at Magilligan, County Londonderry. [24776]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Prison Service have record of only once instance where a member of the public made representation, via electronic mail in September 2005, regarding the location of Magilligan Prison. It is known that a number of families of prisoners would favour a location nearer to major centres of population.

However the Service is aware of the interest in the issue, and is fully engaged with staff on the subject. Magilligan Prison has a positive relationship with the local community and the Director General of the Prison Service recently attended a meeting of Limavady Borough Council's Economic Development Committee at which a range of views were expressed. No firm decision has yet been taken on the prison's future location.

Restorative Justice

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many restorative justice schemes have been introduced in Northern Ireland under the terms of Part IV of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. [23675]

Mr. Hanson: Youth conferences as described in Part IV of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 are being rolled out in Northern Ireland as one scheme, managed by the Youth Conference Service, which is part of the Youth Justice Agency.

Road Accidents

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many road traffic collisions involving stolen vehicles there have been in each of the last five years; and how many were *(a)* fatal collisions, *(b)* serious collisions and *(c)* slight collisions in each year. [25154]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

	Fatal collision	Serious collision	Slight collision	Total
2000	4	45	228	277
2001	6	50	231	287
2002	5	29	192	226
2003	7	25	133	165
2004	2	18	80	100
Total	24	167	864	1,055

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many road traffic collisions involving hit and run vehicles there have been in each of the last five years; and how many were *(a)* fatal collisions, *(b)* serious collisions and *(c)* slight collisions in each year. [25155]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of injury road traffic collisions where a hit and run vehicle was involved: 2000–04

	Fatal collision	Serious collision	Slight collision	Total
2000	4	98	734	836
2001	4	83	738	825
2002	6	103	659	768
2003	3	75	626	704
2004	5	60	489	554
Total	22	419	3,246	3,687

Road Traffic Offences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the Answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 114W, on road traffic offences, what 'intelligence led basis' means in this context; and how the operational command units choose the roads which they police. [24179]

Mr. Woodward: This is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, who will write to the hon. Gentleman. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

School Transport

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much he has allocated for school transport in Northern Ireland for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [24177]

Angela E. Smith: Funding for home to school transport is provided by each Education and Library Board out of its overall budget for support services to schools, and is subject to the approval of the Department. The Revised Resource Allocation Plans provided by the boards show that they expect to spend approximately £65 million on home to school transport in 2005–06. Allocations to boards for 2006–07 have yet to be determined and will be subject to the outcome of Budget 2005.

Schools (Viability Criteria)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used in assessing the viability of schools in terms of pupil numbers; and whether the same criteria are applied across all educational sectors in Northern Ireland. [22328]

Angela E. Smith: The pupil viability criterion for new primary schools seeking recognition for grant-aid purposes is a minimum first year intake of 15 pupils in Belfast and Londonderry and 12 pupils elsewhere. The pupil viability criterion for new post-primary schools seeking recognition for grant-aid purposes is a minimum year eight intake of 50 pupils.

To qualify for capital funding, primary schools must achieve a minimum first year intake of 20 pupils in Belfast and Londonderry and 15 pupils elsewhere for three years. Post-primary schools must achieve minimum year eight intakes of 50 pupils for three years.

These criteria apply to all proposals for new schools and to all educational sectors. Pupil numbers Are not the sole criteria considered by the Department of Education in approving funding for a new school.

There are no minimum viability numbers set for existing schools. However, the department has considered it appropriate to review the position of a primary school if its enrolment is below 60 pupils and a post-primary school if its enrolment is below 300 pupils. The department is currently reviewing the viability criteria for schools.

Sexual Equality

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken in Northern Ireland to promote sexual equality in the workplace in relation to terms and conditions of employment, particularly in relation to pay and opportunities for promotion. [22803]

Angela E. Smith: There is a robust framework of sex equality legislation in place in Northern Ireland which prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex in terms and conditions of employment, including promotion and equal pay between men and women.

A range of employment rights is also in place for working parents, such as extended paid maternity leave and the right to request flexible working for parents of young children or disabled children under 18.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has a duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and provides advice and assistance in relation to employment issues. The Commission, in partnership with Opportunity Now Northern Ireland, facilitates the Equal Pay Forum, made up of employers and trade union officials, which raises awareness and promotes best practice on equal pay issues.

Smoking-related Deaths

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many smoking-related deaths there were in Northern Ireland in the last four years; and how many people he estimates smoked regularly in each age group in each of the last four years. [22812]

Angela E. Smith: Smoking history is rarely recorded on death certificates. Estimates can however be made of the number of deaths attributable to smoking, by using information on the contribution that smoking makes to specific conditions recorded at death. The Health Development Agency[1] published the most recent estimates for Northern Ireland in 2004. This report estimated that over the period 1998–2002, an average of 2,300 deaths were caused by smoking each year in Northern Ireland.

The most recent survey estimates of the percentage of the population of Northern Ireland who smoke are given in the following table.

[1] Twigg, L., Moon, G., and Walker, S. The smoking epidemic in England, Health Development Agency, 2004 (http://www.publichealth.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=502811).

Table: Prevalence of smoking by age in Northern Ireland, 2002-03 and 2004-05

Percentage

Age group	*Financial year* 2002-03	2004-05
16–24	32	29
25–34	32	55
35–44	27	32
45–64	26	26
65 +	14	12
All adults aged 16 +	26	26

Source:
Continuous Household Survey

Sports Council

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of Sports Council funding for minority sports in Northern Ireland in 2005–06. [24847]

Mr. Hanson: The Sports Council for Northern Ireland is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding to sport. The Sports Council does not use or recognise the term "minority sports" in deciding funding levels. Figures on Sports Council funding levels to sport in Northern Ireland in 2005–06 are not yet available.

Staff Assaults

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what costs were incurred by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety resulting from attacks on ambulance crews and their vehicles in the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [22636]

Mr. Woodward: The costs incurred by the Northern Ireland ambulance service resulting from attacks on ambulance crews and their vehicles in the last three years are not readily identifiable. The trust is currently developing a method of accurately capturing these costs.

While the number of attacks has reduced in the last three years, attacks on front-line ambulance staff and their equipment not only endangers them, but also reduces their ability to deliver vital services which could ultimately result in putting the lives of patients lives needlessly at risk.

Teachers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to increase the number of students taking up teacher training programmes. [24178]

Angela E. Smith: The level of intakes to teacher education courses is determined annually by the Department of Education, with the aim of maintaining a reasonable match between the numbers being trained and the projected numbers of teaching vacancies. Pupil numbers are on the decline and the anticipated number of teachers required annually reflects that trend. Student intakes are therefore being reduced accordingly.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to publish a report on the work of the Teachers' Health and Well-Being Strategy Group; and if he will make a statement. [25047]

Angela E. Smith: I have been informed that the chair of the Teachers' Health and Well-being Strategy Group expects to reconvene the group in mid-November when a revised draft of the strategy document will be tabled. The report will then be presented to management side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee, who the group reports to, before being placed on the agenda for formal discussion at the Teachers' Negotiating Committee. Until these procedures are complete I am unable to specify a particular date for publication.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who has been consulted during the consultation process being carried out by the Teachers' Health and Well-Being Strategy Group; and when he expects to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation. [25048]

Angela E. Smith: There has not been a formal consultation process at this stage.

The Teachers' Health and Well-being Strategy Group was established by, and reports to, the management side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee and it is the management side who will decide on any consultation process when they receive the report from the strategy group.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestant and *(b)* Catholic teachers are employed in (i) the state controlled sector, (ii) the Catholic maintained sector and the (iii) integrated sector; and if he will make a statement. [25162]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education in Northern Ireland does not hold statistical information on the religious breakdown of teachers, nor is it aware of any bodies that do.

Terrorism Act

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suspected Irish terrorists have been held for more than seven days under Schedule 8 of the Terrorism Act 2000. [24138]

Mr. Woodward: Section 306 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, extends the maximum period of detention permitted under Schedule 8 of the Terrorism Act 2000 from seven to 14 days. PSNI advises that no persons have been detained for more than seven days under this legislation.

Unauthorised Encampments Order

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to enable the Unauthorised Encampments (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 in Northern Ireland. [24142]

Mr. Hanson: During the debate into the legislation, I indicated that I intended to defer bringing the substantive provisions of the order into effect until I am satisfied that an adequate number of transit sites are operational in Northern Ireland. I anticipate that five sites will be operational in 2006, I am reviewing the situation with the Housing Executive with a view to enabling the necessary provisions as soon as possible once the sites are operational.

Victim Groups (Funding)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been allocated for victim groups in Northern Ireland in the past five years, broken down by *(a)* Westminster parliamentary constituency and *(b)* district council area. [17532]

Angela E. Smith: Records show that funding detailed in the following tables has been allocated to organisations involved in providing support for victims between April 1998 and March 2005. A year by year breakdown of these figures is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In addition to the amounts shown, victims' groups may also apply for funding from any programme or scheme, such as the District Council Community Relations Programme or European Union funding through the Local Strategy Partnerships, for which they can satisfy the relevant eligibility criteria.

The funding has been attributed to the relevant parliamentary constituency and local district council area according to headquarters address of the group or organisation concerned. The group or organisation in some instances will provide services on a wider geographic area.

(a) Westminster parliamentary constituency

	£
East Antrim	180,610
North Antrim	235,785
South Antrim	0
Belfast East	186,710
Belfast North	7,105,379
Belfast South	8,699,038
Belfast West	4,116,819
North Down	363,647
South Down	115,118
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,229,496
Foyle	2,340,406
Lagan Valley	699,965
East Londonderry	194,704
Newry and Armagh	1,676,222
Strangford	6,180
West Tyrone	3,227,466
Mid Ulster	12,325
Upper Bann	769,471

(b) District council area

	£
Antrim	0
Ards	99,508
Armagh	1,497,073
Ballymena	0
Ballymoney	80,627
Banbridge	216,006
Belfast City	20,012,116
Carrickfergus	180,610
Castlereagh	129,594
Coleraine	194,704
Cookstown	8,225
Craigavon	770,371
Derry City	2,340,406
Down	1,790
Dungannon	230,066
Fermanagh	1,069,430
Larne	0
Limavady	0
Lisburn	821,359
Magherafelt	3,000
Moyle	0
Newry and Mourne	326,790
Newtownabbey	0
North Down	20,000
Omagh	2,129,304
Strabane	1,098,162

Note:
The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (formerly Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust) also received £1,123,324 through the EU Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace I), which supported victims of violence. The Foundation allocated these funds in support of a number of projects for both ex-offenders and victims. Persons from these groups could benefit from the same project and it is not possible to disaggregate the assistance between the two groups.

Victims Commissioner

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what budget is planned for the Office of the Commissioner for Victims; how many staff are expected to be employed in that office; and when the office will open. [25161]

Angela E. Smith: The recently appointed Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors, Mrs. Bertha McDougall, is due to take up post with effect from 5 December 2005. Her office will be operational from that date. Sufficient resources will be made available to enable the Interim Commissioner to carry out her duties and it is anticipated at this stage that she will have a staff of four to assist her.

Young Offender Institutions

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many young offenders institutions there are in Northern Ireland; how many offenders are in each; and what the capacity is of each. [24158]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Prison Service has one Young Offenders Centre located at Hydebank Wood, Belfast.

The centre can currently accommodate up to 244 males in single cell accommodation. At 4 November it housed 196 young offenders.

Youth Conferences

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the places where youth conferences of the kind set out in the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 have been piloted in Northern Ireland since December 2003, broken down by police district command unit. [23676]

Mr. Hanson: Youth conferences of the kind set out in the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 have been rolled out to the following court divisions:

County court division	*Date commenced*	*PSNI district command unit*
Belfast	18 December 2003	West Belfast South Belfast East Belfast North Belfast Carrickfergus Newtownabbey
Fermanagh and Tyrone	5 April 2004	Fermanagh Strabane Dungannon and South Tyrone Cookstown Omagh
Armagh and South Down	6 June 2005	Banbridge Newry and Mourne Armagh

HEALTH

Adult Social Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to publish a White Paper on adult social care. [23112]

Mr. Byrne: We are drawing to the close of a major listening exercise that will feed into a new White Paper covering the health and care that people need in the community. The public consultation exercise is known as "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say: Improving Community Health and Care Services".

The consultation is broad in scope and covers both health and social care because that is what makes sense to people. The White Paper will bring together the outcome from the social care Green Paper, "Independence, Well-being and Choice", with thinking on health services provided in community settings. The consultation is due to close on 4 November and the aim will be to publish a White Paper around the turn of the year.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to receive updated guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on the use of *(a)* donepezil, *(b)* rivastigmine, *(c)* galantigmine and *(d)* memantine for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. [22617]

Jane Kennedy: This is a matter for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Information about NICE'S current work programme is available on its website at www.nice.org.uk.

Ambulance Services (Salisbury)

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on replacing the ambulance station in Salisbury. [23596]

Caroline Flint: It is for the local national health service to decide on how to deliver health services in their local communities which includes decisions on the replacement of local ambulance stations. The hon. Member may wish to approach the chair of Wiltshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust directly.

However, I have been informed by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority, that there are currently no plans to replace Salisbury ambulance station.

Asperger's Syndrome

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will ensure that each child diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome receives immediate referral for assessment in order to gain access to appropriate therapies and social skills training; [16886]

(2) if she will make it her policy that each child diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome should be allocated a key worker or lead nurse immediately following diagnosis. [16887]

Mr. Byrne: The importance of early identification of developmental disorders followed up with prompt early interventions is emphasised in standard eight of the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services. This standard applies to all disabled children and young people and those with complex health needs, including those with Asperger's syndrome. Autism spectrum disorders were the subject of one of the first two exemplars which we published at the same time as the NSF.

The standard sets out clearly that parents of severely disabled children or those with high levels of need require a key worker. The key worker service should be provided in line with the guidance in "Together from the Start" (DH/DfES 2003) and "Care Co-ordination Network UK Key Worker Standards" (Care Co-ordination Network UK, April 2004) and supported by cross-agency senior management commitment. "Key Worker Standards" notes that a successful key worker service is dependent on an agreed referral system and specific guidelines for eligibility for the key worker service. These should be determined according to local need.

Avian Influenza

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to extend the range of high risk groups who currently receive influenza vaccination. [21775]

Caroline Flint: The risk groups who are currently offered seasonal influenza vaccine are based on advice from the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI). The JCVI keeps its advice under regular review.

Breast Screening

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on breast screening performed at age 50 and over on patients living in *(a)* North Yorkshire and *(b)* Essex; and at what (i) age and (ii) frequency such screening is carried out. [22788]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national computerised call/recall system for breast screening was introduced in 1988. Women aged 50 to 64 are invited for free breast screening every three years. Following successful Government funded pilot studies, the programme is being extended to women aged 65 to 70. Women over 70 can request free three yearly screening.

Cancelled/Delayed Treatment

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* cancelled operations and *(b)* delayed transfers of care there have been in Lancashire hospital teaching NHS trust in each of the last seven years. [22724]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested on cancelled operations is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Cancelled operations in Lancashire teaching hospitals national health service foundation trust: 2001–02 to 2005–06

	Number of last minute cancellations for non clinical reasons
2001–02	[1]386
2002–03	389
2003–04	440
2004–05	406
2005–06	[2]123

[1] Due to organisational changes this figure represents Chorley and South Ribble primary care trust only in the first quarter, then Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust and Preston acute hospitals trust in the second, third and fourth quarters of 2001–02.
[2] This figure for 2005–06 represents only those cancelled operations in the first quarter of 2005–06. Data for other quarters is not yet available.
Note:
Data were originally collected by health authority only prior to 2001–02. Trust level data were collected from 2001–02 onwards.
Source:
QMCO

The information requested on delayed transfers of care is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Delayed transfers of care in Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS foundation trust: 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	Delayed transfers of care
1999–2000	[1]17
2000–01	[1]10
2001–02	[1]21
2002–03	17
2003–04	03
2004–05	15

[1] Figures represent Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust and Preston acute hospitals NHS trust. Situation reports (SITREPS) were not collected prior to 1999–2000.
Source:
SITREPS

Cancer

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts are providing cancer patients with velcade. [23006]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the format requested.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether cancer drugs are approved more rapidly if applications are restricted to national use and do not require European approval by the EU's committee for medicinal products for formal marketing approval. [20983]

Jane Kennedy: The time allowed for marketing authorisation of products is specified in European legislation and is the same for all types of drugs and whether approved by national licensing or by the European Commission through the European Medicines Agency's scientific committee for human medicinal products. The maximum time allowed for the evaluation of the company's data for the initial authorisation of a new product is 210 days in both cases. Variations to the initial authorisation, for example to add new uses, have to be evaluated within 90 days in both cases. The national agencies and the European agencies may also accelerate those procedure times where justified for example by urgent unmet medical needs for potentially life-saving drugs.

However, if one considers the needs of all European patients, approval can be faster using the European Union single procedure than a series of separate national approval procedures. That is one of the reasons why many complex new drugs using new biotechnology methods of production must use the European 'single licence' procedure. From November, all new anti-cancer drugs must also use this procedure so that they can be available to all European patients as quickly as possible.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts fund velcade for cancer treatment. [23141]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Information on the number of primary care trusts funding velcade for cancer treatment is not collected centrally.

In July, the Secretary of State announced that velcade would be referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence for early appraisal.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 538W, on carbon monoxide poisoning, what the budget for section 64 grants is in 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [23630]

Caroline Flint: The budget for grants awarded to the voluntary and community sector under the section 64 General Scheme of Grants in 2005–06 is £17.88 million. A list of new and continuing grants is published annually on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/section64.

The section 64 General Scheme of Grants helps to strengthen and further develop the partnership between the Department and the voluntary and community sector. It is the Department's main funding stream for national voluntary organisations working in the health and social care fields.

Care Guidance

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance her Department issues to *(a)* local authority social services and *(b)* NHS organisations concerning the frequency of assessments for (i) social care, (ii) registered nursing contribution and (iii) NHS continuing care; [22268]

(2) when she expects to issue new guidance concerning NHS continuing care; [22316]

(3) if she will place in the Library a summary of the main issues discussed in the electronic discussion forum set up for her Department's work on NHS continuing care. [22318]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is currently working on the production of a national assessment framework for continuing care due for publication in early 2006. This should result in a single set of national eligibility criteria and suitable assessment methodologies for access to national health service continuing care.

Contributions to the electronic discussion forum, set up on the Department's website, in relation to the work on continuing care have not, to date, been significant. For the most part, the forum has attracted particular local queries rather than debate, and no issues have been raised that have not been aired at face-to-face stakeholder events.

In the lead-up to the formal public consultation, we are noting all comments received from stakeholders. This will continue during the consultation period, and the information will be available after completion of this process.

Policy guidance on fair access to care services (FACS) was published on 2 June 2002 under guidance of local authority circular (LAC) (2002)13. The guidance provides councils with an eligibility framework for adult social care for them to use when setting and applying their eligibility criteria. It also covers the timing of reviews.

Detailed guidance on registered nursing care contributions are available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/23/03/04012303.pdf—Health Service Circular HSC 2003/006—"Guidance on NHS Funded Nursing Care".

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/22/04/040122204.pdf—Health Service Circular HSC 2001/17—"Guidance on Free Nursing Care in Nursing Homes".

Following the ombudsman's report on continuing care assessment procedures, new cases are now considered routinely as part of hospital discharge. Detailed guidance on procedures for NHS continuing care are available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/22/80/04012280.pdf—Health Service Circular HSC2 2001/015—"Continuing Care: NHS and Local Councils' responsibilities".

Carers' Grants

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funds have been allocated to fund carers' grants in each of the last five years, broken down by local authority. [23207]

Mr. Byrne: Information showing the funds allocated to councils in the carers' grant in each of the last five years has been placed in the Library.

Choose and Book System

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will set out the criteria used to choose those general practitioners who wish to participate in the pilot choose and book exercise; and if she will make a statement. [22408]

Mr. Byrne: The choose and book programme has concluded its proof of concept pilot phase, which was conducted over 14 primary care and 13 secondary care sites. This was concluded in June 2005. The programme will not be undertaking any more pilots as the system has moved to wider roll out across the national health service.

The choose and book system is now available to all general practitioner practices (GP) in England in either the web based format or fully integrated. Local GPs should contact their local primary care trust's choose and book lead to agree a go live date.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of general practitioner practices are making referrals using the choose and book system. [22121]

Mr. Byrne: As at 27 October 2005, 1,089 general practitioner (GP) practices had gone live with and started to make referrals using the choose and book system. This equates to 13 per cent. of the GP practices in England.

Commission for Social Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to ensure that the Commission for Social Care Inspection has the capacity to analyse trends in the numbers and types of complaints it receives. [22379]

Mr. Byrne: As an independent body, it is up to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), to manage its resources and ensure that it adequately performs all its functions.

To ensure that the CSCI has the resources to carry out its functions, the Department provides funding through grant-in-aid to supplement income generated by the CSCI from its regulatory work. In 2004–05, grant-in-aid from the Department amounted to just under £101 million.

An analysis of trends in the number and types of complaints against regulated services that the CSCI has received can be found in its annual report 2004–05, which is available in the Library.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the Commission for Social Care Inspection to publish its follow-up report on medication in care homes. [22380]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), that the follow-up report on medication in care homes, will be published in February 2006.

The follow-up report will contain information about how care homes score against medication national minimum standards, similar to the original medication report published by the National Care Standards Commission in March 2004.

Publication of the report has been put back from December 2005 to February 2006, so that it can incorporate an analysis of complaints regarding medication issues that the Commission has received about care homes. It will also incorporate the results of a survey of CSCI inspectors on what factors led them to award top or bottom scores for homes against the medication standards.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the Commission for Social Care Inspection to publish its national report on its joint inspection activity. [22381]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that the national report on "Joint inspection of services for older people" will be published in March 2006.

The report covers the inspection work that CSCI, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission have jointly carried out into the way in which the national health service and councils are working together with their partners to meet the needs of older people and improve their lives.

Community Pharmacists

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will ensure that community pharmacists are allocated a guaranteed seat on the commissioning boards of the locality commissioning consortia which are due to be set up as part of the new practice-based commissioning system. [22413]

Mr. Byrne: There is no requirement for commissioning consortia to be established under practice based commissioning. This is a decision for primary care trusts, involving their practices and other primary healthcare professionals as appropriate.

Consultant Physicians

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the results of the 2004 annual consultant physician census carried out by the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK; and if she will make a statement. [21570]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not accept the Royal College of Physician's contention that 78 per cent. of consultant physicians intend to retire early. There is often a distinct difference between the intention expressed when doctors are asked such a question and what actually happens when individual doctors reach the relevant age. The average retirement age for consultants has been relatively steady in recent years at around 63 to 64 years of age.

The Department has developed a range of flexible retirement options, so doctors approaching retirement can adapt their working patterns without affecting pension entitlement. By extending their working lives through flexible retirement, experienced doctors can continue to provide their important services to patients and local communities.

Continuing Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average duration of an episode of NHS continuing care has been in each year since 1997–98; and what the total cost has been of providing NHS continuing care in each year since 1997–98. [23111]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the average duration of a continuing care episode is not held centrally. There is no way to estimate with any precision the average duration of an episode of this type. Durations are likely to vary considerably, ranging from individuals with a life expectancy of just a few days, to those who remain in continuing care for extended periods. Information relating to the total cost of providing continuing care is not held centrally.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the evidential basis is for the statement in her response of 21 July 2005 to the Health Select Committee's report on Continuing Care that the divide between health and social care provision, and the basis on which it is provided, has stood since 1948. [23205]

Mr. Byrne: The distinction is a matter of law. The founding legislation of our health and social care are two separate and distinct Acts of this Parliament in the immediate post-war period; the National Health Service Act, 1946 and the National Assistance Act, 1948. More recent legislation, such as the Health and Social Care Act of 2001, has fostered and promoted co-operation and joint working between health and social care.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what procedures are in place to be followed by *(a)* primary care trust officers and *(b)* social workers to ensure that the NHS carries out a complete fully-funded NHS continuing care assessment where it is required; [21882]

(2) pursuant to the Government's response to the Health Select Committee's report, on NHS continuing care, cm 6650, on what date the template requiring all strategic health authorities to advertise was issued; and what the wording of the template is; [21877]

(3) how many times the NHS has settled cases out of court after solicitors for a patient have served final legal notice that court proceedings to secure free continuing care under R. (Coughlan) *v.* Devon Health Authority are being launched. [21869]

Mr. Byrne: Following the Ombudsman's report on continuing care assessment procedures, eligibility for fully funded national health service continuing care is now considered routinely as part of hospital discharge. Detailed guidance on procedures for NHS continuing care is available on the Departments website at the following addresses:

Continuing Care: NHS and Local Councils' responsibilities is available at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/22/80/04012280.pdf.

Continuing Care (NHS responsibility) Directions 2004 is available at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/46/90/04074690.pdf.

Delayed Discharge (Continuing Care) Directions 2004 is available at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/46/91/04074691.pdf.

Strategic health authority (SHA) continuing care leads were sent a template on 13 May 2003. This template provided a suggested procedure for SHAs and primary care trusts to follow when investigating continuing care inquiries arising from the Ombudsman's report. It suggested what reasonable action was required in order to make people aware of the review process. A copy of the template is available in the Library.

Information on the extent, if any, that the NHS has settled NHS continuing care eligibility cases out of court following receipt of final legal notice has not been collected.

Dacorum Primary Care Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the at risk population of *(a)* Dacorum primary care trust and *(b)* Hertfordshire is expected to be inoculated against existing strains of influenza by (i) 30 November and (ii) 31 December. [22845]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Hollobone) on Tuesday 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 970W.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of breast cancer have been diagnosed in the area covered by Dacorum primary care trust in each month since January. [23025]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Dentistry

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Government's policy is on NHS dentist administration fees for children of those on incapacity benefits. [23062]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No provision exists in the National Health Service General Dental Services Regulations 1992 (as amended) or the National Health Service (Dental Charges) Regulations 1989 for payment to dentists of an administration fee for children of those on incapacity benefit.

Departmental Estate

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what have been identified as the most significant sustainable development impacts in relation to operation of her Department's estate. [22100]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to her on 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 548W.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to her Department's policies since 1997. [22278]

Mr. Byrne: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency.

For example:

At the end of August 2005, there were no people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment at the Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, while in 1999 at Gateshead Health NHS Trust there were a total of 348 waiting more than nine months.

At the end of June 2005, there were three patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment at the Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, while in March 2000 there were a total of 397.

At the end of August 2005, there were no people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Gateshead Primary Care Trust (PCT), a fall from 274 in June 2002.

At the end of June 2005, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Gateshead PCT has fallen to five from 724 in June 2002.

In June 2003, at Gateshead Health NHS Trust, 92.8 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge.

Figures for Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust in June 2005 show an improvement to 99.1 per cent.

Between September 1998 and March 2005, the number of consultants at Gateshead Health NHS Trust, now Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, has increased from 69 to 98.

Figures for June 2005 show that all patients within Gateshead PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

In the Gateshead unitary authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 250.7 in 1997 to 215.5 in 2003.

In the Gateshead unitary authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 200.5 in 1997 to 146.3 in 2003.

Gateshead PCTs allocation has risen to £242.7 million for 2005–06, a cash increase of 9.2 per cent.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to her Department. [21004]

Jane Kennedy: The Department operates a competency based recruitment process, which requires candidates to demonstrate that they have the skills and competencies required for the advertised role. Applicants are generally assessed initially on the strength of their written application. Short listed candidates are expected to provide additional evidence at the interview stage. Where high levels of literacy or numeracy are required for a particular role a specific literacy or numeracy test may be carried out.

Departmental Water Consumption

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what reduction there has been in water consumption by her Department between 2002 and 31 March 2005. [22103]

Caroline Flint: In 2002–03, the water consumed in the Department's main London offices amounted to 22,346 cubic metres. In 2004–05, this amount had reduced to 18,012. Overall consumption per head had reduced from 8.72 to 7.50 cubic metres. This exceeds the target of 7.7 cubic metres per head contained in the "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate".

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at which non-office sites on *(a)* her Department's estates and *(b)* estates of its arm's length bodies opportunities have been identified for significant water savings. [22104]

Jane Kennedy: The Department and its agencies have only three non-office sites. None of these has significant water usage and there are no opportunities for significant savings. Nevertheless, staff are encouraged to conserve water where possible.

Of the Department's arms length bodies, water saving initiatives have been identified as follows:

Health Protection Agency (HPA)

Over the past few years the HPA and its predecessor bodies have introduced a number of measures to reduce water on its large sites at Colindale, Chilton and Porton. These measures include reduction in the number of autoclaves used, introduction of automatic unitaps for hand washing and the introduction of low water usage WC cisterns.

The HPA has a green page on its intranet, which promotes the responsible use of water with minimal wastage.

NHS Blood and Transplant

NHS Blood and Transplant has three operating divisions:

Bio Products Laboratory (BPL),

National Blood Service (NBS) and

UK Transplant (UKT).

Water usage within the NBS and UKT is minimal, as processes do not require the use of large quantities of water. Water usage is constantly monitored and controlled through environmental monitoring controls.

All water usage at BPL is in line with environmental consent limits.

NHS Direct

NHS Direct is considering acquiring new facilities. Resource consumption comparators will form part of the procurement assessment process.

Doctors

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners per head of population there have been in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* England in each year since 1997. [21049]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of general practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars, per 100,000 population is collected by primary care trust (PCT) area and is therefore not available on a constituency basis.

Information for the North East and England between 1997 and 2004 is shown in the table.

Information for South Tyneside PCT and the PCTs comprising Tyne and Wear is also shown in the table. However, the latest population data available at PCT level is for 2003. Information is only available at PCT level since 2001, as this was the first year PCTs were established.

General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population, for selected organisations 1997–2004

		1997		1998		1999	
		All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population
	England	28,046	57.6	28,251	57.9	28,467	58.1
	North East	1,432	55.8	1,426	55.7	1,446	56.7
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	621	54.0	620	53.9	626	54.6
5J9	Darlington PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KA	Derwentside PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KC	Durham And Chester-Le-Street PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5J8	Durham Dales PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KD	Easington PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5D9	Hartlepool PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KN	Langbaurgh PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KM	Middlesbrough PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5E1	North Tees PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KE	Sedgefield PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	811	57.2	806	57.1	820	58.4
5KF	Gateshead PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5D7	Newcastle PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5D8	North Tyneside PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
TAG	Northumberland Care Trust	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KG	South Tyneside PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3
5KL	Sunderland Teaching PCT	3	3	3	3	3	3

		2000		2001		2002	
		All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population
	England	28,593	58.1	28,802	58.2	29,202	58.8
	North East	1,453	57.1	1,514	59.6	1,535	60.5
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	634	55.3	662	57.8	664	57.9
5J9	Darlington PCT	3	3	53	54.1	59	60.2
5KA	Derwentside PCT	3	3	44	51.7	41	48.1
5KC	Durham And Chester-Le-Street PCT	3	3	90	63.6	87	61.3
5J8	Durham Dales PCT	3	3	54	62.9	52	60.8

		2000		2001		2002	
		All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population
5KD	Easington PCT	[3]	[3]	54	57.5	53	56.8
5D9	Hartlepool PCT	[3]	[3]	47	52.1	49	54.4
5KN	Langbaurgh PCT	[3]	[3]	60	61.6	60	61.3
5KM	Middlesbrough PCT	[3]	[3]	113	61.8	114	62.9
5E1	North Tees PCT	[3]	[3]	93	50.6	96	51.8
5KE	Sedgefield PCT	[3]	[3]	54	61.9	53	60.9
Q09	*Northumberland, Tyne and Wear*	819	58.6	852	61.1	871	62.6
5KF	Gateshead PCT	[3]	[3]	120	62.8	122	63.9
5D7	Newcastle PCT	[3]	[3]	177	66.5	196	73.7
5D8	North Tyneside PCT	[3]	[3]	113	58.9	100	52.2
TAG	Northumberland Care Trust	[3]	[3]	203	66.0	207	67.2
5KG	South Tyneside PCT	[3]	[3]	84	55.0	84	55.2
5KL	Sunderland Teaching PCT	[3]	[3]	155	54.5	162	57.2

		2003		2004	
		All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population	All practitioners[1]	All practitioners[1] per 100,000 head of population[2]
	England	30,358	60.9	31,523	62.9
	North East	1,611	63.4	1,678	65.9
Q10	*County Durham and Tees Valley*	700	61.0	739	64.3
5J9	Darlington PCT	65	66.2	69	[3]
5KA	Derwentside PCT	42	49.1	53	[3]
5KC	Durham And Chester-Le-Street PCT	92	64.5	95	[3]
5J8	Durham Dales PCT	61	71.0	67	[3]
5KD	Easington PCT	54	58.2	53	[3]
5D9	Hartlepool PCT	51	56.6	51	[3]
5KN	Langbaurgh PCT	63	63.9	63	[3]
5KM	Middlesbrough PCT	112	62.4	119	[3]
5E1	North Tees PCT	105	56.4	109	[3]
5KE	Sedgefield PCT	55	63.0	60	[3]
Q09	*Northumberland, Tyne and Wear*	911	65.4	939	67.2
5KF	Gateshead PCT	127	66.5	128	[3]
5D7	Newcastle PCT	178	66.8	174	[3]
5D8	North Tyneside PCT	131	68.7	139	[3]
TAG	Northumberland Care Trust	216	69.8	236	[3]
5KG	South Tyneside PCT	88	58.0	88	[3]
5KL	Sunderland Teaching PCT	171	60.4	174	[3]

[1] General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes Contracted GPs, QMS Others and PMS Others. Prior to September 2004 this group included QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs, PMS Salaried GPs, Restricted Principals, Assistants, Salaried Doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS Other, Flexible Career Scheme GPs and GP Returners.
[2] 2004 Primary Care Trust ONS population data to be published November 2005.
[3] Data not applicable.

Notes:
1. PCTs did not come into existence until 2001. Therefore data for PCTs before 2001 is not available.
2. Data as at 1 October 1997–99 and 30 September 2000–04.

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics 2001 ONS Population Census.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deanery-approved junior doctors' training places there were for *(a)* senior house officers and *(b)* registrars in each of the last 10 years. [19507]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of deanery approved junior doctors' training places is not collected centrally.

The Health and Social Care Information Centre aggregates information from each postgraduate deanery in respect of doctors holding training numbers as specialist registrars, but not senior house officers. This information is only available from 2000 and is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services: deanery approved training places[1] for specialist registrars; 2000–04, England[1]

	Total
2000	15,515
2001	16,846
2002	16,460
2003	17,270
2004	19,444

[1] Figures as at 30 September for 2000 and as at 31 March 2001–04.

Source:
National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre specialist registrar training monitoring collection.

European Medicines Evaluation Agency

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drugs have been approved by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency for formal marketing approval in each of the last five years. [20992]

Jane Kennedy: The European Commission, which approves products through European Medicines Agency procedures, publishes a community register of medicinal products for human use, which lists the following numbers of marketing authorisation approvals:

44, between October 2000 and September 2001.

31, between October 2001 and September 2002.

25, between October 2002 and September 2003.

34, between October 2003 and September 2004.

19, between October 2004 and September 2005.

Food Supplements (Tryptophan)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of whether the consultation process undertaken by the Food Standards Agency on proposed changes in the regulation of tryptophan in food supplements was consistent *(a)* with the principles set out in Cabinet Office code of practice on consultation and *(b)* with the code of good practice in consultations and policy appraisal; and if she will make a statement; [22237]

(2) what assessment she has made of the merits of *(a)* warning statements and *(b)* statutory limits as a means of regulating the use of tryptophan in food supplements; [22238]

(3) what steps the Food Standards Agency took to communicate with stakeholders about its proposals for new regulations on the use of tryptophan in food supplements after the closure of its formal consultation exercise and prior to the laying of statutory instruments; [22239]

(4) why the Food Standards Agency proposed lower limits for the use of tryptophan in food supplements than the levels established by the agency's Ad Hoc Expert Advisory Committee on Vitamins and Minerals. [22240]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The consultation process carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) included preparing a regulatory impact assessment (RIA) to determine the impact on industry and consumers, which was followed by a 12-week consultation period with stakeholders on the proposed regulations and the draft RIA. The impact on industry, on allowing the re-introduction of L-tryptophan into supplements, was considered and on balance was considered to be positive given that supplements containing tryptophan have been prohibited for sale since 1990. Consumer choice will also be increased without presenting an appreciable risk to health. This approach is consistent with the Cabinet Office code of practice on consultation and the code of good practice in consultations and policy appraisal.

The use of advisory statements was not considered appropriate due to the severity of the symptoms of eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome in people taking dietary supplements containing tryptophan pre-1990, and the uncertainty relating to gaps in the scientific evidence. The United Kingdom Government's committee on toxicity (COT) decided to recommend a daily dose level of 220 milligrammes (mg) on a precautionary basis that would not present an appreciable risk to health.

Following the closure of the formal consultation exercise on the regulations for the use of tryptophan in foods, the COT secretariat has reviewed the data submitted by respondents. They found that there was no new evidence to that already reviewed by COT in 2004, when it reached its conclusions on the safety of tryptophan that would support a higher level of tryptophan being used in food supplements. The FSA therefore adopted the level and purity criteria recommended by COT, and this has therefore been adopted into UK legislation to reintroduce the sale of tryptophan supplements in the UK, in the interests of consumer choice and safety. We have asked COT to review its recommendation and any new information on tryptophan since June 2004, and this will be considered at the COT meeting in December. Depending on COTs advice the legislation may be amended. A summary of consultation responses and full RIA will be sent to all respondents, and made available on the FSA website.

Tryptophan was not considered by the expert group on vitamins and minerals (EVM) as it is not a vitamin or mineral. The EVM proposed safe upper levels (SULs) for vitamins and minerals using the well-established paradigm for setting acceptable and tolerable intake levels for chemicals in food. Where the data were not adequate to set a SUL, the EVM gave guidance on levels that would not be expected to result in adverse effects.

The COT uses the same paradigm in its consideration of the safety of tryptophan as a supplement. In its evaluation the COT noted significant uncertainties and decided that an uncertainty factor of 10 should be applied to derive a dose that would not be expected to be a risk to health in the general population. The limit proposed by the COT was 220 mg of tryptophan per day.

Foundation Trusts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will allow foundation hospitals to compete to provide services in other areas. [17864]

Mr. Byrne: National health service foundation trusts are empowered to develop and deliver new services either on their existing sites or further afield.

The independent sector treatment programme is an efficient and cost effective use of the private sector capacity to reduce waiting times and offer choice across the NHS. The programme is targeted at independent sector providers who are able to make available additional capacity to NHS commissioners. We are following strict procurement regulations, and have not restricted any organisation from expressing an interest and then participating in the procurement.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS foundation trusts may advertise their services abroad to attract non-UK patients. [21394]

Mr. Byrne: There is no legal restriction preventing a national health service foundation trust (NHSFT) advertising its services abroad to attract non-United

Kingdom patients. However, NHSFTs are bound by a duty to provide NHS services to NHS patients according to NHS values and principles and cannot increase their income from private patients at the expense of NHS patients. Section 15 of the Health Care Act 2003 provided for a private patient cap on such income for NHSFTs.

GP Practices

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of GP practices had adopted practice-based commissioning in the last period for which figures are available. [23036]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 626W, on GP practices, how many general practitioners, excluding retrainers and registrars are projected to leave the national health service work force at age 55 or above in total between 2005 and 2015, broken down by *(a)* strategic health authority area and *(b)* primary care trust area; and how many general practitioners excluding retrainers and registrars have left the national health service work force at age 55 or above in each year since 1990. [20464]

Mr. Byrne: Information relating to the number of general practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars projected to leave the national health service at age 55 or above in total between 2005 and 2015 broken down by strategic health authority and primary care trust could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information on the number of GPs, excluding retainers and registrars, who have left the national health service at age 55 or above in each year between 2000 and 2003 is shown in the table.

Leavers from	*GPs of 55 and over leavers (headcount)*
2000	702
2001	728
2002	614
2003	639

Information between 1998 and 2000 could also be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information prior to 1998 is not of reliable quality.

Health Care Providers

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether overcapacity will emerge in the NHS under the Government's policy of promoting a choice of healthcare provider for NHS patients. [22333]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for North Durham (Mr. Jones) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 834W.

Health Protection Agency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of the Health Protection Agency has been in each year since its inception. [23951]

Caroline Flint: This information is in the Health Protection Agency's annual report and accounts for 2003–04 and 2004–05, copies of which are available in the Library.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs have been of the hepatitis C FaCe It campaign separately identifying *(a)* the cost of information packs sent to primary health care professionals, *(b)* the professional fees charged by Munro and Foster, *(c)* the cost of staging FaCe It events and *(d)* other expenditure. [20673]

Caroline Flint: The information available on expenditure on the FaCe It campaign is shown in the table.

FaCe It hepatitis C awareness campaign: expenditure to date

£000

Category	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Information pack for health care professionals	19	62	0
Professional fees charged by Munro and Forster	[2]	[2]	[2]
Cost of staging FaCe It events	0	65	67
Other expenditure, for example, Hepatitis C Information Line	68	431	219

[1] To 31 October 2005.
[2] Disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice commercial interests.

Hospices

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Government funding was made available to *(a)* children's and *(b)* adult hospices for 2005–06. [22373]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not routinely collect the data requested on national health service funding for adult and children's hospices. Data supplied by Help the Hospices shows that NHS funding for adult hospices in 2004 was £97.8 million, an increase of about 50 per cent. over 2000 and that NHS funding for adult hospices averaged 34 per cent. of expenditure.

Hospital Beds

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of beds available in community hospitals in *(a)* west Kent, *(b)* east Kent, *(c)* Thames Gateway, *(d)* Medway and *(e)* Medway and Swale. [24619]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The information requested is not collected in the format requested. However, information on the total number of beds available in all national health service trusts and primary care trusts in England has been placed in the Library.

Influenza Pandemic/Vaccines

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the relative risks to the populations of different primary care trust areas across the country during an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [22195]

Caroline Flint: The United Kingdom influenza pandemic contingency plan indicates national risks—UK, England and devolved authorities—and those for the typical numbers in a variety of primary care settings, for example, primary care trusts (PCTs), general practitioner practices, of various sizes assuming everyone is affected equally. The indicative numbers do not take into account the detailed demographics of each PCT or GP practice because until the characteristics of the disease are known there is no reliable way of taking account of local variations in population.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the supply of influenza vaccines available to Kingston primary care trust; and if she will make a statement. [22226]

Caroline Flint: The Department met with vaccine suppliers to discuss supply arrangements and the number of doses required for the flu campaign. This year around 13.4 million doses of vaccine will be made available in the United Kingdom. This is sufficient to provide enough vaccine for those aged over 65 and in at risk groups. General practices are responsible for placing their own orders for supplies of vaccine with manufacturers and for agreeing delivery schedules. The Department holds a central contingency stock, which can be used to address local supply difficulties.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she expects all those in vulnerable groups who want influenza vaccinations to receive them; and whether she has received reports of shortages of vaccine. [22449]

Caroline Flint: The Department met with vaccine suppliers to discuss supply arrangements and the number of doses required for the flu campaign. This year around 13.4 million doses of vaccine will be made available in the United Kingdom. This amount is based on an estimate of likely uptake among those aged over 65 and in specific at risk groups. The amount of vaccine ordered represents an increase over previous years and we are aiming to increase uptake in the at risk groups.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the supply of influenza vaccines to primary care trusts, with particular reference to Cheltenham and Tewkesbury primary care trust; and if she will make a statement. [21455]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The Department met with vaccine suppliers to discuss supply arrangements and the number of doses required for the flu campaign. This year around 13.4 million doses of vaccine will be made available in the United Kingdom. This is sufficient to provide enough vaccine for those aged over 65 and in at risk groups. General practices are responsible for placing their own orders for supplies of vaccine with manufacturers and for agreeing delivery schedules. The Department holds a central contingency stock, which can be used to address local supply difficulties.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice her Department offers on the consumption of poultry, with particular reference to avian influenza. [22442]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises that poultry should always be cooked thoroughly before being eaten to avoid food poisoning due to Salmonella and Campylobacter.

On the basis of current scientific evidence, the FSA advises that avian influenza does not pose a food safety risk for United Kingdom consumers. This is because for people, the risk of catching the disease is from being in close contact with live poultry that have the disease and not through eating cooked poultry.

Informal Carers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the training opportunities available to informal carers. [23158]

Mr. Byrne: The Government recognise that many carers would like access to training and support in their caring role or feel that their own personal development and general mental and physical well-being would be enhanced by undertaking training or educational opportunities.

Section two of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004, which came into force on 1 April 2005, provides that when assessing a carer's needs, councils must take into account whether the carer works or wishes to work, undertakes or wishes to undertake education, training or leisure activities.

For example, "Learning for living" is a City and Guilds course specifically designed for this purpose. It is an online learning resource that can lead to a qualification accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The level two certificate in personal development and learning for unpaid carers is designed to identify and build on the knowledge, understanding and skills of people who are unpaid carers, either currently or in the recent past. The award provides carers with an opportunity for self-development and confidence building, to prepare for other roles and choices and to transfer the skills acquired from the caring role.

Information Technology (Expenditure)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2170W, on Information Technology (Expenditure) what the total revenue expenditure was for NHS trusts in 2003–04. [18889]

Mr. Byrne: The total revenue expenditure in national health service trusts was £36,008,134,000 in 2003–04.

Source:
2003–04 audited NHS trust summarisation schedules.

Medical Staff (CRB Checks)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much her Department spent on Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for *(a)* physiotherapists, *(b)* speech and language therapists, *(c)* occupational therapists, *(d)* nursing staff, *(e)* doctors and *(f)* other staff employed by the NHS in each year since the CRB was established; how many checks were carried out; and what percentage were cleared; [20847]

(2) how much her Department spent on Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) police checks for *(a)* locum staff and *(b)* permanent staff employed by the NHS in each year since the CRB was established; [20848]

(3) what percentage of staff employed by the NHS who were subject to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks had already been subject to a CRB police check within the last *(a)* year, *(b)* two years and *(c)* five years; [20849]

(4) how much her Department spent on Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for staff working for the NHS in each year since the CRB was established; how many checks have been conducted; and what percentage were cleared. [20850]

Mr. Byrne: National health service employers are responsible for paying for Criminal Records Bureau checks on their employees and prospective employees. Information about the amount spent and the number of checks carried out is not collected centrally by the Department.

Medicine Reviews (Older People)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the target for medicine reviews in the National Service Framework for Older People has been superseded. [23067]

Mr. Byrne: Although good progress has been made, the target for medicine reviews in the national service framework for older people has not been superseded.

Mental Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to ensure that local protocols and pathways are established to deliver services to people who have a learning disability with mental health problems. [22981]

Mr. Byrne: Adults with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities, are covered by the mental health national service framework (NSF) in respect of their mental health problems.

"Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century" (2001), the first White Paper for people with learning disabilities for 30 years, requires clear local protocols to be in place for collaboration between specialist learning disability services and specialist mental health services.

In order to promote the development of such local protocols, a learning disabilities dimension was added to the NSF local implementation planning group in 2002 and again in 2004.

The National Institute for Mental Health in England and the valuing people support team published a service improvement toolkit called "Green Light: How Good Are Your Mental Health Services for People with Learning Disabilities?" in 2004. This guidance is designed to help local services to work together to ensure that the delivery of the NSF is working for people with mental health problems who also have a learning disability.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has commissioned into *(a)* stress, *(b)* depression and *(c)* other mental health problems among carers. [22982]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has not commissioned any specific research in this area. However, we are aware of the potential pressures of caring on a carer's mental health. This is why, through recent guidance, we refer to a carer centred approach to assessment and encourage local authorities to take the mental health needs of carers fully into account when they carry out carers assessments.

Midwives

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the extent of financial support to be offered to student midwives. [23151]

Mr. Byrne: Diploma level midwifery students receive a non-means tested bursary of up to £6,859 per year. Additional allowances can supplement the bursary if a student is for example: aged over 26; a single parent; disabled; has dependants or on maternity leave. All midwifery students on national health service funded courses have their personal tuition fees, currently £1,175 per year, paid on their behalf.

MRI Scanners

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in establishing a national database of MRI scanners held by each hospital trust; what assessment has been made of *(a)* the extent of capacity utilisation and *(b)* waiting times for (i) urgent and (ii) non-urgent cases; and where available data is published. [16940]

Mr. Byrne: As part of the cancer plan central capital funded programme, an informal database of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners and their locations has been maintained to facilitate the procurement process and monitor deliveries.

Data on waiting times for MRI scans is not currently collected centrally, but a new data collection is under active review. It is for national health service trusts in partnership with their primary care trusts to assess their MRI scanner utilisation and capacity and that they are using their diagnostic capacity to the full.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy for the treatment of myalgic encephalomyelitis; [22194]

(2) how much funding her Department committed for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* the previous four years for research into the (i) biological causes, (ii) effects and (iii) treatments for myalgic encephalomyelitis. [22193]

Mr. Byrne: In May 2003, the Medical Research Council (MRC) announced funding for a major trial into various treatment options for those with myalgic encephalomyelitis. Known as PACE—pacing, activity and cognitive behavioural therapy: a randomised evaluation—this trial is ongoing.

The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. The MRC is currently funding two complementary trials into various treatment options for chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) that aim to improve quality of life for those who are ill. The Department is meeting part of the cost of the trials, to which in total £4.2 million has been allocated. Patient recruitment began toward the end of last year.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is, however, devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects, including some concerned with myalgic encephalomyelitis, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding she has made available for research into the physical causes of myalgic encephalomyelitis. [22747]

Mr. Byrne: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC does not normally allocate funds to particular topics: research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available. When appropriate, high quality research in particular areas of strategic importance may be given priority in competition for funds, but research excellence and importance to health continues to be the primary considerations in funding decisions. The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding.

The MRC is currently funding two complementary trials into various treatment options for chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) that aim to improve quality of life for those who are ill. The Department is meeting part of the cost of the trials, to which in total £4.2 million has been allocated. Patient recruitment began towards the end of last year.

The Department has, since 1998, separately commissioned and funded a number of small-scale research projects related to aspects of CFS/ME at a total cost of £293,000.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is, however, devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects, including some concerned with myalgic encephalomyelitis, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research

Myasthenia

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding her Department has allocated for research into myasthenia gravis in 2005–06. [22131]

Mr. Byrne: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC is currently funding a five-year senior non-clinical fellowship at a total cost of £913,000 specifically to research disease mechanisms and ribonucleic acid-based therapies for pathogenic mutations at the neuromuscular synapse. This basic study aims to understand the underlying mechanisms behind myasthenia gravis and other similar conditions.

The MRC has also recently awarded a £205,000 research grant to support a study that aims to investigate a novel therapeutic approach for the silencing of genes causing neuromuscular disease. It is hoped that this research will have widespread application where nucleic acids are contemplated as potential therapeutic agents for muscle or neuromuscular junction disease.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects, including some concerned with myasthenia gravis, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

National School Fruit Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of fruit supplied to schools under the National School Fruit Scheme was sourced according to seasonal variations in local and national availability in the period September 2004 to September 2005. [21879]

Caroline Flint: All fruit is supplied based on national seasonal availability.

The table shows a breakdown of the produce supplied by the school 'fruit and vegetable scheme during the school year 2004–05 by school term and source region.

Percentage

Term	*United Kingdom*	*Imported*
Autumn	30	70
Spring	29	71
Summer	10	90

Although we are obliged to tender competitively and under European Union competition law cannot favour United Kingdom growers in our tendering process, we have designed the school consumption calendar to reflect any seasonality for produce on a national and international level.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which holding locations fruit is supplied to schools under the National School Fruit Scheme; and by what methods it is transported. [21880]

Caroline Flint: There are 15 distributors to the school fruit and vegetable scheme operating out of 23 distribution centres around the country. Distribution centres are located strategically around the country to attempt to minimise the journey time to schools.

Distributor	Location of distribution centres
A. G. Axton	Berkshire
Arthur Brett	West Midlands
Country Fresh	South Yorkshire
Croydon Fruiterers	London
F. W. Gedney	Ormskirk, Norfolk/Suffolk
G. W. Price	North Yorkshire
George Cossey	Somerset
H. B. Hawkes	London
Minor Weir and Willis	East Midlands, London, South East
Parkfresh Foods	Liverpool
Peachey's	Essex
Pioneer Foods	Cumbria
Prescott Thomas	London
Redbridge	Hereford, Stoke-on-Trent, Gateshead, Southampton, Bristol, Wigan
West Country Foods	Cornwall

The distributors primarily use diesel powered long-wheelbase 'Transit' type vans, with full refrigeration.

Neurological Conditions

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Daventy (Mr. Boswell) of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2719W, on neurological conditions, what work force issues were identified by the work force team; and what steps are being taken to address them. [20653]

Mr. Byrne: The work force group identified shortages in the professions required to deliver the long term conditions national service framework, including medical consultants, allied health professions, specialist nurses and support staff, and the need for a greater flexibility in when and how services are delivered.

The work force development priorities in this area are reviewed, alongside the requirements in other areas, by the work force review team and will be reflected, with other work force priorities, in the annual workforce planning recommendations to strategic health authorities (SHAs), which are expected to be published shortly. The recommendations cover work force planning in England for healthcare scientists, allied health professions, nurses and midwives, dental teams and doctors and are based on available evidence provided from many sources, including the work force group. The SHAs then consider their local circumstances and options for addressing their specific requirements.

On 28 September this year, "Skills for Health" launched a range of competencies in this area to support the national health service in its delivery of more flexible approaches to services.

NHS Beds

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* accident and emergency, *(b)* intensive care unit and *(c)* general beds are available in each NHS trust; what percentage that represents of the total beds in each case; and if she will make a statement. [21988]

Mr. Byrne: Accident and emergency departments do not have any beds. Information on the number of available beds in wards classified as intensive care and general and acute beds and also the percentage of the total by trust in 2004–05 has been placed in the Library.

NHS Complaints

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's observations on NHS complaints structures; and if she will make a statement. [21873]

Jane Kennedy: "Making Things Better: A Report on Reform of the NHS Complaints Procedure in England" (10 March 2005) is a useful and timely report, which focuses on the need to develop a more patient-centred national health service complaints procedure. The objective of any complaints process must be to satisfy the person who has raised concerns and, where appropriate, to use that information in order to improve services.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will define the term control total, used for the purposes of the financial monitoring of NHS organisations; and whether NHS organisations will be required to repay the deficits contained within their respective control totals. [18076]

Mr. Byrne: Control totals are used where it would be impossible to return to financial balance in a single year. The aim is to bring strategic health authorities (SHAs) as close as possible to financial balance for their local health communities.

The control totals are set in consultation with SHAs. Irrespective of the control totals set, SHAs carry forward deficits and surpluses to the following financial year. This ensures organisations do not benefit from having a deficit, and are not disadvantaged by having a surplus.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS organisations have financial recovery plans; when each was agreed; over what period each runs; which have been subject to revision; and for what reasons. [22979]

Mr. Byrne: The Department manages the financial performance of the national health service through strategic health authorities (SHAs). NHS organisations that overspend are required to develop recovery plans to return to financial balance. Recovery plans are agreed and managed by SHAs so the information requested is not held by the Department.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1287W, on NHS finance, who will provide the additional funding needed to provide strategic health authorities with an uplift to their carry forward; and what she has estimated the scheme will cost in 2006–07. [23008]

Mr. Byrne: Under the incentive scheme, strategic health authorities that underspend will receive additional resources and those that overspend will receive a reduction to their resources. On this basis, we expect the scheme to be self-balancing.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to take the decision on which name should replace the name of direct payments. [23100]

Mr. Byrne: There was a mixed response to the proposal to change the name of direct payments as outlined in the Green Paper, "Independence, Well-being and Choice: Our vision for the future of social care for adults in England". We are currently considering the implications of this issue further.

An interim analysis of the response to the consultation, which is informing our thinking towards the forthcoming heath and social care White Paper is available in the Library.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which areas will be piloting individual budgets; when she expects the pilots to begin; and how individual budgets will differ from the system of direct payments. [23101]

Mr. Byrne: The first individual budget pilot, which will take place in West Sussex and focus on older people, will begin in December this year. The remaining sites, of which there will be around a dozen, are in the process of being selected. An announcement will be made in November. They will come on stream throughout 2006 and will continue for between 18 months and two years.

The programme of pilots is being developed with input from stakeholders including people who use services, and an academic research and evaluation team. The pilots are being comprehensively evaluated in order to ensure that they can provide us with the evidence we need to make decisions about future roll-out.

Individual budgets would build on some of the successful features of direct payments and have the same principles of choice and control. There are, however, some key differences. Individual budgets would include a number of income streams rather than simply social care services in order to give the individual a more joined-up package of support. Individual budgets would also give the individual choice over how they receive their allocation; it does not have to be a cash allocation. Most importantly, individual budgets put people in the centre of the planning process, recognising that they are the person best placed to understand their own needs and how to meet them.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial position of the NHS. [21532]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service has achieved overall financial balance in each of the past four years, up to 2004–05. The audited accounts show that the NHS as a whole will end 2004–05 with an overall deficit of around £250 million. This represents around only 0.4 per cent. of total NHS resources, compared with the 1.5 per cent. deficit figure in 1996–97.

NHS Staff

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the reasons for graduate unemployment in *(a)* physiotherapy, *(b)* medicine, *(c)* speech and language therapy and *(d)* nursing; and if she will make a statement. [21737]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* After a period of sustained investment to ensure a rapid growth in the national health service workforce, the national health service is now moving to more of a steady state where there is a closer match between supply and demand. NHS expenditure is continuing to grow but getting the right staffing complement is an issue that needs to be addressed locally. Workforce planners within strategic health authorities are working closely with local NHS employers to make sure that staff and students understand the range of opportunities that are available. The electronic recruitment service NHS jobs (www.jobs.nhs.uk) has hundreds of jobs for all staff groups.

NHS Training

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effects of medical careers reforms in the NHS on the number of training contracts available to senior house officers. [23548]

Mr. Byrne: There were 20,094 medically qualified senior house officer (SHO) and equivalents in the national health service as at 30 September 2004, up from 14,580 in 1997. The full implementation of modernising medical careers (MMC) in the period beginning in 2007 will see the phasing out of the SHO grade and the introduction of new structures. The number of places available in new structures will continue to be decided by service and educational need. The launch of the foundation programme as the first phase of MMC in August this year saw some SHO posts converted to SHO equivalent foundation year two posts but this conversion did not affect the overall number of posts available for doctors working at the SHO level.

Nurses

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of nurses leaving the NHS in each of the last three years. [22786]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Nutrition

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has commissioned into the nutrition of older people *(a)* in care homes, *(b)* receiving domiciliary care, *(c)* in an acute hospital ward and *(d)* in intermediate care. [22382]

Mr. Byrne: The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service. Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. The remainder funds health and social care research through the Department's central research programmes. Details of individual projects, including a number concerned with nutrition and older people, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Overseas Treatment

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the health establishments abroad which have treated NHS patients in the last five years; and which other establishments she plans to use. [20610]

Mr. Byrne: Since the end of 2002, patients have been referred for treatment in Europe, primarily to Belgium at Brussels, Bruges and Gent, by Guys and St. Thomas's hospital under the London patient choice (LCP) arrangements. There were also a number of individual contract arrangements set up by national health service commissioners. Information about the health establishments contracted with by NHS commissioners for this purpose has not been collected centrally. The LCP scheme ended on 31 March 2005 although primary care trusts are able to contract with healthcare providers abroad on an individual needs basis. There are no current central plans for further referral schemes abroad because we are rapidly increasing the capacity to treat NHS patients within England.

Data on where United Kingdom patients are treated in the European Economic Area under the E111/112 schemes is not available in the format requested.

Patient Appointments

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners appointments were missed in each of the last five years. [18815]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) on 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1523W.

Patients' Groups

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what occasions she has met bodies representing patients' groups since 5 May; [20487]

(2) which patient groups she has met since 6 May; and on which dates. [20856]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2831W.

PCTs/Strategic Health Authorities (Document Distribution)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the *(a)* reference numbers and *(b)* titles of (i) statutory instruments, (ii) departmental circulars and (iii) other documents distributed direct to (A) primary care trusts and (B) strategic health authorities consequential to the provisions of the Abortion Act 1967 and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 in the last three years; what action was required in respect of each; and what further documents in these categories she proposes to circulate in the next 12 months. [20614]

Caroline Flint: In the last three years, primary care trusts (PCTs) and strategic health authorities (SHAs) have been given access to the following letters and documents about the provisions of the Abortion Act, which set out the Government's policy, recommended good practice and refers to the legal position on abortion in relation to services:

Letters

The Chief Medical Officer wrote to PCTs and SHAs on 21 September 2005, following the publication of his report, "An Investigation into the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) Response to Requests for Late Abortions".

The following documents issued by the Department:

"Effective Commissioning of Sexual Health and HIV Services", a sexual health and HIV commissioning toolkit for PCTs and local authorities (2003).

Government response to the Health Select Committee's third report of session 2002–03 on sexual health (2003).

"An investigation into the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) Response to

Requests for Late Abortions", a report by the Chief Medical Officer (2005).

The following documents funded by the Department:

"The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion", Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (2004).

"Recommended Standards for Sexual Health Services", Medical Foundation for Aids and Sexual Health (2005).

The Department will be issuing best practice guidance for abortion services in spring 2006. The guidance will also take into account the issues raised by the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations, including the legal position on abortion.

Contact with the national health service about the provision of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act is made with the license holders of fertility clinics. However, in August 2005, all NHS chief executives were given access to the document, "The Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, A Public Consultation" via the chief executive's bulletin.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the effective rate of employer contribution is to final salary pension schemes for nurses in the public sector. [21589]

Mr. Byrne: The effective rate of national health service employer contributions for nurses who are members of the NHS Pension Scheme is 14 per cent. The employee contribution rate for nurses is 6 per cent.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many physiotherapy training places have been commissioned over each of the last four years, broken down by strategic health authority. [23068]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 28 October]:* The information requested is shown in the tables.

Numbers of physiotherapy training commissions broken down by strategic health authority (SHA) have been collected since 2002–03. Training commissions in 2001–02 are shown by regional office area.

Table 1: Physiotherapy pre-registration training commissions in 2001-02 by regional office area

	Headcount
England	1,780
Northern and Yorkshire	309
Trent	157
East	151
London	302
South East	219
South West	156
West Midlands	262
North West	224

Source:
Quarterly monitoring returns.

Table 2: Physiotherapy pre-registration training commissions by SHA area

	2003-03	2003-04	2004-05
England	2,157	2,343	2,391
Avon, Gloucester and Wiltshire	135	135	130
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	35	38	75
Birmingham and Black Country	92	100	122
Cheshire and Merseyside	—	—	—
Cumbria and Lancashire	253	324	314
County Durham and Tees Valley	57	71	72
Devon and Cornwall	159	158	65
Essex	82	82	96
Greater Manchester	—	—	—
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	36	67	68
Kent, Surrey and Sussex	121	—	—
Kent and Medway	—	2	3
Leicester, Northamptonshire and Rutland	—	—	3
North Central London	—	—	—
North East London	—	—	—
North East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	62	51	55
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge	58	78	76
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	67	76	85
North West London	0	0	—
Dorset and Somerset	—	23	23
Shropshire and Staffordshire	90	90	94
South East London	377	393	414
South West London	—	—	—
South Yorkshire	—	—	—
Surrey and Sussex	—	132	116
Thames Valley	77	76	76
Trent	193	190	225
West Midlands South	108	103	104
West Yorkshire	155	154	175

Source:
Quartlery monitoring returns.

Pressure Ulcers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of vacuum-assisted closure machines for the treatment of pressure ulcers; whether she plans to instruct the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to examine the effectiveness of such machines; what other steps she is taking to prevent the development of pressure ulcers in patients in hospitals; and if she will make a statement. [23109]

Mr. Byrne: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence published new clinical guidance on pressure ulcer management in September 2005. This comprehensive guidance includes appraisals on the effectiveness of a wide range of options for the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers, including vacuum-assisted closure methods.

Reducing the incidence of pressure sores in hospitals is tackled locally through the development and implementation of individualised plans for prevention and treatment agreed and delivered by a multidisciplinary team working with patients and their carers.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of redundancies which may arise from the reorganisation of primary care trusts *(a)* in Durham and *(b)* in England. [17476]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 13 October 2005]:* The Department has received proposals on primary care trust configurations from County Durham and Tees Valley strategic health authority and these will be considered by an independent external panel to see whether the proposals meet the criteria identified in the document, "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS", published on 28 July. Before any changes are made, proposals will be subject to a full three-month public consultation, beginning in December.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department has issued to primary care trusts on compliance with the Secretary of State's directive of 27 February 2004. [23181]

Mr. Byrne: Related directions on continuing care and delayed discharges came into force from 27 February 2004. They, and all other published guidance, are available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/IntegratedCare/ContinuingCarePolicy/fs/en.

Private Finance Initiative

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking to ensure that private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible create the minimum of environmental damage; [22109]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of *(a)* the (i) sustainability and (ii) environmental impacts of private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible and *(b)* what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the private finance initiative process to deliver environmentally sustainable projects for her Department; [22110]

(3) what role her Department *(a)* has and *(b)* plans to take to make the private finance initiative process more accountable and transparent in terms of environmental sustainability; [22111]

(4) what steps she is taking to make private finance initiative contracts for which her Department is responsible more accountable and transparent in terms of environmental sustainability. [22112]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service environmental assessment tool kit (NEAT) is the NHS response to the Government's objective of a sustainable construction programme.

All capital development schemes, whether private finance initiative (PFI) or publicly funded, must submit a NEAT as part of their full business case. The business

case must demonstrate a commitment to meeting the NEAT score rating of "excellent" for a new build or "very good" for a refurbishment scheme.

By integrating the design, build and operational aspects into a single financial package, PFI helps to encourage greater efficiency, including energy efficiency, over the whole life of the contract.

Radiographers

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many radiographers have been employed in the NHS in each year since 1997. [23196]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified radiography staff in England as at 30 September for each specified year

	Qualified radiography staff	*of which:*	
		Diagnostic radiography	*Therapeutic radiography*
1997	11,771	10,364	1,407
1998	12,118	10,645	1,473
1999	12,330	10,839	1,491
2000	12,489	11,036	1,453
2001	12,706	11,163	1,543
2002	13,031	11,489	1,542
2003	13,344	11,687	1,657
2004	13,900	12,147	1,753

Note:
New occupation codes for healthcare scientists were introduced in 2003. As a result, a small number of staff previously included under diagnostic radiography are now classified within medical physics
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census.

Residential Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) in what circumstances a local authority can set limits on what it will pay to meet the assessed needs of a person requiring care in a residential setting; [22263]

(2) when she will next review the capital limits for state support for costs of care in residential settings. [22264]

Mr. Byrne: The National Assistance Act 1948 sets out the framework within which local authorities decide what people can afford to contribute to the cost of their residential care. Local authorities (LAs) are responsible for assessing the care needs of any person seeking public financial support in order to enter a care home.

LAs assess a person's ability to pay charges using the National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) Regulations 1992 and the Charges for Residential Accommodation Guide (CRAG). The CRAG provides guidance to local authorities to help them understand the charging regulations and helps to ensure a consistent approach to charging.

The capital limits set the amount below which people can receive LA help with the cost of their care. People with less than £20,500 are entitled to apply for financial help from social services and local authorities are required to disregard savings of £12,500 or less when assessing residents ability to pay for their care.

The capital limits are reviewed annually. The review of the Assessment of Regulations, including the capital limits and the CRAG will begin shortly and are intended to be implemented from April 2006.

Sexual Health

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people under the age of 16 years have attended a sexual health clinic in *(a)* Tees Valley and *(b)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [22347]

Mr. Byrne: The number of attendances at genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics is not available by age group, but age group data are collected for a selection of diagnoses and are shown in the table. The data shown are for diagnoses made at GUM clinics (and excludes primary care) within County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and not by the patients' area of residence. For confidentiality reasons, these data are only routinely published at SHA level.

Number of diagnoses[1] of selected sexually transmitted infections in young people aged under 16, County Durham and Tees Valley SHA: 1997 to 2004

	Number
1997	30
1998	26
1999	29
2000	39
2001	27
2002	40
2003	49
2004	42

[1] Diagnosed conditions: primary and secondary syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes, genital warts and Chlamydia.
Source:
KC60 Returns, Health Protection Agency.

Sleep Apnoea

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the Government's policy on the prescription of continuous positive airway pressure equipment on the NHS for patients suffering from sleep apnoea. [23162]

Mr. Byrne: It is for health professionals in primary care organisations, in consultation with other stakeholders, to determine which services their populations require and ensure the appropriate level of provision. This would include the provision of continuous positive airway pressure equipment for patients with sleep apnoea where appropriate.

Smallpox Vaccine

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the members were of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation which decided to purchase the Lister strain of virus for smallpox vaccine production. [22114]

Caroline Flint: The Secretary of State for Health made the decision to purchase the Lister strain of smallpox vaccine, taking into account advice provided from the expert sub-group of the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI). This expert advisory sub-group was chaired by Professor Michael Langman, the chair of the JCVI at the time, and was comprised of those core members of the JCVI with experience relevant to smallpox vaccine issues and other invited experts from the organisations listed as follows. These other experts were invited on the basis of their individual expertise in their field and did not necessarily present the views of those organisations to which they belonged. The names of the participants are not therefore being made public. The names of all members of the JCVI are available on the JCVI website at www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/jcvi/index.htm.

Organisations to which the attendees belonged were:

Royal Free Hospital
Public Health Laboratory Service
Institute of Child Health
St. Bart's Hospital
National Institute of Biological Standards and Control
Imperial College Medical School
University of Birmingham
Centre for Applied Microbiology
Medicines Control Agency
Defence and Scientific and Technology Laboratories
Ministry of Defence
Department of Health

Smoking

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the health and safety implications of smoking carriages in *(a)* enclosed public places and *(b)* workplaces. [22519]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* A regulatory impact assessment (RIA) has been published alongside the Health Bill. The RIA contains estimates of costs and benefits of legislation to end smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces. A copy is available in the Library.

Social Care Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been published on *(a)* access to and *(b)* transfer of care records from the NHS to social services; how she expects the sharing of patient care records to develop under the National Programme for IT; and whether legislation will be needed to ensure social services have access to patient records under the National Programme for IT. [23102]

Mr. Byrne: General guidance on information sharing with social services has been published as part of the Department's publication, "Confidentiality: Code of Practice for the NHS". The national programme for information technology, aiming to deliver a national health service care records service by 2010, will, in time, support appropriate access to patient care records by all staff involved in providing that care. Social services will only have access to patient health records with the consent of the patient concerned or where access is already permitted by law, so new legislation will not be required.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timescale is for the development of a national framework for continuing care. [23103]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to my press statement of 22 July 2005. This confirmed that work would accelerate on the introduction of a national set of eligibility criteria for national health service continuing care. The Department is progressing work on the production of the national assessment framework for continuing care due for publication in early 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she plans to take to improve the support offered to carers. [23105]

Mr. Byrne: Carers remain a high priority for this Government. We continue to be committed to ensuring they are supported both as carers and as individuals in their own right. We have supported legislation that strengthens the rights of carers to an assessment of their own needs as carers and involves a right to a carer's assessment. In addition, The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 requires councils to take into account whether the carer works or wishes to work, undertakes or wishes to undertake education, training or leisure activities.

We are also continuing to fund support to carers through the carer's grant. Since its introduction in 1999, the grant has provided an extra £450 million to increase the number of breaks for carers. The grant is worth £185 million in 2005–06 and will continue at this level until at least 2007–08.

Speech/Language Therapy

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure adequate provision of speech and language therapists in the public sector. [22184]

Mr. Byrne: At September 2004, there were 6,556 speech and language therapists employed in the national health service, an increase of 1,685, or 35 per cent. since 1997.There is a range of initiatives in place to support sustained growth in the number of speech and language therapists. These include improving pay and conditions, encouraging the NHS to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer, increasing training, help with accessing child care and continuing professional development and running national and local recruitment campaigns.

It is for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with strategic health authorities, local authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. This process provides the means for addressing needs within the local community, including the provision of speech and language therapy.

PCTs are receiving record levels of investment between 2005–06 and 2007–08 to enable them to develop services.

Supporting People Report

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to act on the recommendation in the Audit Commission's report on supporting people, that her Department, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, providers and administering authorities should jointly consider practical problems and opportunities. [23614]

Mr. Byrne: The Government will be considering the findings of the Audit Commission report in the context of the ongoing work to develop a supporting people strategy. I understand that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will issue a consultation paper on this shortly. Departmental officials have been closely involved in the development of that consultation paper, and the consultation will provide an opportunity for joint consideration of a way forward which also includes providers and administering authorities.

Swale Primary Care Trust

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds Medway primary care trust procured from Swale primary care trust between 2003–04 and 2004–05 for *(a)* Sheppey community hospital and *(b)* Sittingbourne memorial hospital. [24622]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

Tryptophan

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) why the Food Standards Agency did not publish the responses to its recent consultation exercise on the use of tryptophan in food prior to the laying before the House of statutory instruments on the matter; [22216]

(2) if she will make available in the Library a copy of the submissions received by the Food Standards Agency in response to its recent consultation exercise on the use of tryptophan in food; and if she will take steps to ensure that the Agency publishes the responses on its website; [22217]

(3) if she will withdraw the draft Tryptophan in Food (England) Regulations 2005 to allow further consultation. [22218]

Caroline Flint: A copy of the submissions received by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in response to its recent consultation on the use of tryptophan in food will be placed in the Library. The FSA will make all the documents available in its library and publish these on its website, including the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) and a copy of the regulations. The intention was to publish all the documents when the statutory instruments were laid before the House, but a further delay has occurred due to a typographical error in the RIA, which now requires re-signing before publication.

The Tryptophan in Food (England) Regulations 2005 will not be withdrawn as this will allow L-tryptophan back onto the market and provide consumers with the opportunity to purchase supplements containing L-tryptophan again. The FSA has asked the committee on toxicity to review its recommendation on L-tryptophan and, depending on its advice, the legislation may then be amended.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations have been made to the chief executive of the Food Standards Agency on the agency's decision in relation to the regulation of tryptophan in food supplements since 7 October 2005; and when she will respond to each. [22623]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The chief executive of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) received a letter from the Institute of Optimum Nutrition dated 7 October regarding the FSA's decision in relation to the regulation of tryptophan in food supplements. A response to this letter was issued on 25 October.

Vulnerable Adults (Abuse)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1180W, on no secrets guidance, what plans she has to collect information on the number of adult protection referrals received and investigations undertaken. [22370]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 16 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 629W.

The second phase of the project is now under way and I will be reporting on the outcome in due course.

Waiting Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Written Answer of 20 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 785W, on breast cancer (waiting times), how the Labour Party manifesto commitment that all women will be seen within two weeks of referral by their general practitioner by 2008 will be monitored. [23952]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The 2005 Labour Party manifesto gave the commitment that all women with breast symptoms, even if cancer is not initially suspected, should be seen within two weeks of referral by their general practitioner by 2008. Details of this commitment and how it will be resourced, implemented and monitored are yet to be determined with stakeholders and finalised.

Your Health, Your Care, Your Say

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost is of employing Opinion Leader Research for the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise. [23228]

Mr. Byrne: The cost of the contract with opinion leader research, which includes organising and running four regional deliberative events and a national citizen's summit, and analysing the results of these events alongside feedback from local events and completed questionnaires is £949,000.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the cost of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise to *(a)* the Department, *(b)* strategic health authorities, *(c)* health trusts and *(d)* local authorities. [23588]

Mr. Byrne: The estimated cost of the nationally organised elements of the consultation is £1.2 million which is funded from the Department's running costs budget. No estimate is available of the cost to health and social care organisations.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 8 November 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Better Regulation Agenda

25. **Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on progress in removing unnecessary burdens on small businesses through the better regulation agenda; [25390]

26. **Gordon Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on progress in removing unnecessary burdens on small businesses through the better regulation agenda. [25391]

Mr. Jim Murphy: We are making significant progress in implementing the package of reforms set out in the 2005 Budget.

We have launched a major exercise to measure and then reduce the administrative burdens faced by business and we are on track with a major rationalisation of regulators. These changes will benefit small business.

Ministerial Visit

27. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will visit the Wyre Estuary in Lancaster and Wyre constituency to discuss the administration of the Duchy's lands there. [25392]

Mr. Jim Murphy: In the light of recent events and pending the appointment of a new Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster I am unable to commit to such a visit.

However, I am aware that the hon. Member has arranged to meet with the Chief Executive of the Duchy of Lancaster in London on 17 November.

Special Advisers

John Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many special advisers are employed by the Government; and if he will make a statement. [25388]

Mr. Jim Murphy: There are currently 80 special advisers in post.

TRANSPORT

Transport Infrastructure (Shoreham)

10. **Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the transport infrastructure improvements required in and around Adur in West Sussex to facilitate the proposed expansion of facilities at Shoreham airport and Shoreham harbour. [25403]

Ms Buck: Any proposals to expand Shoreham airport or harbour would be for the owners of those facilities to bring forward, alongside, as appropriate, proposals to address associated landside transport issues.

Regional Airports

11. **Mr. McGovern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on Government support for regional airports. [25404]

Mr. Darling: The great majority of airports in the UK are operated on a commercial basis, but the Air Transport White Paper makes clear there may be a case for limited public funding to support small airports operated by local authorities and those in objective 1 and 2 areas. We have facilitated the use of route development funds and fifth freedom rights to attract new services at regional airports, and development agencies can provide support where it would help to deliver regional economic objectives.

A43

12. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on plans to upgrade the A43 Kettering to Northampton road. [25405]

Dr. Ladyman: Any plans to upgrade the A43 between Kettering and Northampton will be for Northamptonshire county council, as local highway authority, to consider.

Aircraft Pollution

13. **Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce pollution caused by aircraft. [25406]

Ms Buck: The balanced strategy set out in The Future of Air Transport White Paper required that we did more to reduce and mitigate the environmental impacts of air transport. It included a range of measures at national and international level to address noise, local air quality and climate change issues. These are supplemented by specific environmental controls and appropriate mitigation action at individual airports.

Roadside Workers

14. **Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths of roadside workers; and if he will make a statement. [25407]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been discussing with the Highways Agency, it's contractors and stakeholders at the highest level, proposals to bring about a step change in the approach to health and safety for road workers to achieve a lasting reduction in the risks for this vulnerable group.

M4

15. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cars per day used junction 16 of the M4 in the last year for which figures are available; and what his estimate is of the capacity of the junction. [25408]

Dr. Ladyman: During 2004, on average 24,700 cars per day used junction 16 of the M4 (that is they turned on or off the motorway at this junction).

A specific study would be required to determine the absolute capacity, however, peak hour congestion problems indicate that this junction is running at or above capacity at certain times of the day.

Rail Network (East Midlands)

17. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the regional rail network in the East Midlands. [25410]

Derek Twigg: The most recent assessment of the regional rail network in the East Midlands was made as part of the SRA Midland Mainline/East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy which was published in March 2004. This work reviewed the usage of existing services and made recommendations around their future development.

Rail Services

18. **Daniel Kawczynski:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage better rail services between Shropshire and London. [25411]

Derek Twigg: The Department is currently examining the business case for direct rail services between Shrewsbury, Telford and London. The work is being carried out in conjunction with local authorities in the area and other interested bodies.

19. **Peter Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure reliable train services during the autumn and winter months. [25412]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail and train operators have measures in place to address the operational risks presented by severe weather in the autumn and winter. The details are an operational matter for Network Rail.

Sustainable Communities Plan

20. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what planning assessments have been made of the transport capacity of the Sustainable Communities Plan areas. [25413]

Ms Buck: The Milton Keynes South Midlands sub-regional spatial strategy was published on 17 March 2005. This provided the area with a framework for delivery of its spatial strategy including an assessment of transport capacity issues and requirements.

The draft spatial strategy for the East of England which takes in London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area and parts of the Thames Gateway is current being tested through its examination in public. This draft contains a regional transport strategy.

A similar planning process will follow in the rest of the south-east which takes in the Kent element of Thames Gateway and the Ashford growth area.

A5120

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the congestion on the A5120 in the vicinity of Junction 12 of the M1 motorway; [25425]

(2) what plans he has to improve traffic flows on the A5120 at Junction 12 of the M1 motorway. [25427]

Dr. Ladyman: Several sources of information have been used to determine existing traffic flows and vehicle movements at Junction 12; these include travel surveys, vehicle origin/destination data, and several vehicle surveys undertaken from 2003–04. This information has been used in traffic modelling work, which will forecast future traffic flows. The A5120 is the responsibility of Bedfordshire county council and we have no information about congestion in the vicinity of junction 12. However further studies will be undertaken as the M1 widening junctions 10–13 scheme is developed.

Proposals to widen the M1 motorway between Junctions 10 and 13 (including improvements to junctions 11,12 and 13) were displayed at public consultation exhibitions from November 2004 to January 2005. A preferred route announcement for this scheme is planned for later this year.

Air Carrier Insolvencies

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the percentage of travel insurance policies which cover air carrier insolvency. [25141]

Ms Buck: Civil Aviation Authority research indicates about 10 per cent. of travel insurance policies cover air carrier insolvency.

Central Railway

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library copies of the documents on the Central Railway project that were released by his Department to Central Railway plc following an application under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [25254]

Derek Twigg: The documents will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Concessionary Travel (South Gloucestershire)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the cost to South Gloucestershire council of implementing the national half-fare concessionary travel scheme; and what additional resources he will be allocating to South Gloucestershire council in respect of the proposed extension of the concessionary travel scheme. [26577]

Ms Buck: The Government will provide an extra £350 million in 2006–07 which will be sufficient to fund the cost to local authorities. A decision on how the extra funding will be distributed will be made in due course.

Departmental Estate

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in the Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. [25331]

Ms Buck: Details of land and property owned by the Department in Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency are set out as follows.

The Highways Agency currently has three pieces of agricultural land in its portfolio, which fall in the Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. These pieces of

land are at Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury and together amount to 17.69 acres. Two pieces of land are to the east of the A5 and the third piece of land is to the west of the A5.

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency currently owns Shrewsbury Goods Vehicle Test Station, Ennerdale Road, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 3LF.

Eurotunnel

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the Eurotunnel Working Group in addressing issues surrounding the process of Eurotunnel's audit system. [24611]

Derek Twigg: The Channel Tunnel Safety Authority's (CTSA's) Annual Report for 2004–05 notes, in paragraph 75, that the Health and Safety at Work and Human Factors Working Group will be considering, among other things, the process of Eurotunnel's audit system in the course of 2005–06. I expect that the CTSA's Annual Report for 2005–06 will cover the results of that consideration.

Highways Agency

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what systems are in place to ensure that there is consistency and national co-ordination of policy across regional offices of the Highways Agency; and whether he plans to make changes to the systems. [25426]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency is a national executive agency reporting to Ministers, with annual objectives agreed by Ministers and set out and published in its business plan each year. The chief executive of the Highways Agency is responsible for ensuring consistency of application of policy and co-ordination across its regional offices. He reports to me on a regular basis.

Motorway Crash Barriers

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the guidelines are for the *(a)* choice and *(b)* construction of each type of motorway crash barrier. [26120]

Dr. Ladyman: The choice of safety barrier in a motorway central reserve is controlled by the Highways Agency Interim Advice Note 60/05—The Introduction of a New Highways Agency Policy for the Performance Requirements for Central Reserve Safety Barriers on Motorways. The implementation of this advice requires future barriers to be of concrete unless there are over-riding circumstances.

The guidelines for the choice and construction of the barrier that can be used in other motorway locations are contained in the documents listed:

(a) Highways Agency Interim Requirements for Road Restraint Systems December 2004—Chapters 1 to 6 inclusive.

(b) Highways Agency Interim Advice Note 44/05 (Rev 4)—Interim Requirements for Road Restraint Systems (Vehicle and Pedestrian) Revision 4. (IRRS)

(c) European Standards in the Series EN1317—Road Restraint Systems.

(d) Highways Agency Interim Advice Note 55/04—Guidance on the use of European Standard BS EN 1317—Road Restraint System.

Detailed guidelines for the construction of safety barriers are contained in the manufacturer's product specifications and in the Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works, Volume 1, Specification for Highway Works, Clauses: Series 0100, 0400, Appendices: A, C and E

Night Parking Charges

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport under what legal authority local authorities may charge for car parking in towns and city centres at night. [21384]

Ms Buck: Section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allows local authorities to charge for the use of off-street car parks, while section 46 allows them to charge for the use of designated on-street parking places. The determination of the levels of charges is a matter for individual authorities.

Ports

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list ports which are *(a)* compliant and *(b)* non-compliant under the International Ship and Port Security Code. [24199]

Dr. Ladyman: There are over 500 port facilities in the United Kingdom that are compliant under the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. The names of the facilities have been lodged in the Library in the document titled "ISPS Compliant Port Facilities in the UK".

The ISPS Code applies to port facilities serving passenger ships and cargo ships over 500 Gross Tonnes engaged on international voyages and domestic Class A ferries which travel more than 20 nautical miles from the UK coastline.

Rail Franchises

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what costs have been incurred in respect of rail franchise tendering processes since May 1997. [24576]

Derek Twigg: The letting of franchises since 1997 has been successively undertaken by the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising, the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority, the Strategic Rail Authority and since July 2005, the Department for Transport.

Franchise tendering costs were part of the general business costs of these organisations and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department plans to publish the consultants' final report on the review of the Northern Rail franchise; whether its recommendations will be incorporated into the 2006 rail timetable planning conference; and if he will make a statement on the implications of the review for the "Northern Way" initiative. [24946]

Derek Twigg: Work on the review of the Northern Rail franchise is proceeding, and I expect to announce proposals for consultation early next year. The consultation will seek the views of organisations involved in the "Northern Way" initiative.

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date his Department plans to publish the final regional planning assessment for North East England; and whether its recommendations will be incorporated into the 2006 rail timetable planning conference. [24947]

Derek Twigg: I am currently considering the draft of the North East England rail regional planning assessment with a view to publication in due course.

Railways

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date his Department plans to recommence the rail passenger partnership funding for new passenger rail services; what plans he has to review such funding; and if he will make a statement. [24945]

Derek Twigg: There are no specific proposals to re-introduce rail passenger partnership funding at this stage. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's statement to Parliament of 10 February 2005 sets out the funding for rail until 2008–09. Future funding arrangements for the railway will be reviewed as part of the 2007 spending review and the development of the high level output specification for Network Rail.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to upgrade the infrastructure at Shrewsbury railway station. [25332]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail is investigating potential enhancements to platform 3 in conjunction with Arriva Trains Wales, to improve capacity at the station, and this will be progressed after the impact of new timetables in December 2005 is known.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the efficiency of rail links to Gravesham; and if he will make a statement. [24184]

Derek Twigg: The pattern and efficiency of train services throughout Kent including services to Gravesham have been extensively reviewed in preparation for the forthcoming award of the new Integrated Kent Franchise. The latest published figures show South Eastern Trains achieving an 89.3 per cent. on-time performance in the first quarter of 2005–06.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what correspondence he has received from the London business community on its contribution to the funding of Crossrail; and if he will publish it. [24213]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State has received a number of letters regarding the funding of Crossrail from representatives of the London business community. The Secretary of State does not generally publish the correspondence he receives and has no plans to do so in this case.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the efficiency of rail links to *(a)* Kings Langley, *(b)* Apsley and *(c)* Hemel Hempstead; and if he will make a statement. [25574]

Derek Twigg: These stations have benefited from the West Coast Main Line Modernisation Project. Platforms have been extended to accommodate 12 car train lengths at all three stations. New air conditioned trains are also being introduced for certain services and line speed improvements are being implemented during 2006, to allow more attractive and reliable services to be operated.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the performance of South East Trains since it was returned to public hands. [26519]

Derek Twigg: The performance of all train operators, including South Eastern Trains (SET), is monitored on a four-weekly basis. The most recent figures for SET show an on-time performance of 88.3 percent. Corresponding figures for the most directly comparable operators are 89.1 percent. for southern and 92.1 percent for South West Trains.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the staff turnover rate for Cross London Rail Links Limited was in the past 12 months. [26539]

Derek Twigg: I understand from Cross London Rail Links Limited (CLRLL) that, between November 2004 and November 2005, the number of staff directly employed by the company rose from 59 to 73; eight employees left the company and 22 new employees joined.

Road Usage

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of road usage by *(a)* domestic and *(b)* non-domestic heavy goods vehicles in the United Kingdom in 2004. [25132]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest available information that separately identifies the use made of roads in Great Britain by UK-registered and foreign- registered heavy goods vehicles is for 2003. Estimates for that year are as follows:

Heavy goods vehicle traffic	*Billions Vehicle kilometres*
(a) UK registered HGVs :	27.6
(b) Foreign registered HGVs :	0.9

Source:
DfT: Traffic in Great Britain, and Survey of Foreign Vehicle Activity in GB 2003

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of transcontinental haulage lorries in the United Kingdom in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 were non-domestic; and if he will make a statement. [25134]

Dr. Ladyman: Based on data collected by the Department about the number of heavy goods vehicles travelling to mainland Europe from Great Britain[1] the information is as follows:

	UK-registered (thousands)	*Foreign-registered (thousands)*	*Foreign-registered as share of total[1] (percentage)*
2002	493	1,290	72
2003	474	1,322	73
2004	493	1,447	74

[1] For a small number of vehicles country of registration is not known.

Source:

DfT: Road Goods Vehicles Travelling to Mainland Europe

1. Traffic to the Republic of Ireland is excluded

Schools (Peak-time Traffic)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what support his Department is providing to initiatives to reduce the amount of peak time traffic around schools in *(a)* the Tees Valley and *(b)* the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency. [22071]

Derek Twigg: The Government want to reduce the present level of car use for journeys to and from school and make it possible for more pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport. The Department for Transport and Department for Education and Skills are providing support to all local authorities in England to help them achieve this through their joint "Travelling to School" project.

As part of the project both Departments are providing joint funding (£7.5 million a year) to local authorities to enable them to employ school travel advisers to work with schools and help them develop and implement school travel plans and other initiatives to reduce car use. In addition, the Department for Education and Skills is awarding small capital grants (from a fund of £20 million a year) to schools with approved school travel plans to enable them to make improvements to school sites that will encourage sustainable travel to school. Both funding for school travel advisers and small capital grants was originally awarded for the period April 2004 to March 2006 but was extended earlier this year to March 2008.

Telecommunication Masts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether telecommunication masts constructed by Network Rail will be used to provide mobile phone telecommunication services for the general public; and if he will make a statement. [25621]

Derek Twigg: This is an operational matter for Network Rail. Network Rail will respond directly to the hon. Member.

Transport Links (Essex)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government have in the context of the Thames Gateway to build new transport links in Essex. [25069]

Ms Buck: DfT and ODPM are working with the South Essex Transportation Board to identify the further transport and other infrastructure needs of the area in the context of the Thames Gateway.

In 2003 the Secretary of State for Transport announced a £1.6 billion investment in the widening of the M25. This programme will take in widening between junctions 27–30 on the Essex stretch of the motorway.

DfT relies on the respective transport authorities to come forward with proposals for suitable schemes through their local transport plans. Provisional plans were submitted this summer and are currently being assessed.

Waterways

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines he has issued to users of waterways on the definition of the term commercial. [25385]

Dr. Ladyman: The term commercial, applied to a vessel, is generally explained as any vessel which is not a pleasure vessel.

The term "pleasure vessel" is defined, in the Merchant Shipping (Marine Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations 2005 as:

> "pleasure vessel" means any vessel which is
>
> (i) wholly owned by an individual or individuals and used only for the sport or pleasure of the owner or the immediate family or friends of the owner; or
>
> (ii) owned by a body corporate and used only for the sport or pleasure of employees or officers of the body corporate, or their immediate family or friends, and is on a voyage or excursion which is one for which the owner is not paid for or in connection with operating the vessel or carrying any person, other than as a contribution to the direct expenses of the operation of the vessel incurred during the voyage or excursion; or
>
> (iii) any vessel which is wholly owned by or on behalf of a members' club formed for the purpose of sport or pleasure which, at the time it is being used, is used only for the sport or pleasure of members of that club or their immediate family, and for the use of which any charges levied are paid into club funds and applied for the general use of the club;

and no payments other than those mentioned are made by or on behalf of the users of the vessel, other than by the owner, and in this definition, "immediate family" means, in relation to an individual, the husband, wife or civil partner of the individual, and a brother, sister, ancestor or lineal descendant of that individual or of that individual's husband, wife or civil partner.

PRIME MINISTER

Civil Servants (Business Appointment Rules)

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects the review of the business appointment rules for former civil servants will be published. [23822]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Hutton) to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on Friday 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 613W.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister how much his Office spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23462]

The Prime Minister: My Office has not bought any items of art.

Dexion Workers

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister if he will meet former Dexion workers from Hemel Hempstead. [25569]

The Prime Minister: I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Hutton) will meet the hon. Member shortly to discuss this matter.

Ministerial Visit

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to visit Hemel Hempstead Hospital in this session of Parliament. [26252]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Prime Minister why the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs chairs the Ministerial Committee on the Olympics. [25627]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I act in accordance with the way previous Prime Ministers have chosen their chairmen of Cabinet committees.

Overseas Visits

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to be accompanied by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on all trips to *(a)* China and *(b)* India. [25013]

The Prime Minister: I am accompanied by Ministers as and when appropriate.

Visits

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1298W, for what reasons the cost of the visit was not met from public funds; and what the purpose of the visit was. [25933]

The Prime Minister: This is not a matter for the Government.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

0870 Phone Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24458]

Alan Johnson: A number of services provided by contractors on behalf of my Department have used 0870 telephone numbers. From the central records available the 0870 telephone numbers used in the last five years are:

0870 600 6080
0870 240 5927
0870 240 5929
0870 606 1515
0870 191 0111
0870 191 0112
0870 191 0113
0870 191 0114
0870 191 0115
0870 191 0116
0870 150 2100
0870 150 2300
0870 150 2333
0870 150 2500

The DTI has received no revenue from the use of these 0870 telephone numbers over the last five years.

Animal Health

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on animal health of the coming into force of the Supply of Relevant Veterinary Medicinal Products Order 2005. [25285]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Order considers the effect on animal health in detail, noting in particular that veterinary surgeons will still take decisions on which medicines prescribed or dispensed for animals under their care. Animal health was considered both by the Competition Commission in making the recommendations implemented through the order and by Government when accepting the recommendations.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent estimate the Government have made of the carbon dioxide emissions produced by the *(a)* building, *(b)* maintenance and *(c)* decommissioning of a new nuclear power station and the mining of the uranium fuel over (i) 10, (ii) 20 and (iii) 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [25665]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has undertaken no assessment of the lifecycle carbon emissions of a nuclear fission plant.

Development Agencies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list for each regional development agency in England the total sum spent on *(a)* corporate entertainment and *(b)* hospitality for each financial year since their creation. [19729]

Alun Michael: A table showing the breakdown for each of England's regional development agencies (RDAs) is as follows. The following definitions were used as a guide to each category:

(a) Corporate entertainment—the amount staff recorded as entertainment costs in their travel and subsistence claims over the last five years.

(b) Hospitality—expenditure on providing hospitality for RDAs' stakeholders and partners. RDAs do not account for such activities in this way, so these figures are an estimate, attributable to specific project activity. These figures do not include regular business meetings, consultation events, conferences and workshops where refreshments were provided.

RDA spend on corporate entertainment and hospitality 1999–2005

£

	1 April 1999–31 March 2000		1 April 2000–31 March 2001		1 April 2001–31 March 2002	
	Corporate entertainment	Hospitality	Corporate entertainment	Hospitality	Corporate entertainment	Hospitality
Advantage West Midlands (AWM)	0	8,500	0	28,500	0	163,500
East of England Development Agency (EEDA)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)	284	0	17,870	0	8,509	493
London Development Agency (LDA)	0	0	209	0	31,957	0
North West Development Agency (NWDA)	6,192	952	13,342	3,408	18,057	3,499
One North East (ONE)	6,659	13,426	2,849	10,061	30,853	4,377
South of England Development Agency (SEEDA)	24,304	—	34,689	—	47,063	—
South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)	8,937	0	13,045	0	17,723	0
Yorkshire Forward (YF)	3,405	0	20,095	0	19,616	0

	1 April 2002–31 March 2003		1 April 2003–31 March 2004		1 April 2004–31 March 2005	
	Corporate entertainment	Hospitality	Corporate entertainment	Hospitality	Corporate entertainment	Hospitality
Advantage West Midlands (AWM)	0	8,600	0	8,900	0	8,000
East of England Development Agency (EEDA)	4,649	3,000	11,582	9,417	32,777	6,851
East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)	34,723	3,998	34,405	13,939	43,194	5,107
London Development Agency (LDA)	16,801	0	23,133	0	19,462	0
North West Development Agency (NWDA)	28,657	4,251	32,848	5,986	29,997	5,642
One North East (ONE)	38,744	11,900	21,986	18,374	20,560	14,040
South of England Development Agency (SEEDA)	36,089	—	50,858	—	45,640	5,000
South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)	22,817	2,545	15,330	1,735	17,428	3,124
Yorkshire Forward (YF)	25,957	19,035	33,545	30,883	26,977	12,299

Notes:

1. AWM—the contents of the hospitality line and entertaining line do not include any costs relating to programme expenditure which are incurred incidentally on entertaining/hospitality as the information cannot easily be extracted.
2. EEDA response—figures are not available for years prior to 2002–03, but are not believed to be significantly different from 2002–03 (ie approximately £7,500 for both categories together).
3. SEEDA—the figures for corporate entertainment include hospitality—they were not able to separate them out before 2004–05.
4. YF—the contents of the hospitality line and entertaining line do not include any costs relating to programme expenditure which are incurred incidentally on entertaining/hospitality as the information cannot easily be extracted from our database.

Global Interactive Entertainment

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the UK's position within the global interactive entertainment market place; and what steps he is taking to prevent the relocation overseas of UK-based interactive entertainment corporations. [24960]

Alun Michael: In 2002 the DTI published a detailed study of the competitiveness of the UK computer games industry entitled "From Exuberant Youth to Sustainable Maturity". A copy was placed in the Libraries of the House. The analysis confirms that the UK has a vibrant and valuable computer games industry.

DTI works closely with UK Trade and Investment and the sector in focusing its efforts on maintaining the UK's position as a centre of excellence for the global electronic interactive games industry. The UK is a free and open market for international business so the Government does not seek to inhibit companies from placing their global business in the location that best suits their need.

Home Credit Providers

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of whether a conflict of interest may arise from the Office of Fair Trading being responsible for regulating home credit providers and for assessing competitive problems in the market. [24491]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The OFT is a regulatory body which is charged with certain responsibilities set out in statute. Under the Consumer Credit Act many types of business—including home credit companies—have to obtain a licence from the OFT. Under the Competition Act and Enterprise Act the OFT is responsible for competition law.

These functions are consistent as the OFT seeks to make markets work well and the CCA and competition powers both contribute to this aim. Therefore it is highly unlikely that any conflict of interest should arise.

Household Energy Bills

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average annual household bill has been for *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in each year since 1997. [25543]

Malcolm Wicks: The average annual standard credit household bills for gas and electricity for each year since 1997 are shown in the following table:

£

	Electricity	*Gas*
1997	285	328
1998	268	315
1999	264	305
2000	257	295
2001	250	293
2002	249	310
2003	250	320
2004	257	333
2005	284	383

Note:
Gas bills are calculated using an annual consumption of 18,000 kWh, electricity bills a consumption of 3,300 kWh. Figures are inclusive of VAT. Figures for 2005 bills for both fuels are provisional. These figures are in cash terms.
Source:
Quarterly Energy Prices, DTI.

Land and Vertical Agreements Exclusion Order

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons the Government decided to repeal the Land and Vertical Agreements Exclusion Order 2000. [25327]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government repealed the Land and Vertical Agreements Exclusion Order 2000 as part of the package of legislation that came into effect on 1 May 2004 to modernise competition law. The substantive arguments concerning repeal of this order may be found in the following documents:

1. The Government's June 2003 consultation on its proposals for the treatment of existing exclusions and exemptions from the Competition Act 1998 in the light of EC Regulation 1/2003 which may be found at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/modconsult1.pdf. The section on vertical agreements is at pages 21–32.

2. The Government's response to that consultation which may be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/compmodresp.pdf. The section on vertical agreements is at pages 8–11.

Magazine Distribution

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations the Office of Fair Trading has received from the European Commission on the legality of magazine distribution in the UK. [25326]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The EU Commission submitted views to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on the application of EU Competition Law to agreements on the distribution of newspapers and magazines, in response to the OFT's consultation document "Newspaper, Magazine Distribution—Public Consultation on draft opinion of OFT" issued 19 May 2005.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the measures being taken by other European Union countries to ensure that they are compliant with relevant European Union competition law in respect of magazine wholesalers and distributors. [25328]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. It is for other national competition authorities and/or the companies concerned to look at their domestic systems of newspapers and magazine distribution to assess whether they are compatible with competition law (including EC competition law).

Martin Benfield

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department were first informed of the allegations concerning Martin Benfield, a former secondee working in his Department in relation to his involvement with Europa Crown Limited; what information concerning the allegations was made known to (i) Ministers and (ii) his Department; what action was taken as a result of information received, including information from criminal proceedings in the USA; whether an investigation was conducted; and whether disciplinary procedures were pursued against any individuals. [21678]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Bribery and corruption are criminal offences and as such are dealt with by the criminal justice system; in any such case evidence should be handed over to them. UKTI takes such allegations very seriously and co-operates fully with the criminal justice system if asked to do so.

National Minimum Wage

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individual workers have benefited from the recent rise in the National Minimum Wage. [26140]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In October 2005, the national minimum wage for adults (workers aged 22 and over) increased to £5.05 per hour. For workers aged 18 to 21, the National Minimum Wage was increased to £4.25 per hour.

The DTI estimates that around 1.3 million people in the UK will be covered by the October 2005 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. The DTI has based this estimate on data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2004.

Natural Gas

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which companies are the five largest suppliers of natural gas in the UK. [25120]

Malcolm Wicks: Because the source of the available information is a statistical survey, the information requested cannot be given without the direct agreement of all the companies concerned.

Nuclear Power

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the practicality of developing nuclear-based combined heat and power energy services in the North East. [24935]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has undertaken no assessment of combined heat and power energy systems utilising nuclear generation.

Nuclear Reactors

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what assessment has been made of the increase in the mass of spent fuel over the current stockpile that would be created by a new programme of 10 AP-1000 nuclear reactors. [25596]

Malcolm Wicks: While the Department has undertaken no formal assessment, an industry assessment is included in papers on keeping the nuclear option open (KNOO) that were prepared for the DTIs Energy Advisory Panel and contributed to the work on the Energy White Paper:

KNOO Scoping Paper (EAP 11.06.02-P3)

KNOO Summary Paper (EAP 01.10.02-P3)

KNOO Miniprojects

These papers were placed in the Libraries of the House at the start for this year in response to a written parliamentary question from the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 648w.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with the Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organisation. [24398]

Malcolm Wicks: I have had no direct recent discussions with the Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organisation (NWMO), however, officials of NWMO were invited to the UK recently by the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee and took the opportunity to visit during the week beginning 23 October.

During the visit they held talks with members of the Lords Committee, the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM), and met with relevant officials from Defra and the DTI.

Options for the long-term management of higher activity wastes in the UK are currently the subject of consideration and evaluation by CoRWM, who are due to make their final recommendations to the Government in 2006. The long-term management policy for these higher activity wastes will then be decided by the UK Government and the devolved administrations in the light of CoRWM's recommendations.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the capital grant funding required to deliver the Government's Energy White Paper commitment to a 10 year solar PV demonstration programme; and if he will make a statement. [21396]

Malcolm Wicks: Since 2002 the Government have committed £41 million to the Major PV Demonstration programme and PV field trials. A further £30 million over three years has just been announced for the Low Carbon Buildings Programme, which will support renewables technologies including solar PV. In addition, the Government are developing a mirocgeneration strategy to tackle those barriers hindering the development of a sustainable market for microgeneration products.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the deadline is for grant applications to *(a)* stream two of his Department's Solar PV Major Demonstration programmes and *(b)* the community stream of his Department's Clear Skies programme. [21667]

Malcolm Wicks: The Solar PV Major Demonstration programme will hold a final call for applications under stream two in February 2006 and the community stream of the Clear Skies will hold a final call for applications on 4 November 2005.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the deadline is for final householder applications for stream one of his Department's *(a)* Clear Skies and *(b)* Solar PV Demonstration programmes. [21668]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no set deadline for householder (stream one) applications under Clear Skies and the Solar PV Demonstration programmes. Grants will be offered up until March 2006 unless forecasting shows that funding will run out sooner, in which case a month's notice will be given.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much time will elapse between the end of stream two funding allocations under the Solar PV Demonstration programme and the Clear Skies Capital Grant programme and the start of stream two allocations under the Low Carbon Buildings programme. [21669]

Malcolm Wicks: Plans to bring forward £1.5 million from the new £30 million budget for the Low Carbon Buildings programme should address concerns about a potential funding gap between the existing and new programmes.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* biomass, *(b)* tidal, *(c)* wind, *(d)* solar and *(e)* hydro-electric power in producing electricity; and what proportion of UK electricity production he expects each to contribute by 2010. [26119]

Malcolm Wicks: The Renewables Innovation Review was published in 2004 and considered which are the key renewable technologies for the delivery of the UK targets and aspirations for renewables, the UK's wider carbon reduction aspirations and for the creation of UK economic benefit. A copy of the review can be found on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/renewables/renew_2.1.4.htm.

The Renewables Obligation is the Government's key mechanism for encouraging renewable generation. It is market based and does not prescribe the level of contribution from different renewable technologies. However, it is expected that wind will make the major contribution towards the Government's 2010 target of 10 per cent. renewables with a smaller contribution from other technologies.

Self-employed

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what statutory help is available to the self-employed in connection with *(a)* maternity (i) pay and (ii) leave and *(b)* paternity leave. [25950]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The self-employed have no employer, so it is not possible for any statutory scheme of leave to apply to them.

Maternity allowance (MA) is payable for 26 weeks to self-employed women who meet the qualifying conditions. Eligible women receive £106 per week, or 90 percent. of their average weekly earnings if that is less.

Solar Energy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely impact on business planning for solar photovoltaic of the changes in funding mechanisms operated by the Department. [24446]

Malcolm Wicks: Business planning in the solar PV industry will need to take account of the recent announcement of a £30 million budget over three years for the low carbon buildings programme together with plans to develop a microgeneration strategy to tackle barriers to a sustainable market for microgeneration products.

Telecommunications

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment he has made of the reasons why the target set by the telecoms adjudicator for 250,000 lines in the local loop network to be unbundled by June was not met; and if he will make a statement on his assessment of the impact of the failure to meet that target upon the Government's digital strategy; [18501]

(2) what steps he is taking to ensure that the target set by the telecoms adjudicator for one million lines to be unbundled from the local loop network by June 2006 is met; and if he will make a statement. [18502]

Alun Michael: The telecommunications adjudicator scheme was initiated by Ofcom, the independent regulator of the communications sector to facilitate scale processes for the unbundling of local loops to meet market demand. Membership of this industry scheme is voluntary by BT Group plc and the LLU operators. Any targets set by the independent adjudicator are a matter for him on the basis of the best information then available.

The pace at which local loops are unbundled is a product of the regulatory framework set by Ofcom; the development of scale processes which is for BT, the industry and the adjudicator within that regulatory framework; and investment decisions by current and prospective LLU operators. I understand that lines are currently being unbundled at the rate of 4,000 a week; a rate that is expected by the adjudicator to rise substantially in the near term as existing broadband operators bulk migrate their customer base to LLU and as significant new operators invest in the market.

The digital strategy is multi-faceted, involving coordination of activities across Government to gain concerted action to deliver the benefits of a digitally enabled UK. Success will require effective partnership between private, public, community and voluntary interests utilising a range of delivery mechanisms, including the internet, mobile and broadcasting technologies. Progress toward implementation is being made across the digital strategy, for example by the DfES on transforming learning with ICT, the Home Office multi agency child internet safety centre and the publication on 1 November, of the strategy for transformational Government enabled by technology, which set out the vision for Government in the twenty-first century.

Uranium

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry from which countries uranium is supplied to UK nuclear power stations. [25484]

Malcolm Wicks: Currently the majority of uranium for the UK's civilian nuclear power reactors is sourced from Australia and Canada.

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the remaining unmined supplies of uranium across the world; and how many years' supply of uranium for nuclear power stations this represents should power generation continue at present levels. [25485]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department of Trade and Industry has made no estimate of the global supply of uranium or of the number of years that uranium could be supplied.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Nuclear Energy Agency and the International Atomic Energy Agency has published a report examining uranium production. The report, "Uranium 2003: Resources, Production and Demand"(2004) edition can be viewed at the OECD Bookshop website under Statistics Publications:
http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/index.asp?lang=en

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent estimate he has made of the carbon dioxide emissions resulting from the *(a)* mining, *(b)* processing, *(c)* transportation and *(d)* utilisation of uranium used in the production of nuclear energy in the UK; and what that figure represents in terms of emissions per kilowatt hour of energy produced. [25506]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has undertaken no assessment of the lifecycle carbon emissions of a nuclear fission plant.

World Trade Organisation

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his priorities are for the forthcoming World Trade Organisation meeting in Hong Kong. [25620]

Ian Pearson: Her Majesty's Government objective for the 6th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong is to achieve a package that

(i) is pro-development, (ii) helps build a more competitive European economy and (iii) allows a conclusion to the current trade round—the Doha Development Agenda—by the end of 2006.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Amateur Sports Clubs

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the average fee for a licence paid by amateur sports clubs is following the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [23924]

James Purnell: The data is not available. However, we estimate that most amateur sports clubs will fall within fee bands A and B. As regards a premises licence or a club premises certificate, clubs falling within Band A (non domestic rateable value between £0 and £4,300) will pay a fee of £100 for any conversion, new application or variation, with an annual charge of £70 thereafter, while clubs falling within Band B (non domestic rateable value from £4,301 to £33,000) will pay a fee of £190 and an annual charge of £180.

BBC Licence Fee

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many complaints she has received regarding the BBC licence fee in each of the last 10 years. [25872]

James Purnell: The information requested is not recorded centrally.

Concessionary Television Licences

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many concessionary television licences for *(a)* over-75s and *(b)* blind people were issued in each constituency in the Yorkshire and Humber region in each of the past two years. [24753]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer television licence fee concessions as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of concessionary licences issued. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in each constituency in the Yorkshire and Humber region in 2004–05 was

Constituency	*Households with a person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment, 2004–05*
Barnsley, Central	4,360
Barnsley, East and Mexborough	5,015
Barnsley, West and Penistone	5,065
Batley and Spen	4,390
Beverley and Holderness	5,910
Bradford, North	4,495
Bradford, South	4,815
Bradford, West	4,070
Brigg and Goole	5,145
Calder Valley	5,880
Cleethorpes	5,600
Colne Valley	5,600
Dewsbury	4,305
Don Valley	5,070
Doncaster, Central	5,850
Doncaster, North	4,745
East Yorkshire	6,985
Elmet	5,785
Great Grimsby	4,890
Halifax	5,525
Haltemprice and Howden	5,960
Harrogate and Knaresborough	5,990
Hemsworth	4,935
Huddersfield	5,085
Keighley	5,802
Kingston upon Hull, East	5,350
Kingston upon Hull, North	3,805
Kingston upon Hull, West and Hessle	5,020
Leeds, Central	4,270
Leeds, East	4,400
Leeds, North East	5,580
Leeds, North West	5,300
Leeds, West	4,460
Morley and Rothwell	4,960
Normanton	4,650
Pontefract and Castleford	4,780
Pudsey	5,705
Richmond (Yorks)	5,515
Rother Valley	4,875
Rotherham	4,470
Ryedale	6,510
Scarborough and Whitby	7,250
Scunthorpe	4,880
Selby	5,500
Sheffield, Central	4,115
Sheffield, Attercliffe	6,055
Sheffield, Brightside	4,235
Sheffield, Hallam	5,080
Sheffield, Heeley	5,995
Sheffield, Hillsborough	5,970
Shipley	5,785
Skipton and Ripon	6,795
Vale of York	6,010
Wakefield	5,195
Wentworth	5,035

Comparable information in relation to households with a person who is registered blind is not held centrally.

Departmental Staff (Relocation)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in her Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 following the Lyons Review; where they have been relocated; and if she will make a statement. [25078]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS's headcount has fallen by six since 1 April 2004. There have been no cost savings relating to IT projects. In 2004–05, DCMS's efficiency programme achieved savings totalling £28.5 million. Planned efficiency in 2005–06 total £152 million, against a programme target of £87 million. These savings have been made, or are expected to be made, in programmes across DCMS, the NDPBs it sponsors and local authority culture and leisure sectors.

Football Foundation

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money from the

Football Foundation has been awarded in the Hartlepool constituency in each year since the organisation was founded. [25678]

Mr. Caborn: Funding broken down by constituency is not available, but the overall approved total of funds committed to the Hartlepool region since the Football Foundation's creation in 2000–01 is £2,961,587.

This figure includes funding for a range of capital projects, community and education initiatives, provision of football kit and stadia improvement projects.

Gambling Act

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on what date Part 3 of the Gambling Act 2005 will come into force. [25728]

Mr. Caborn: We plan to bring the Gambling Act 2005 fully into force with effect from September 2007, and we have no plans to bring any of the provisions of Part 3 into force before that date.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many full-time equivalent employee reductions have been made as a result of the Gershon review; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* total value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [25079]

Mr. Lammy: The Department has no plans to relocate any people following the Lyons Review. However, in the non-departmental public bodies for which the Department is responsible, 12 posts in the Arts Council were relocated to Cambridge in 2004–05 and in 2005–06 there are plans to transfer 30 posts in the Big Lottery Fund to Newcastle.

Independent Sports Review

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had on the Independent Sports Review; and if she will make a statement. [25944]

Mr. Caborn: I always welcome contributions and ideas regarding the way we fund and administer the delivery of sport. I therefore read the Independent Sports Review with interest and noted its recommendations. I have not held any recent discussions on the report.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in her Department. [26591]

Mr. Lammy: We have had no IT projects which have cost over £1 million.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in her Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if she will list them. [26592]

Mr. Lammy: We have had no IT projects costing over £1 million scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee.

National Lottery

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what definition she uses of additionality in relation to the operation of the national lottery. [26239]

Mr. Caborn: We continue to follow the principle set out in our July 2003 policy statement

"Lottery funding will not be allowed to become a substitute for funding that would normally fall to mainstream Government spending"

a basic principle which has been expressed in slightly different ways in the past by successive Governments. We do not, however, believe that a legal definition is appropriate.

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she has discussed with *(a)* the Football Association, *(b)* the Premier League and *(c)* the Football League plans to stage matches in the UK over the period of the Olympic Games in 2012; and if she will make a statement. [25049]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Neither my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, nor I have held any discussions with the football authorities about the staging of matches in the UK during the period of the Olympic Games in 2012. However, officials will be discussing this with the football authorities in due course.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), as part of the Host City Contract, ask all host cities to take steps to ensure that no major event that could have an impact on the successful organisation and staging of the Games takes place in London or at other competition venues during the period of the Games. The Government and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) will be working with the IOC, venue owners, local authorities and national governing bodies to ensure we take a common sense approach to the application of this particular requirement.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she has discussed with the England and Wales Cricket Board the staging of international cricket matches in the UK over the Olympic period in 2012; and if she will make a statement. [25050]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Neither my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, nor I have held discussions with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) about the staging of international cricket matches in the UK over the Olympic period. However, my officials met the ECB last week to discuss the issue.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), as part of the Host City Contract, ask all host cities to take steps to ensure that no major event that could have an impact on the successful organisation and staging of the Games

takes place in London or at other competition venues during the period of the Games. The Government and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) will be working with the IOC, venue owners, local authorities and national governing bodies to ensure we take a common sense approach to the application of this particular requirement.

Premier League

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Office of Communications has spent to date on its investigation into Premier League broadcasting rights. [25706]

James Purnell: Ofcom and the Office of Fair Trading, as the national competition authorities, have been advising the European Commission in relation to their investigation into the sale of Premier League broadcasting rights. The level of expenditure by Ofcom on this work is a matter for the Chief Executive, Stephen Carter, and officials have asked him to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Super-casinos

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many bids there have been for a super-casino; and which locations such bids relate to. [25876]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has established an independent casino advisory panel to assist her in the exercise of her order making powers under Section 175(4) of the Gambling Act 2005 to determine the geographical distribution of the new casino premises licences, including the licence for the one regional casino permitted by the Act.

The panel is beginning to develop the necessary criteria for examining the proposals and detailing the process by which proposals should be submitted. It is envisaged that the panel will ask for formal proposals to be submitted to it early in the New Year.

Television Licences

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how the non-payment of television licences is detected. [25889]

James Purnell: The BBC has responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration under contract to the corporation. I have therefore asked the BBC's head of revenue management to consider the question raised by the hon. Member and to write to him direct. Copies of the reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Ultra-local Television

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will reframe the BBC's remit in local communities as a cautious and selective intervention in limited areas where it is clear that commercial models are not sustainable. [25343]

James Purnell: As stated in the Green Paper published in March 2005, the BBC needs to be vigilant about its potential to have a negative effect on commercial competitors. The Green Paper set out proposals for achieving this including that significant new activities should be subject to market impact assessments. Further detail will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper.

Under-aged Drinkers

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what impact she expects the Licensing Act 2003 to have on alcohol abuse amongst under-aged drinkers in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gravesham. [24051]

James Purnell: When implemented on 24 November, the Licensing Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) will increase the penalties for selling alcohol to children. The maximum fine on conviction will be increased to £5,000 and there will be the ability to suspend or forfeit personal licences at first offence, rather than on second conviction, as is the case now. The Act also removes a range of exceptions which allow children to buy alcohol, for example in clubs, and on river and coastal 'booze cruises'.

The 2003 Act is only one element of the Government's approach to tackling alcohol abuse. For example, the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy is founded on improving education and heath intervention, and the Violent Crime Bill will introduce a new closure power where premises are found to have sold alcohol persistently to people under 18-years-old.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24463]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has not operated any 0870 telephone numbers in the past five years, and therefore has not received any such revenue.

Africa

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the aid to Africa agreed at the G8 summit is being allocated between countries. [25210]

Hilary Benn: As agreed at the Gleneagles summit, the commitments of the G8 and other donors will lead to an increase in official development assistance to Africa of US$25 billion a year by 2010.

UK's assistance to Africa will increase to £1.25 billion per annum by 2008. These resources will be allocated to individual countries in line with DFID's resource allocation process. To help inform the decision, DFID uses a financial model to generate suggested allocations for bilateral

country programmes. This model takes account of both the extent of a country's poverty and the likely effectiveness of UK aid in reducing that poverty. Vulnerability to economic shocks and the amount of aid which countries are likely to receive from other donors are also taken into account, alongside a number of other factors. Country-by-country, these include the effectiveness of multilateral channels, conflict and reconstruction needs, inequality and social exclusion, our historical engagement and the political environment. In line with our new policy on conditionality, aid allocations are subject to developing country governments' commitment to poverty reduction, sound financial management, and human rights.

It is for other donors to decide how they will allocate their increased aid between African countries.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23841]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's Human Resources Director is responsible for developing and implementing the Department's Skills Development Plan.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23866]

Mr. Thomas: I have arranged for the document entitled "DFID Skills Development Plans, 2005–2006" to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23773]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not collect data on the qualifications of its new recruits. The vast majority of our posts require qualifications above level 2. We verify qualifications before a new recruit takes up post. Even where we do not require qualifications at level 2 or above, our competence based recruitment, which may include literacy and numeracy tests as appropriate, provide an assurance on levels of skill.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23792]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton to my response answer given the 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 511W.

Departmental Staff (Relocation)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 following the Lyons Review; where they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [25077]

Mr. Thomas: As a result of the Lyons Review, DFID agreed to relocate 85 posts from London to its office in Abercrombie House, East Kilbride. As at the end of September 2005, 74 posts have so far been relocated, of which five were relocated between January to March 2004, 40 were relocated during the financial year 2004–05, and 29 in the first six months of 2005–06. Another five moves are planned before the end of December 2005, and the target will be met by the end of 2005–06. All relocations are to East Kilbride.

Diplomatic Representation

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the contribution to *(a)* development and *(b)* his Department's work of United Kingdom embassies and high commissions in developing countries. [24240]

Hilary Benn: The United Kingdom impacts on development through many of its policies, not just those relating to aid. DFID therefore works closely with other Government Departments on issues such as trade, agriculture, migration and security, to improve the development impact of UK policies. DFID works particularly closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) because of its political role and presence in developing countries. We do this through several mechanisms at Whitehall and country level. For example, the global and Africa conflict prevention pools bring together the FCO, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and DFID to improve the UK's response to countries affected by conflict. We post development experts into embassies, and in the case of Sudan, have set up a joint FCO-DFID unit. These mechanisms have helped to promote closer understanding and working between the Departments.

UK Government Departments make assessments of their own performance against their objectives (as expressed in their public service agreements (PSA) twice annually. These assessments are published in the departmental reports and autumn performance reports which are available in the Libraries of the House. Where Departments share public service agreement targets, these assessments of progress are made jointly. The FCO therefore makes its own assessment of progress against its PSA target on sustainable development, which is their target most closely related to international development. DFID, the FCO and the MOD make a joint assessment of progress against the shared conflict prevention target, and DFID, the FCO and the Department of Trade and Industry make a joint assessment of progress against the shared target on international trade. The next assessment will be provided in the autumn performance report 2005, which will be published in December.

Both DFID and the FCO closely monitor our working relationship and an action plan is in place to improve in collaborative working, both in the UK and overseas. We are reviewing how best to work with the FCO at country level. DFID country offices may be co-located with a British embassy or high commission, or may operate from stand-alone premises, depending on local circumstances. Whether co-located or not, there is close co-operation between the embassy/high

commission and the DFID country office. This includes the sharing of analysis of local political, economic and development issues, of mutual benefit to the work of both Departments. Efforts to monitor collaboration at country level forms part of our work on improving the impact of the overall UK policy on development.

Disasters Emergency Committee

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will encourage the Disasters Emergency Committee to extend the list of organisations to whom it offers free transport of relief materials to those areas in Kashmir, Pakistan and India that were affected by the recent earthquake. [24402]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is funding flights for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) agencies so that the money they raise from their public appeal is spent on relief materials and programmes. So far we have funded 46 flights. We encourage the DEC to share available space on flights whenever possible.

Indian Ocean Tsunami

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what targets were set to measure the impact of UK aid to countries affected by the Indian ocean tsunami. [24238]

Mr. Thomas: Each country affected by the Tsunami produced a detailed needs assessment in order to guide the relief and reconstruction effort. DFID's humanitarian relief and reconstruction work has been agreed in close consultation with country Governments in light of these assessments. A detailed independent review of our humanitarian response in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India has been completed. This confirmed that DFID projects were appropriate to the relief needs of the affected populations, and were effectively implemented in a way which maximised their impact. DFID will undertake similar assessments of our reconstruction work once the balance of funds available has been fully committed.

Individual agencies providing relief and reconstruction assistance are expected to have set their own targets, taking into account affected country Government's needs assessments. In line with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice 2004, it is then expected that they report annually on progress and activities against their stated objectives.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the progress of *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU-funded reconstruction programmes in countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. [24239]

Mr. Thomas: A detailed independent review of our humanitarian response in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India has been completed. This confirmed that DFID projects were appropriate to the relief needs of the affected populations, and were effectively implemented in a way which maximised their impact.

DFID has allocated £65 million to meet reconstruction needs in the tsunami affected countries. Of this, £41 million has been committed; the use of the balance will depend on evidence of where this funding can be most appropriately used. Assessment of the use of these funds will begin once they have been fully committed.

The Government of Sri Lanka, together with donors, is currently reviewing the impact of all tsunami recovery programmes. This review is expected to be completed by the end of November, and as well as detailing successes will also identify areas where increased effort is required.

The European Court Authorities are currently evaluating the humanitarian programmes of ECHO (Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission). However, their report is not yet available. No assessment has yet been made of EU funded reconstruction programmes as much of this work is still underway.

TB

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what average percentage of funding allocated to direct budget support was attributed to the control and treatment of TB in the last year for which figures are available. [24454]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides a significant part of its funding directly to Government budgets in support of their overall strategies for poverty reduction (Poverty Reduction Budget Support). DFID provided £339 million in 2003–04 and £423 million in 2004–05 in this way. Partner Governments may use some part of this funding directly for TB control activities, or for building up health services to diagnose and treat TB as well as other major causes of ill health. It is not currently possible to provide accurate estimates of the proportion of PRBS which is spent directly on TB control and treatment. This is because national Governments do not have financial accounting systems that trace the proportion of direct budget support spent on individual diseases.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Pay

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account is taken of differences between the value of pension provision of members of the armed forces and that of workers in comparable jobs in the private sector when settling the pay of members of the armed forces. [25065]

Mr. Touhig: The Armed Forces Pay Review Body, in their recommendations on the total remuneration package for the armed forces, make an adjustment to comparator earnings figures to take account of the higher relative value of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme benefits against that of the pension schemes of comparator organisations. The non-contributory nature of the scheme is one factor taken into account but a key factor is the early and fast accrual of benefits under the AFPS compared with those available in the civilian sector.

Core Sites Initiative

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department's Core Sites Initiative will be concluded; if he will publish an interim report on progress on the Initiative; and if he will make a statement. [23317]

Mr. Touhig: The initial categorisation was completed in December 2002. Since then we have set in train some major packages of rationalisation and, as reported in the Stewardship Report on the Defence Estate 2004, we have used the baseline data collected during the Core Sites work to help inform our planning toward an estate of the right size and quality. We are working now on producing a rationalisation plan to cover the whole estate that, once initiated, will facilitate further consolidation of defence activity on to a smaller number of more densely utilised locations. Future operational needs, technological advances, and organisational change will be key factors in our planning for the future estate. Each rationalisation proposal that emerges will be subject to full consultation in the normal way.

WALES

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23734]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). The current DCA plan is to sign up to the Carbon Management programme, but has no date fixed for joining the scheme.

Carbon Offset Scheme

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much is due to be spent in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* each of the next four financial years on the carbon offset scheme by his Department; and what estimate he has made of the number and distance of flights and related carbon dioxide emissions which are being offset in each case. [22391]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) and complies with its environmental policies. The DCA is considering adopting the Carbon Offset Scheme.

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he plans to publish the next departmental sustainable development action plan. [22386]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) and operates within the DCA's action plan.

The DCA is developing a new action plan to be published this financial year via its website—www.dca.gov.uk

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment has been made of progress towards implementation of each target set in the last departmental sustainable development action plan. [22387]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). It is covered by DCA action plans and reports. The DCA is developing a new action plan, based on targets laid out in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. The plan is to be published this financial year, via the DCA website—www.dca.gov.uk

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of *(a)* new building work and *(b)* refurbishment of buildings of (i) his Department and (ii) agencies of his Department, has been subject to environmental assessment using BREEAM and BREEAM98 since May 1997. [22388]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office has had no major building refurbishment work, since it was established in July 1999.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with *(a)* the National Assembly for Wales and *(b)* the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the funding for enabling Welsh councils to reach the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012. [22984]

Nick Ainger: The Welsh Assembly Government's long-term vision is that everyone in Wales shall have the opportunity to live in good quality homes. To achieve this, steps are needed to ensure that existing housing meets the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. Social landlords are expected to devise realistic programmes to bring their properties up to the standard by the end of 2012. The Assembly has an agreement with HM Treasury that enables housing authorities to pay off overhanging debt to the Public Works Loan Board, on transfer of stock to a registered social landlord.

Winter Deaths

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people aged over 65 years in Wales died in each year since 1997 as a result of the effects of the winter months; and if he will make a statement. [23039]

Nick Ainger: Estimates from the Office for National Statistics indicate that excess winter deaths of people aged 65 and over in Wales since 1997 have been as follows:

	Number
1997–98	1,200
1998–99	2,670
1999–2000	2,660
2000–01	1,470
2001–02	1,460
2002–03	1,340
2003–04	1,480
2004–05	1,800

Note:
Estimates up to 2003–04 to the nearest 10, for 2004–05 to the nearest 100

The Welsh Assembly Government has policies and actions to reduce the impact of cold winter weather on the health of older people. It funds the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, which provides insulation and central heating in homes. The annual Keep Well This Winter campaign encourages older people to take extra measures to look after their health during the winter, such as having the flu vaccination, eating properly and taking appropriate exercise, by keeping warm and by keeping safe.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Sinn Fein Members (Allowances)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Leader of the House what total amount of public money has been spent on additional cost allowance claims by Sinn Fein Members of the House of Commons since they became eligible to make such claims. [25479]

Mr. Hoon: Between 8 January 2002 and 31 March 2005, when Sinn Fein Members were eligible to claim allowances, the total of the additional cost allowance claimed by all Sinn Fein Members has been £211,041.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. [25233]

Mr. Morley: The list of current members of the ACP is published on their website at http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/acp.asp?id=1506

Current members are:

Membership of The Advisory Committee on Pesticides: 1 January 2005

Chairman

Professor David Coggon is Professor of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the Medical Research Council Environmental Epidemiology Unit, University of Southampton. He has been the Chairman of the Committee for five years.

Deputy Chairman

Professor Robert Smith is a Professor of Biology at the University of Leicester and has been a member of the Committee for five years and Deputy Chairman for two years.

Members

Dr. Nicholas Bateman is Director of the Scottish Poisons Information Bureau, Reader in Clinical Pharmacology and Consultant Physician in Edinburgh. He has been a member of the Committee for five years. Dr. John Cherrie is an Occupational Hygienist at the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh and Honorary Reader at the University of Aberdeen. He has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Mr. James Clarke is Science and Business Development Manager of ADAS Sustainable Crop Management at ADAS. He has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Dr. Richard (Charlie) Clutterbuck is an Honorary Visiting Fellow in the Department of Health Management and Food Policy, City University London and has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Professor David Colman is Professor of Agricultural Economics in the School of Social Sciences at The University of Manchester, and is a new member to the Committee.

Dr. Clifford Elcombe is a Senior Lecturer, (toxicologist) at the Biomedical Research Centre, Dundee University and has been a member of the Committee for three years.

Dr. Ian Grieve is a Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Environment Science at the University of Stirling and has been a member of the Committee for four years.

Professor Gabrielle Hawksworth is a Professor of Molecular Toxicology at The University of Aberdeen, and is a new member to the Committee.

Dr. Charles Vyvyan Howard is a Senior Lecturer, (medical toxico-pathologist) in the Department of Human Anatomy and Cell Biology at the University of Liverpool and has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Ms Rosaline Howell is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences at Manchester Metropolitan University and has been a member of the Committee for one year.

Dr. Alastair Leake is Head of The Game Conservancy Trust's Allerton Project in Loddington, Leicestershire and is a new member to the Committee.

Professor David Macdonald is Director of the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at the University of Oxford and is A. D. White Professor at Cornell University. He has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Professor Lorraine Maltby is Professor of Environmental Biology at The University of Sheffield and has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Ms Diane McCrea is an independent consultant in food and consumer affairs and has been a member of the Committee for one year.

Dr. Patricia McElhatton is Director of the National Teratology Information Service in Newcastle upon Tyne and has been a member of the Committee for five years.

Dr. Martin McPherson is a Technical Director at Crop Protection Services, Stockbridge Technology Centre in Selby, and is a new member of the Committee.

Dr. Daniel Osborn is Science Director for the Sustainable Economies Programme of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Dr. Vinod Tohani is a Consultant in Public Health Medicine/Consultant in Communicable Disease Control at the Southern Health Board in Armagh, Northern Ireland and has been a member of the Committee for three years.

Dr. Rosemary Waring is a Reader in human toxicology at the School of Biosciences at the University of Birmingham and has been a member of the Committee for two years.

Prof. Coggon has served as Chairman for two consecutive terms of office and will retire from this position on 31 December 2005

I have recently announced the appointment of Prof. Jon Ayres as Chairman of the committee with effect from 1 January 2006 for a term of three years. http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/051021d.htm

Aircraft Pollution

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has undertaken into the polluting effects of chemtrails for aircraft. [24397]

Mr. Morley: The Department is not researching into chemtrails from aircraft as they are not scientifically recognised phenomena. However, condensation trails (contrails) are known to exist and have been documented since the 1940s. Contrails are composed of ice crystals forming on the small particles and water vapour emitted by aircraft as the result of the combustion process, they form behind high-flying aircraft depending on the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere.

A major scientific report, "Aviation and the Global Atmosphere", was published in 1999 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The report assessed the current contribution of aviation to climate change and, based on a range of scenarios and assumptions, forecast its contribution up to 2050. It estimated that contrails covered about 0.1 per cent. of the Earth's surface in 1992 and projected this cover would grow to 0.5 per cent. by 2050 (on middle range assumptions). More recently this work has been updated from the results of the EU 5th Framework Project, TRADEOFF.

Contrails continue to be the subject of research to help better understand both how they are formed and what effects they have on the atmosphere.

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the length of time the avian influenza virus survives in soil. [24110]

Mr. Bradshaw: The survival of avian influenza viruses in the environment will be influenced by the strain of the virus, whether they are held in water or faeces, the host from which the faeces came, the physical properties of the faeces and the ambient temperature. The scientific literature gives a range, with different strains of virus from 12 to 36 hours at 37C for chicken faeces artificially infected with Low Pathogenic H7N2 to at least 105 days in wet faeces under field conditions with High Pathogenic H5N2.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many birds *(a)* entered and *(b)* died in quarantine in the UK in each year from 2000 to 2005. [24648]

Mr. Bradshaw: Figures from the EU wide computer system used to record imports of animals and their products, known as TRACES, show that from January 2004 to date 186,442 captive birds were imported into the UK.

From January 2000 to December 2004 our records show that 679,166 captive birds were imported into the European Union. We do not have figures for UK imports during this period as this figure was obtained from the previous EU computer system and a detailed breakdown of the figures is no longer available.

These figures are for captive birds, as no distinction can be made between captive bred birds and wild caught birds. The figures to not include poultry. However there are discrepancies between these figures and the figures reported by CITES. We are concerned about these discrepancies between these figures and are urgently investigating them to resolve the problem.

Records of bird deaths in quarantine are not held centrally. However any such deaths are required to be reported by the quarantine facility to their local veterinary inspector who arranges for post-mortem examination at an approved laboratory.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the arrangements are for ministerial responsibility for the State Veterinary Service across England and Wales in *(a)* normal circumstances and *(b)* the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [24654]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have ministerial responsibility for the State Veterinary Service in both normal circumstances and during animal disease outbreaks.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has overall responsibility for Defra and its agencies.

Details of how the Prime Minister, other Ministers and the Devolved Administrations are involved in the management of disease emergencies, can be found in Defra's "Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan". The contingency plan is on Defra's website.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken by her Department to ensure that bird farmers are adequately protected against risks of avian influenza; and what information is being disseminated by her Department to farmers regarding the current situation. [24958]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information for bird keepers regarding worker protection has been published on the Defra website (http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/poultrykeepers.htm). This information includes biosecurity advice, recommendations regarding personal protective equipment and guidance on measures to take should an outbreak of avian influenza virus be suspected.

As a matter of course we have distributed guidance material to our partners in the industry who are helping to distribute this material to their members, who cover the great majority of bird keepers. We have also produced a simple one-page leaflet on biosecurity and surveillance for smaller concerns and hobby keepers. This was posted on our website and sent out to organisations representing the industry to send on to their members. It has also been mailed to 3,800 vet practices in Great Britain.

In addition we have placed adverts in trade and specialist press targeting the same audience to get biosecurity and surveillance messages across. All these pieces of guidance are available on the Defra website.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish new advice to poultry-keepers regarding measures that they can take to reduce the risk of spreading avian influenza. [25052]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have reviewed our biosecurity guidance for poultry keepers and published two leaflets during the last month, one aimed at commercial keepers and the other for smaller concerns and hobby keepers. We have also published advice on assessing risks.

We have distributed this guidance material to our partners in the industry who are helping to distribute to their members, who cover the great majority of bird keepers. In addition, the material has been mailed to 3,800 vet practices in Great Britain in order to reach the hobby keeper. We have also placed adverts in trade and specialist press to get biosecurity and surveillance messages across to this same group.

This information is available on the Defra website: http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/poultrykeepers.htm).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the epidemiological significance of clades is in relation to the H5N1 virus of avian influenza. [25378]

Mr. Bradshaw: Between 15 and 20 clades of H5N1 avian influenza virus have been identified since typing work began. The H5N1 viruses which have caused disease in poultry and humans since 2004 lie within a distinct sub-grouping formed by two clades.

Biofuels

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the level of tax on biofuels; and if she will make a statement. [23168]

Mr. Morley: The Department is in regular contact with Treasury Ministers to discuss a whole range of matters related to energy and environmental policy. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs meets regularly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a wide range of matters that affect the business of the Department. As with all tax matters, decisions on duty incentives rest with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Bird Trade

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many wild birds were traded into the UK *(a)* in 2004 and *(b)* to date in 2005; and what checks have been made for avian influenza among these birds. [23812]

Mr. Bradshaw: Figures from the EU wide computer system used to record imports of animals and their products, known as TRACES, show that in 2004 67,480 captive birds were imported into the European Union. Of these 66,586 were imported into the UK.

In 2005, 120,639 captive birds were imported into the EU to date. Of these 119,856 were imported into the UK.

These figures are for captive birds, as no distinction can be made between captive bred birds and wild caught birds. The figures do not include poultry. However there are discrepancies between these figures and the figures reported by CITES. We are concerned about these discrepancies between these figures and are urgently investigating them to resolve the problem.

All imported captive birds must be held in quarantine for 30 days during which time a test must be carried out for the avian influenza virus.

Brazilian Meat

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what means of identification is available to segregate the two parts where consignments of beef from Brazil are a mixture of animals slaughtered before and after 30 September. [26074]

Mr. Bradshaw: The packaging of consignments has a traceability code which includes three elements: the approval number of the meat plant; the slaughter date; and an internal number. For example:

Code: 17510109050000 =

1751—Approval number of plant

01–1st

09—September

05—2005

0000—internal number

Border inspection posts can therefore determine from the traceability code on the boxes of meat, the date the animal was slaughtered.

Byway Claims

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many byway claims were made to *(a)* Wiltshire county council and *(b)* other county councils between 5 August and 11 October; and how many of these were attributable to the Trail Riders Federation in each case. [24420]

Jim Knight: The figures provided by county councils are as follows.

Highway authority	*Number of byway claims made between 5 August and 11 October*	*Number of these claims attributable to Trail Riders Fellowship*
Bedfordshire	0	—
Buckinghamshire	0	—
Cambridgeshire	0	—
Cheshire	0	—
Cornwall	0	—
Cumbria	2	2
Derbyshire	0	—
Devon	0	—
Dorset	24	19
Durham	0	—
East Sussex	0	—
Essex	0	—
Gloucestershire	2	0
Hampshire	0	—
Herefordshire	0	—
Hertfordshire	0	—
Kent	0	—
Lancashire	1	0
Leicestershire	0	—
Lincolnshire	5	4
Norfolk	0	—
Northamptonshire	0	—
Northumberland	0	—
North Yorkshire	1	0
Nottinghamshire	0	—
Oxfordshire	0	—
Rutland	0	—

Highway authority	Number of byway claims made between 5 August and 11 October	Number of these claims attributable to Trail Riders Fellowship
Shropshire	0	—
Somerset	0	—
Staffordshire	0	—
Suffolk	4	0
Surrey	0	—
Warwickshire	0	—
West Sussex	0	—
Wiltshire	12	3
Worcestershire	0	—

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24381]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Department does not own any land or property in the Kettering constituency.

Energy Efficiency

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to build local markets for biomass wood fuel. [22684]

Mr. Morley: The Government support the use of woodfuel for the generation of heat, combined heat and power (CHP), and electricity. We are working closely with industry and others to develop markets and promote uptake. Householders and community organisations can apply for funding under DTI's £12.5 million Clear Skies Initiative to install renewable energy schemes, including wood-fuelled boiler systems. Defra's £60 million Community Energy programme provides capital grants to install new and refurbish old community heating networks, including renewable energy systems. DTI and the Big Lottery Fund's Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme has allocated £66 million of funding to develop end-use markets for biomass, including woodfuel, in the heat, CHP and electricity generation sectors. Grants are also available from the regional development agencies. Co-firing of woodfuel with fossil fuels in conventional power stations is a developing end-use. Support to help develop the supply chain for woodfuel has been made available under the £3.5 million Bio-energy Infrastructure Scheme. The Community Renewables Initiative's local support teams are working to develop local woodfuel projects in their areas.

We recognise that there are issues that make it difficult to encourage the confidence needed for the development of woodfuel markets. The Biomass Task Force, led by Sir Ben Gill, was set up a year ago to identify the barriers to developing biomass energy, including woodfuel, and to recommend ways to overcome the problems. Their report was published on 25 October. The Government has committed itself to publishing a full response to the report within the next six months.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of current energy usage in the public sector the Government estimates can be saved through energy efficiency measures. [24971]

Mr. Morley: For analysis purposes, the public sector is usually treated as part of the wider commercial and public services sector. Estimates from experts vary, depending on assumptions made. In broad terms, it might be possible to achieve savings of around 30 per cent. if all technical measures were implemented, regardless of cost, across the sector as a whole. However, the potential for cost-effective measures by 2010 is around 10 per cent.. The same figures are assumed to apply to the public sector share.

Flooding

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what circumstances victims of flooding are eligible for compensation from her Department. [24932]

Mr. Morley: The approach adopted by successive governments has been that no compensation is generally payable to those affected by flooding. This reflects the fact that flood defence legislation is based on "permissive powers" i.e. that bodies such as the Environment Agency are empowered to undertake flood defence works but are not obligated to do so.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what criteria the Department uses to decide whether a storm is of a one in 30-year storm for the purposes of establishing when compensation may be paid by a water undertaking following flood damage; [24512]

(2) what legislation governs compensation payments by water undertakings in the event of flooding. [24513]

Mr. Morley: The Guaranteed Standards Scheme (GSS) sets out the conditions under which customers of water and sewerage companies are entitled to compensation. It lays down statutory standards of service that must be met by companies for internal sewer flooding and is governed by the Water Industry Act 1991, under the Water Supply and Sewerage Services (Customer Service Standards) Regulations.

Most companies' compensation payments and assistance to customers go beyond the statutory requirements. If, however, sewer flooding has been caused by severe weather (e.g. widespread flooding) then a payment is not due.

GM Crops

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the recent European Court of Justice ruling on GM crops. [25230]

Mr. Morley: The recent European Court of Justice ruling turned down an application by Austria for a derogation from Directive 2001/18/EC to declare the region of Upper Austria a GM-free zone. The court's ruling was based on the fact that the Austrian Government failed to prove that the region of Upper Austria had a unique ecosystem which might justify a

specific local risk assessment. Under existing EU law, in order to declare a GM-free zone, that is a region where GM crops cannot be cultivated, a member state has to prove that there are special reasons to introduce national measures.

Under current EU law, as agreed by EU member states, the only legitimate grounds for narrowing the geographical scope of an approval to prevent cultivation in a defined zone are the production of clear evidence that the GM crop involved poses a particular risk to the specific area in question. In the Austrian case, the European Court of Justice found that Austria had not demonstrated the existence of any such risks to the region of Upper Austria.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's latest recommendation is on field separation distances between GM and non-GM crops. [25232]

Mr. Morley: The separation distances between GM and non-GM crops used in the Farm Scale Evaluations were based on information from the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) in 2000. We have commissioned a further report from NIAB on separation distances to inform the proposals we are developing on the co-existence of GM and non-GM crops. We will issue a consultation paper on this in due course.

Greenhouse Gases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the emissions of the Kyoto basket of gases will be between 2008 and 2012 if the trend in emissions of the last *(a)* five years, *(b)* four years, *(c)* three years, *(d)* two years and *(e)* one year continue; and whether the Kyoto target would be met under each projection. [25008]

Mr. Morley: The UK commitment under the Kyoto protocol is to reduce these emission by 12.5 per cent. below the base year level for the years of the commitment period (2008–12).

The following table shows projected UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and percentage reductions during the commitment period obtained by assuming that the linear trend in emissions of the last *(a)* five years, *(b)* four years, *(c)* three years, *(d)* two years and *(e)* one year continue, based on the most recent published UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory data, which cover the period 1990 to 2003. The table indicates that the UK will exceed the reduction target in each projection except for case *(e)* where one year's difference in emissions is used to indicate the trend. Case *(e)* is the least robust projection as it is most susceptible to interannual variability due to fuel price relativities, external temperatures and other effects. On the basis of projections provided to the European Union in June, we expect to exceed the Kyoto commitment by about 8 percentage points, and the review of the UK Climate Change Programme currently is assessing the actions needed to put the UK back on course to meet our domestic target of achieving a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010, which would further increase the safety margin.

Projections based on trend back	*Average UK GHG emission 2008–12 (MtC)*	*Reduction from Kyoto protocol base year emissions (percentage)*
(a) 5 years	163.5	-20.3
(b) 4 years	176.1	-14.2
(c) 3 years	176.5	-14.0
(d) 2 years	164.9	-19.6
(e) 1 year	190.9	-7.0

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of new recruits to her Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23777]

Jim Knight: This information is not available. This is because Defra introduced a competence based recruitment and selection system in October 2003. Competences are individual abilities or characteristics that are key to effectiveness in work and do not rely on educational qualifications. New recruits to Defra to grades below the senior civil service will have demonstrated the particular skills and behaviours at the level required for the vacancy for which they applied. For specialist posts such as scientists, lawyers, vets and statisticians, candidates are also asked to provide further detail of their technical knowledge (including qualifications) and expertise for the posts.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for 0Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of her Department. [23787]

Jim Knight: Since October 2003 Defra has operated competence based recruitment and selection processes. Competences are individual abilities or characteristics that are key to effectiveness in work. The aim is to obtain precise and verifiable information about when candidates have displayed the particular behaviours at the level required for the vacancy. This is achieved generally through a structured competence based application form and assessment through interview and, where appropriate, assessment centre exercises.

Non-food Crops

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many non-food crops are grown in England; and what the percentage produced of each sort was *(a)* by value and *(b)* by volume in 2004–05. [22175]

Mr. Morley: In 2004, at least 11 crops were grown in England for non-food and energy use. The contribution of each of these in terms of production area and value is shown in the following table. Our best estimate of n on-food crop production area in 2004 is approximately 115,000 hectares, 40 per cent. of this area was represented by non-food crop production on set-aside land.

These figures do not necessarily give the whole picture: a number of crops can be used for either food or non-food uses; non-food crops may be grown on non set-aside land or not declared under any particular scheme; and part of the crop may be used as food while co-products are used as industrial raw materials or fuel.

Estimated areas of non-food crops grown in England, tonnage of seed or biomass produced (tonnes) and estimate of total value (tonnage x £/tonne) in the 2004 cropping season

Crop	Area (ha)	Area (percentage)	Tonnage (tonnes)	Estimated total value[1] (£)	Total value (percentage)
Oilseed Rape	66,468	57.5	[2,3]199,197	27 million	56.8
Linseed	32,000	27.7	[2,3]53,864	9.7 million	20.4
High Erucic Acid Oilseed rape	8,430	7.3	[2]39,047	7.4 million	15.6
Papaver Somniferum	1,978	1.7	[2]2,242	692,000	1.5
Hemp	1,539	1.3	[2]8,464	931,000	2.0
Flax	1,426	1.2	[2]2,139	53,000	0.1
Short Rotation Coppice	1,729	1.5	[3]13,832	553,000	1.2
Crambe	862	0.8	[2]758	136,000	0.3
Miscanthus	333	0.3	[3]2,660	90,000	0.2
Barley	456	0.4	[2]2,445	142,000	0.3
Wheat	288	0.3	[2]2,036	118,000	0.2
Essential Oil Crops	73	<0.1	[2]532	746,000	1.6
Total	115,260				

[1] Estimated values based on industry derived or estimated market values and tonnage data.
[2] Declared tonnages by first processor in Defra payment schemes.
[3] Estimated tonnages based on average yield—note that as oilseed rape and linseed are grown on both set-aside and main regime land, part of the tonnage is declared and part estimated. Much of the SRC and miscanthus would not have reached first harvest by 2004 and will therefore not have delivered the tonnage and value estimated.

Notes:
1. The data represents information collated through various Defra payment schemes. However, some crops for non-food use (eg essential oil crops) may be grown outside such schemes and out-with any arable support scheme, in addition some food crops may be diverted to non-food uses (eg wheat for starch). Accurate information on such crops and crop movements is not centrally collated. The data therefore represents an underestimate of the true non-food crop area and production statistics.
2. Data presented for Short Rotation Coppice and Miscanthus areas represents information collated under the Energy Crops Scheme on planting grant applications and applications under the Woodland Grant Scheme.
3. Data for non-food crops grown on set-aside and crops for energy grown on non-set-aside land in receipt of payments under the new Energy Aid Payment Scheme was derived from data collated by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). 32,927 ha of rape were grown on main regime land in 2004 for biodiesel production—this is included in the figures for oilseed rape in the table.
4. Data for Linseed is derived from Defra Statistics for main regime land and the RPA for production on set-aside (999 ha).
5. Data for flax and hemp areas and production is derived from declarations under the UK Flax and Hemp Fibre Regime.

Nuclear Plants (Coastal Erosion)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the impact of coastal erosion on *(a)* each coastally-sited nuclear plant, *(b)* Sellafield and *(c)* the low level radioactive disposal site at Drigg. [23555]

Mr. Morley: Operational responsibility for managing the risk from coastal erosion in England rests with maritime district councils who, in partnership with the Environment Agency and other bodies with coastal defence responsibilities, take an integrated and long-term view of managing coastlines through Shoreline Management Plans. These plans, in line with Government policy, consider the implications of coastal processes, including erosion. More detailed coastal strategies are then developed, taking into account economic, social and environmental matters. These detailed strategies consider the specific needs of key coastal installations, such as nuclear power stations, Sellafield and the Low-level Waste Repository (LLWR) at Drigg.

The safety of nuclear installations in the UK is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which requires operators to produce safety cases which address a range of internal and external hazards, including flooding. Safety cases are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changing conditions.

HSE, the Environment Agency, maritime district councils and operators ensure, through consultation on the development of Shoreline Management Plans, that the plans do not compromise the needs of nuclear sites.

The impact of coastal erosion on the LLWR has also been considered as part of a Post-Closure Safety Case for the site, submitted to the Environment Agency by British Nuclear Group Sellafield Limited (BNGSL) in September 2002. BNGSL's assessment predicts that the LLWR could be destroyed by coastal erosion in 500 to 5,000 years if no action were taken to maintain the coastline.

The Environment Agency will shortly issue its decision on future regulation of the LLWR, and is proposing to require BNGSL to consider a number of options to reduce predicted impacts.

Poultry Numbers

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of poultry kept by individuals other than farmers; and what mechanisms are in place to enable advice to be made available to them. [20948]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The number of poultry keepers is unknown. However the Government have put in place legislation to set up a

register of poultry keepers and are proceeding to collect data from all those who keep 50 or more birds. The Government have used its website, information sent to all veterinary practices, information sent to stakeholder representative organisations to cascade to their members and advertisements placed in interest journals and media to distribute advice to all keepers including backyard keepers.

Recycling

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent progress she has made towards re-starting the collection and recycling of farm-use black plastic wrap; and if she will seek to legislate to introduce a statutory levy. [24407]

Mr. Bradshaw: In December 2004, the Government issued a consultation paper on the Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations, which will apply waste management controls to agricultural waste. Included in this consultation paper was a chapter proposing that a Producer Responsibility scheme should be introduced, under which the producers of non-packaging farm plastics, such as silage wrap and crop covers, would be obligated to pay for their collection and recovery or disposal. The main question posed was whether such a system should be voluntary or mandatory.

I am now considering the way forward together with ministerial colleagues in light of the responses to the consultation.

Packaging plastics are already covered by the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended). However, it is envisaged that any producer responsibility scheme that is introduced will be developed to enable the collection of both packaging and non-packaging waste plastics from farms.

I have recently awarded the Agricultural Waste Stakeholders Forum (AWSF) £1 million of Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) funding to establish a programme of work to investigate the challenges of collecting and recycling farm plastics, including how best to collect packaging and non-packaging plastics together, and to identify potential solutions to the problems associated with the collection of this waste stream.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of *(a)* paper and *(b)* other recyclable waste were recycled by the Department in 2004–05. [25461]

Jim Knight: During 2004–05, the most recent full year for which figures are available, Defra and its executive agencies recycled

(a) 668.83 tonnes of paper, and

(b) 274.27 tonnes of other recyclable waste.

Television Sets

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what date she plans to publish guidance for local authorities on the disposal of discarded television sets. [25006]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive aims to prevent WEEE arisings and to encourage reuse, recycling and recovery of WEEE. Article 6(1) and annex II of the directive introduce requirements for the treatment of collected items of WEEE to remove certain substances, preparations and components to avoid the dispersion of pollutants into the recycled material or waste stream. We intend to publish guidance on compliance with these requirements by those treating WEEE when regulations are made to transpose this provision.

If local authorities register their civic amenity sites as designated collection facilities, producers will be responsible for the costs of treatment and recycling of separately collected WEEE, including televisions, from June 2006.

In order to obtain better information on the potential hazardous nature of WEEE, Defra have commissioned a project to identify hazardous components in specified items of household WEEE. This project will assist Defra in drawing up guidance for local authorities, recyclers, treatment facilities and other interested parties to enable the identification of hazardous WEEE. Defra aim to publish guidance in spring 2006.

The Environment Agency has published frequently asked questions (FAQs) on hazardous waste issues and guidance on the management of specific waste streams including cathode ray tubes, commonly found in televisions. This information is available on the Environment Agency's website at: www.environment-agency.gov.uk and the FAQs are also available on the Defra website www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/special/index.htm.

Warm Front Scheme

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many residents in the Hemel Hempstead constituency were *(a)* eligible for and *(b)* received grants under the warm front scheme in each of the last five years. [25812]

Mr. Morley: Information on the exact number of residents in Hemel Hempstead eligible for warm front is not available. However, on the basis of the statistical modelling used by the warm front scheme manager it is estimated that around 5,250 households in Hemel Hempstead could currently be eligible for assistance from the scheme.

Between the launch of the warm front scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the numbers of households assisted in each year in Hemel Hempstead constituency are as follows:

	Number of households assisted
2000–01	42
2001–02	131
2002–03	124
2003–04	37
2004–05	150
Total	484

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Energy Consumption (Parliamentary Estate)

Norman Lamb: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how much energy has been consumed by the Parliamentary Estate in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [26149]

Nick Harvey: The information is as follows:

(a) The total energy consumption of the Parliamentary Estate in each of the last five years is as follows:

	kWh
2000–01	53,500,000
2001–02	54,400,000
2002–03	56,400,000
2003–04	58,500,000
2004–05	60,300,000

(b) Cash expenditure on energy in each of the last five years is as follows:

	£000
2000–01	1,180
2001–02	1,460
2002–03	1,520
2003–04	1,490
2004–05	1,890

The figures do not include energy used in 7 Millbank which is paid through a service charge, and show cash spent without any accruals.

Fairtrade Products

Mr. Pelling: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many Fairtrade products are *(a)* used and *(b)* for sale in the House; and what plans there are to increase this number. [26229]

Nick Harvey: A total of eight products approved by the Fairtrade Foundation are sold in the House of Commons restaurants on a permanent basis, and another 10 are available from time to time. Of these, coffee, tea and bananas are used throughout the Refreshment Department, although the last named are not always available. The Department is considering changing to the use of Fairtrade approved sugar. Other products are introduced for sale in response to consumer demand or as a result of becoming aware of new products available on the market.

Flowers (Expenditure)

David Taylor: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what the House's expenditure on flowers was in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [24495]

Nick Harvey: Expenditure on flowers in the catering outlets was:

	£
2000–01	7,497
2001–02	8,378
2002–03	8,081
2003–04	9,457
2004–05	11,513

Flowers are also displayed elsewhere in the House and used at functions. These had a net cost of £8,196 in 2004–05, giving total expenditure of £19,709 in that year. The financial systems do not in every respect separately identify the cost of flowers, so that identifying total expenditure figures for earlier years would involve disproportionate cost.

TREASURY

Civil Service Relocation

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with local councils in Norwich on plans to relocate civil servants there; and how many jobs are involved. [25918]

Mr. Des Browne: As I stated in my answer on 1 November, 11 HM Treasury Group posts are planned to relocate to Norwich. Neither the Chancellor nor myself, as the Minister responsible for the relocation programme, have held discussions with local councils in Norwich on plans to relocate civil servants there. However, officials from the Office of Government Commerce, which is overseeing the implementation of the relocation programme, have attended relocation events hosted by Norwich City Council.

Expenditure/Revenue (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 889W, on expenditure and revenue in Scotland, what further information his Department would need to collect to produce a breakdown of aggregate *(a)* revenue and *(b)* borrowing by country and region. [24763]

Mr. Des Browne: Estimates of expenditure and revenue in Scotland are published by the Scottish Executive in "Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland". The Treasury does not produce a breakdown of aggregate revenue and borrowing by country and region. The Scottish Executive's publication explains the methodological basis of the Scottish Executive

research; that a wide range of indicators and assumptions were used; that regional budgetary accounts remain relatively undeveloped; and that there is no requirement for the compilation of UK regional budgetary accounts.

Forms (Duplication of Information)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make changes to forms *(a)* V064, *(b)* V06003 and *(c)* V07012 in order to reduce duplication of required information; and what assessment he has made of the efficiency of these forms in their current format. [24957]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Valuation Office Agency keeps all its forms under review to take account of changes in the legislation and taxpayers' suggestions. The three forms concerned are thought to be fit for purpose.

Golden Rule

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce an independent monitoring system for the Golden Rule. [25952]

Mr. Des Browne: Progress against the golden rule is measured by the average annual surplus on the current budget as a percentage of GDP since the cycle began. The independent Office for National Statistics produces the public finance and national accounts statistics on which this measurement is based. These statistics are subject to the same safeguards and quality control procedures that apply to all statistics produced within the National Statistics framework. The Chancellor confirmed to the Treasury Committee on 19 July, the Comptroller and Auditor General has been invited to audit the end date of the previous economic cycle and give us his view as to whether the judgment is reasonable and cautious.

Budget 2005 projections show that the Government will meet the golden rule in the current economic cycle. These projections will be updated in the forthcoming pre-Budget report.

Hemel Hempstead

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the average outstanding balance on mortgages for homes in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire; what the average month's interest payable on each of those balances would be at current interest rates; and what the average month's interest payable on each balance would have been (i) in May 1997 and (ii) immediately after the pound left the exchange rate mechanism in 1992. [26350]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Data on mortgage balances outstanding is only available at a national level.

Pensions

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total amount is of unfunded pension liabilities from former nationalised industries. [26221]

Mr. Des Browne: Former nationalised industries did not generally participate in unfunded public service schemes, they usually used funded schemes. A small number of employees are believed to have been provided with unfunded pensions by their nationalised industry employer. Some industry employees became members of unfunded public service pension schemes at privatisation. Such pensions' liabilities as remain in the public sector cannot be separately identified (or could not be without disproportionate cost).

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) pursuant to the announcement on public sector pensions of 18 October, at what rate he assumed current members of public sector pension schemes would be replaced by new employees in each decade for the purposes of estimating the revised cost of public sector pensions; [24877]

(2) what the evidential basis was for the estimate of *(a)* gross savings on the cost of public sector pensions of £26 billion and *(b)* net savings of £13 billion over the next 50 years announced by officials on 19 October. [24878]

Mr. Des Browne: The figures were calculated by scheme actuaries on the basis of the data and assumptions they use for each scheme. The following table indicates the staff turnover assumed across the pension schemes for teachers, the NHS and civil servants that were the subject of the agreement at the Public Services Forum on 18 October:

Estimated proportion of the combined pensionable payroll relating to scheme members who join after April 2006

	Percentage
2006	0
2013	33
2018	50
2023	64
2028	77
2033	86
2038	93
2043	97

Railtrack

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the 10 conditions necessary for him to support the decision to transform Railtrack into a non-equity company limited by guarantee were. [16018]

Mr. Des Browne: Following the judgment in the Railtrack Private Shareholders' Action Group trial the Department for Transport has made available for public inspection a full set of the documents contained in the trial bundles. The trial bundles were compiled by the legal advisors to the Department and the claimants. Documents containing the conditions are included in the bundles.

Self-employment

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of self-employed *(a)* women and *(b)* men in the UK; and how many are aged 16 to 45 years. [25949]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Philip Hollobone, dated 8 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the total number of self-employed people and those aged 16 to 45 years. (25949)

The attached table provides available information showing the numbers of self-employed people aged 16 and over and those aged 16 to 45 by gender. The table covers the three month period ending in August 2005.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Self-employed [1] people in the United Kingdom by age and gender not seasonally adjusted

Thousand

Three months ending August 2005	All persons	Men	Women
All aged 16 and over	3,569	2,596	973
of whom aged 16–45	1,810	1,304	506

[1] Self-employed is based on the respondents self classification.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Stamp Duty

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much stamp duty from the purchase of residential property was collected from *(a)* Kettering constituency, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. [25948]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimates of stamp duty from purchases of residential property in England between 1997–98 and 2004–05 are given at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/table15_2_october04.pdf. Information is not available at the parliamentary constituency or county level for these years.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what value of hardship payments were made to tax credit claimants suffering hardship where an overpayment had occurred in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* each month of 2005–06. [18255]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* For 2003–04 and 2004–05, I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2035W.

For 2005–06, it is no longer necessary for HM Revenue and Customs to issue manual payments in cases of hardship. Instead, a new process allows for an adjustment on the tax credits system to reduce the rate of recovery of an overpayment in-year.

Information on the number of payments adjusted in this way is not currently available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy automatically to write-off tax credit overpayments of £380 or less; and if he will make a statement. [19287]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC's approach to handling overpayments is set out in its Code of Practice 26: "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" published on the HMRC website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/credit.htm

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants have been waiting *(a)* one month, *(b)* two months, *(c)* three months, *(d)* four months, *(e)* five months, *(f)* six months, *(g)* one year and *(h)* two years for backdated tax credit payments to be made. [19409]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons the IT system used by Revenue and Customs staff when dealing with hon. Members' queries through the MPs Tax Credit Hotline was unavailable on Friday 14 October. [19415]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* There was an isolated fault at the local telephone exchange which affected a number of workstations within the Tax Credit Office including the MP Hotline. Other areas of the Tax Credit Office were functioning normally.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the IT contract for the new tax credits has been agreed on a fixed negotiated price basis. [19722]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credits IT system is delivered through an overarching IT services contract, known as Aspire. Within the terms of this contact there is a fixed price for maintaining live operational services.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 948W, on tax credits, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Customer Service Manual and Customer Contact Clarity of Writing: 2005–06 Guide. [21173]

Dawn Primarolo: The Department's Customer Service Manual is being reviewed. It sets out the customer service policy and good practice for face to face service staff. It will be replaced in due course by content on the Department's Face to Face service site. As some of the content has already been superceded by the Clarity of Writing or other guidance, the manual is not available as a single document.

The Clarity of Writing guidance has been placed in the Library.

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much in overpaid tax credits has been remitted in full and then held by the Tax Credits Office for offsetting in each of the last three years; and what the running total is for the 2005–06 financial year. [21401]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

However, where HM Revenue and Customs agree to remit an overpayment of tax credits, amounts already recovered will be used to clear any known overpayment due for recovery. Any net underpayment will then be paid to the claimant.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many overpayments remain outstanding from 2003–04; and to what total value. [25246]

Dawn Primarolo: Information about the total value of overpayments from 2003–04 that remain outstanding as at 5 April 2005 can be derived from the "Comptroller and Auditor General's Standard Report on the Accounts of the Inland Revenue 2004–05" This can be found at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/ir-report2005.pdf.

Mr. Mudie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's recommendations in Tax Credits: Putting Things Right have been accepted; from what date they have operated; and how many *(a)* have been refused and *(b)* are under consideration. [19137]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which of the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Ombudsman in her report of June 2005 on Tax Credits: Putting Things Right have been *(a)* accepted and *(b)* implemented; and if he will make a statement. [19300]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The Government's response to the Ombudsman's recommendations was set out in the Paymaster General's letter to her of 29 July (a copy of which is available on the Ombudsman's website). The Department has already acted on a number of those recommendations, including:

Improved guidance and training for contact centre staff about interim payments and the availability of help in cases of hardship;

Improvements in the tax credits award notice to help understanding of the reasons why overpayments may arise;

Planned improvements in the presentation of information accompanying award notices to draw attention to hardship provisions.

Other improvements are under consideration in the review of Code of Practice 26.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit overpayments were caused in 2003–04 when an error resulted in a child or children no longer being shown on the award notice. [19406]

Dawn Primarolo: Where a child or children are removed from a claim, whether or not as a result of an error, the effect would be to reduce payments and not generate an overpayment. It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Accession State Worker Registration Scheme

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time taken to process applications for a registration certificate under the Accession State Worker Registration Scheme was in the last period for which figures are available. [21459]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* For the period 1 April 2005 to 30 September 2005 the average number of days taken to process applications for a registration certificate under the Accession State Worker Registration Scheme is 13 days.

Asylum/Immigration

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness to date of the Dublin II Regulation of 2003 in reducing *(a)* asylum shopping and *(b)* the problem of refugees in orbit. [20269]

Mr. McNulty: The European Commission has recently launched a comprehensive evaluation process to cover all aspects of the Dublin arrangements, including the operation of the secure electronic communications network for Dublin II requests ("DubliNet") and the supporting Eurodac fingerprint database. The resulting report, expected in 2006, will analyse the impact of the Dublin arrangements to draw conclusions on the added value of Dublin II and the Eurodac Regulation EC No. 2725/2000.

The second Annual Report to the Council and the European Parliament on the activities of the Eurodac Central Unit concluded that Eurodac represents an extremely important tool for a faster and more efficient application of the Dublin arrangements. The report also notes that Eurodac data provide a sound indicator of the phenomenon of "asylum shopping" in member states. Copies of the report can be found in the Libraries. The Home Office's assessment of the report is set out in Explanatory Memorandum 10464/05 sent to the Parliamentary Scrutiny Committees on 14 September 2005.

Our own assessment of the new Dublin arrangements, supported by Eurodac is favourable. Dublin II and Eurodac enabled us to return 1,982 applicants in 2004 to other European countries without considering their claims ourselves. This is far more effective than the gentleman's agreement which applied until 1997, under which fewer people were removed in a year than the Dublin arrangements have enabled us to remove in a month. While it is not possible to prove to what extent asylum shopping that would otherwise have happened is not happening as a result of the new arrangements, asylum intake across the EU15 has fallen by 21 per cent. between 2003 and 2004 (source IRSS).

On the question of refugees in orbit, the Dublin II Regulation is based on a mechanism to identify the member state responsible for determining an asylum claim and provides guarantees that identified state will take charge of or take back an asylum seeker within prescribed time limits. In addition, unlike the old Dublin Convention, the regulation reflects the agreement that member states fully accept to take responsibility for an asylum applicant where a procedural time limit is breached. This ensures that asylum applicants do not face prolonged periods of uncertainty.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of how the UK compares with other EU member states in terms of reception conditions for asylum seekers. [20270]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office commissioned research to compare the reception and accommodation policies for asylum seekers in the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Germany in 2002–03. A summary of the report is due to be published as an online research findings publication in due course.

The European Migration Network is currently in the process of producing a synthesis report of the reception systems that are in place for asylum seekers in the participating EU member states. The UK has provided information to inform this report which is due to be published early in 2006 by the European Commission.

An EU directive laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers entered into force on 5 February 2005; all EU member states were required to bring their law and practice into line with the directive by this date. The European Commission is due to evaluate the implementation of this measure by 2007.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in negotiations on the draft EU asylum procedures directive. [20271]

Mr. McNulty: In April 2004, the Justice and Home Affairs Council reached a general approach on the draft asylum procedures directive. In November 2004, the text was remitted to the European Parliament for re-consultation.

The European Parliament delivered a further opinion on the draft directive in September 2005. The Council has now begun its consideration of the Parliament's report. Once this is complete, the Council will move towards final adoption of the directive.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria were used in making the decision to maintain a non-cash or voucher system for providing support to asylum seekers who make section 4 declarations. [20443]

Mr. McNulty: Support under section four is provided on a temporary basis to those who are in the process of leaving the country. It was always intended that support would take the form of accommodation and food and that there would be no access to cash. That is the position as set out in the legislation as approved by Parliament.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers are in receipt of National Asylum Support Services section 4 support, broken down by *(a)* regional location, *(b)* accommodation provider and *(c)* type of accommodation and subsistence support provided. [20492]

Mr. McNulty: National Asylum Support Services (NASS) management information confirms that on 24 October there were 7,355 people (excluding dependants) in receipt of section four support.

A table showing the regional breakdown of those supported has been placed in the Library together with a list of accommodation providers who are providing section 4 accommodation to NASS. In the majority of cases support provided consists of accommodation and £35 per week in vouchers for each supported person to enable the purchase of food and other essential items. It is not possible, owing to the need to check individual records, to put a figure on the small number supported through full-board accommodation.

List of accommodation providers providing section 4 accommodation to NASS

Provider
Accommodata Ltd.
Angel Group
Capital
Caradon Estates Ltd.
Clearsprings
Gateshead Council
M&Q
RCA Sheffield
Safehaven
YMCA—Glasgow
YMCA—London
YMCA—Cornwall
YMCA—Liverpool
YMCA—Welwyn Garden City
YMCA—West London

Regional breakdown of numbers supported under section 4 as at 24 October 2005

Region	[1]*Number supported*
East Midlands	585
East of England	45
London	635
North East	475
North West	1,140
Scotland	185
South East	100
South West	255
Wales	300
West Midlands	1,745
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,900
Total	7,355

[1] all figures are provisional and have been rounded to the nearest 5. As such they may not sum due to rounding.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for section 4 support were made to the National Asylum Support Service in each month since 1 January; and what the outcome was in each case. [20493]

Mr. McNulty: The monthly breakdown of decisions made this year is set out in the table. A further 404 applications made in September and October still await a decision.

Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999: Record of decisions made in 2005

Month	*Granted*	*Refused*
January	2,663	289
February	2,542	636
March	1,008	582
April	803	275
May	660	304
June	766	365
July	782	303
August	352	277
September	244	84
Total	9,620	3,115

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken by the National Asylum Support Service to determine an application for section 4 support was in the last period

for which figures are available; what the target time is for determining such applications; and what the current performance against this target is. [20494]

Mr. McNulty: The National Asylum Support Service's (NASS) target for deciding applications for support under section 4 is five working days which has routinely been met in the past year. However, a very significant increase in applications meant that NASS could no longer meet this target in all cases.

Increased recruitment and training of staff has improved performance. NASS expects to routinely be meeting the five days target by the end of this calendar year. In the meantime, special arrangements have been made with the voluntary sector (who represent the great majority of section 4 applicants) to prioritise the very urgent cases. These cases, which typically comprise about 20 per cent. of the weekly intake, are being decided on the same day they are received or the day after.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures have been put in place by each of the National Asylum Support Service section 4 accommodation providers to ensure that mothers with babies in receipt of section 4 vouchers exchangeable for food and drink are able to *(a)* obtain nappies and other essentials and *(b)* wash baby clothing. [20496]

Mr. McNulty: Vouchers can generally be used to buy nappies and other toiletries at both supermarkets and other retail outlets. Where this is not the case the National Asylum Support Service works with its accommodation providers to supply the items direct to the supported person. The National Asylum Support Service requires that appropriate facilities to wash clothes must be provided in all properties used to house those supported under section 4.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been convicted and imprisoned for not possessing, without reasonable excuse, a valid document showing their identity and nationality when first interviewed by an immigration officer after arriving in the UK under section 2 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004 since the Act came into force; how many asylum seekers have been convicted of attempting to leave the country with invalid documents in the same period; and how many in each category have been held in HMP Lewes in the corresponding period. [21876]

Mr. McNulty: According to locally collated management information, which may be subject to change, there have been 350 convictions under section 2 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004 since it came into force on 22 September 2004 until 20 October 2005.

Statistics on asylum seekers convicted of attempting to leave the UK with invalid documents could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Statistics on how many persons convicted in each category have been detained at HMP Lewes could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time was that a failed asylum seeker was held in a detention centre prior to deportation or removal from the UK in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; what the average length of time has been since April; and if he will make a statement. [21883]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the average length of time that a failed asylum seeker was held in a detention centre prior to deportation or removal from the UK is not available. It would only be available by examination of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

Quarterly snapshots are published showing the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers on the last Saturday of each quarter and these can be broken down by length of detention. This information may be found in the Quarterly Asylum statistics publications on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of times was that a failed asylum-seeker was transferred between detention centres in the UK prior to removal or deportation from the UK in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [21919]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the form requested.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Department spent on transferring failed asylum seekers between detention centres in the UK in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2002–03; how much it has spent since April; and if he will make a statement. [21920]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the form requested

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of asylum support was at *(a)* 1 January, *(b)* 1 February, *(c)* 1 March, *(d)* 1 April, *(e)* 1 May, *(f)* 1 June, *(g)* 1 July, *(h)* 1 August, *(i)* 1 September and *(j)* 1 October; and if he will make a statement. [21972]

Mr. McNulty: Audited costs for the provision of support to asylum seekers for the period in question are not yet available. Information relating to costs for the financial year 2004–05 will be published on the immigration and nationality directorate (IND) website once the audit of that year's costs has been completed. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as possible after the end of the financial year. Information for the financial years 1996–97 to 2003–04 was given in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 442W and is also published on the IND website.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of accommodating asylum seekers has been in each year since 1997. [22950]

Andy Burnham: The information is not available in the precise format requested. Before 3 April 2000 asylum seekers were supported under either the ad hoc arrangements administered by the Department for Work and Pensions or by local authorities.

Asylum seekers supported under income support arrangements were eligible to receive housing benefit to meet the costs of their accommodation. I have placed a table showing the amounts paid in housing benefit from 1996–97—1999–2000 in the Library.

Between 1996–97 and 1999–2000 the Department of Health was responsible for paying grant to local authorities supporting asylum seekers. Details of the total amounts paid to local authorities were provided on 9 May 2000, *Official Report*, columns 330–31W in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans). Part of this grant would have included an element to meet the costs of accommodation but it is not possible to identify the actual amounts.

Since 3 April 2000 the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) has been responsible for the budget for asylum support. I have placed in the Library information on the costs of providing accommodation to asylum seekers supported directly by NASS for the years 2000–01—2003–04. Information for 2004–05 will be published on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate website, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk as soon as possible after the expenditure for that year has been audited.

Local authorities retain responsibility for providing support to some asylum seekers who made their claim for asylum before the NASS administered support arrangements took effect in their areas. The Home Office is responsible for paying grants to local authorities to meet their direct costs of providing support. Annual payments to local authorities by NASS from 1999–2000 can be found at: http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/applying/national_asylum_support/stakeholders/finance.html

Part of this grant would have included an element to meet the costs of accommodation but it is not possible to identify the actual amounts.

Expenditure by NASS on accommodation for asylum seekers: for the period 2001–01—2003–04

£ million

Financial year	Expenditure on dispersal accommodation	Expenditure on emergency (initial) accommodation	Total expenditure
2000–01	115	[1]—	115
2001–02	247	[1]—	247
2002–03	319	107	426
2003–04	343	96	439

[1] Not available.

Expenditure on housing benefit paid to asylum seekers 1996–97—1999–2000

Financial year	£ million Expenditure
1996–97	19
1997–98	14
1998–99	12
1999–2000	135

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to prevent abuse of the benefits system by asylum seekers. [22953]

Andy Burnham: Asylum seekers are not eligible to receive mainstream benefits. Eligible asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute may be provided with support (accommodation and/or financial assistance) by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Financial support payments are made via the application registration card (ARC), a biometric smartcard that contains photographic identification and details unique to individual asylum seekers. Accommodation providers under contract to NASS are required, as part of their contract, to visit addresses at regular intervals to confirm the supported asylum seeker is living at the address.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Somalian asylum seekers tried to enter the UK in each year from 1997; how many have been allowed to stay; and how many have been deported. [24295]

Andy Burnham: Information is not available on how many Somalis try to enter the UK each year who would, if successful, subsequently apply for asylum, and such information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Applications for asylum in the UK can only be made from within the UK.

Information on the number of asylum applications made by Somali nationals, initial decisions and appeals outcomes, and asylum removals is published quarterly and annually in the regular asylum statistics, copies of which are available from the Library and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are undertaken before the decision is made to detain failed asylum seekers, with particular reference to *(a)* pre-notification and *(b)* the use of other detention methods. [25316]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 7 November 2005]*: Throughout the process and before any removal decision is taken, the person is notified in writing, and has explained verbally, his immigration status and liability to detention and bail rights. If detained he will also be informed of the reasons for detention.

Alternatives to detention, e.g. setting reporting restrictions, must be considered before any detention is authorised. In all cases detention must be used sparingly, and for the shortest period necessary.

Border Control

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing a UK border control police force. [24122]

Mr. McNulty: The Government has no plans at present to create a single border control police force or agency.

The White Paper "One Step Ahead—A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organise Crime" tasked Customs, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) and the police to work together to develop options for providing more effective border controls through enhanced inter-agency co-operation.

Noting the distinct and essential responsibilities of each of the three principal border agencies, the White Paper indicated that there were no plans to create a single border agency.

Nevertheless the White Paper pointed to much closer working between the border agencies. There is already considerable successful integrated working at both a local and national level between the border agencies.

With this in view, the Border Management Programme has been established to take this forward. It will provide more effective working between the agencies in order to maximise border security while minimising the impact on legitimate traffic.

In support of this closer working, the e-Borders programme will deliver a fully integrated border control system fit for the 21st century. It will develop a means of capturing and sharing relevant passenger information through compatible systems across Government providing a comprehensive secure system for all the agencies working together at the border.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government plan to introduce a UK border control police force. [16732]

Mr. McNulty: The Government have no current plans to create a single border control police force or agency.

There is already considerable successful integrated working at both a local and national level between the border agencies.

The White Paper "One Step Ahead—A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organise Crime" in March 2003, tasked customs, IND and the police to work together to develop options for providing more effective border controls through enhanced inter-agency co-operation.

The Border Management programme has been established to take this forward. It will provide more effective working between the agencies in order to maximise border security while minimising the impact on legitimate traffic.

In support of this, the e-Borders programme will deliver a fully integrated border control system fit for the 21st century. It will develop a means of capturing and sharing relevant passenger information through compatible systems across Government providing a comprehensive secure system for all the agencies working together at the border.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average processing time has been of an application for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001 in each year of its operation. [21259]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority advise that median number of days elapsed between receipt of the application and the issue of the decision at the Claims Assessment Stage for applications made under the 2001 Scheme for the years 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 was 156 days, 221 days, 238 days and 258 days respectively.

Domestic Violence

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what minimum statutory level of *(a)* funding and *(b)* other support local authorities are required to provide for victims of domestic violence; and if he will make a statement. [22427]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is no set minimum statutory level of funding that local authorities are required to provide for victims of domestic violence.

However, as part of the new three-year Local Area Agreement initiative between central Government and local government, funding to deliver local priorities will be available. Local partnerships will be responsible for identifying the need for addressing domestic violence as a local priority for improvement to enable them to prioritise their spending. The agreements are based on outcomes, indicators and targets aimed at delivering a better quality of life for people through improving performance on a range of national and local priorities.

In April 2005, the revised Best Value Performance Indicator BV225 was implemented. The indicator covers a range of activities that local authorities need to undertake to successfully address the problem of domestic violence. Its purpose is to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to prevent and support victims of domestic violence.

European Return Fund

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress with discussions in the European Council on the minimum standards for return procedures and mechanisms for supporting removal efforts with a European Return Fund to be established by 2007. [20256]

Mr. McNulty: On 1 September 2005, the European Commission issued a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on common standards and procedures in member states for returning illegally staying third country nationals (COM (2005) 391 final). The Commission has presented this proposal and there has been a first exchange of views. The first formal reading of the proposal in the Council will commence in November.

On 3 May 2005, the Commission issued a proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and Council establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008–13 as part of the General Management Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows". The first reading of the proposal in the Council commenced in September. The first reading of provisions that are specific to the Return Fund is expected to be concluded in November. The first reading of those provisions that are common to the four instruments within the General Management Programme is expected to continue into the next presidency of the EU.

Identity Cards

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the maximum allowable cost for the stand-alone identity card. [19166]

Mr. McNulty: The figure for an affordable charge for a stand-alone identity card has been arrived at following careful scrutiny of the costs of the Identity Cards Scheme over the summer by the Home Office, in full consultation with Treasury and other Government Departments.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total planned budget is for the consultation, trialling and roll out of the Identity Card Scheme. [19167]

Mr. McNulty: The current best estimate for the total average annual running costs for issuing passports and ID cards to UK nationals is £584 million.

The Home Department is not breaking this cost down further because this information is commercially sensitive and discussion of estimated costs may prejudice the procurement process by limiting the Department's ability to secure value for money from the market.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the cap on the fee to be charged for the stand-alone identity card. [19168]

Mr. McNulty: It will be affordable within current Home Office spending plans to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a stand-alone identity card which is valid for 10 years.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will lay before the House detailed proposals on the charging regime for identity cards, in line with the commitment given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, before the Identity Cards Bill completes Third Reading in the House. [19170]

Mr. McNulty: Details of an affordable charge for a stand-alone identity card have already been released, in line with the commitment given by the Home Secretary in June. Decisions regarding the detailed charging strategy have not yet been made. As the Home Secretary stated in June, the actual charges will be determined at the time of introduction of the scheme.

Additionally, the Identity Cards Bill was recently amended by the Government so that Clause 37(7) of the Bill allows for an affirmative resolution procedure to take place the first time a resolution is laid before Parliament setting the charge for identity cards. This will give Parliament greater scope for debate when this occurs.

The actual amount charged to a person will depend on future policy decisions on charging within the scope allowed by the Identity Cards Bill. Issues which the Government wishes to explore further on charging include:

refining estimates of revenues for the verification service as potential users develop more detailed plans for how they will use the scheme;

whether and to what extent offering cards at lower cost, for example to people on low incomes, may be possible;

cost estimates for some components of the scheme may change once the Home Office engages formally with suppliers as part of the procurement process.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department's cost-benefit analysis of the identity cards scheme includes estimates for the benefits which are defined in paragraph 25 of the Regulatory Impact Assessment of 25 May as not yet quantified completely. [20865]

Mr. McNulty: The cost-benefit analysis of the identify cards scheme does include initial estimates for some of the benefits previously defined as not yet quantified completely in paragraph 25 of the Regulatory Impact Assessment of 25 May. Further analysis is under way to refine these estimates.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the graph on page 11 of his Department's document, "Identity Cards Scheme—Benefits Overview" with dates on the time axis; and if he will publish the supporting evidence for the figures given in the graph. [20869]

Mr. McNulty: The date line to the graph on page 11 of the benefits summary document has been deliberately left out, as we are not in a position to know when Royal Assent is likely to be given to the Bill. This date will obviously influence the start date of the project and the timing of any benefits being realised.

The graph as it stands is flexible, as it represents annual movements in the benefits accrual. Therefore a reader of the graph could predict any start date for identity cards roll out, and then understand from the graph the progression of benefit accrual from that date.

The underlying analysis for this graph contains detail that currently could be prejudicial to the future procurement of the identity card scheme, which is driven by Royal Assent being granted.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his most recent estimate is of the *(a)* set-up costs, *(b)* annual running costs and *(c)* cost per card of the identity card scheme. [21354]

Mr. McNulty: The current best estimate for the total average running costs for issuing passports and ID cards to UK nationals is £584 million per annum.

The Home Office is not breaking this cost down further, nor publishing details of set-up costs, because this information is commercially sensitive and discussion of more detailed estimated costs may prejudice the procurement process by limiting the Department's ability to secure value for money from the market.

The current best estimate for the average unit cost of the combined passport and ID card package is £93. In addition, it will be affordable to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a standalone ID card which is valid for 10 years.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of the Identity Card Scheme has been to date. [21382]

Mr. McNulty: The Government announced its intention to introduce legislation for an identity cards scheme in November 2003, following a six month consultation exercise. In preparation £28.66 million has been spent between the start of the 2003 financial year and the end of September 2005.

Ms Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what provisions have been made for *(a)* lone parents, *(b)* low income families, *(c)* the unemployed, *(d)* children and *(e)* students in relation to the proposed cost of identity cards; [21564]

(2) what assistance will be provided for people that cannot afford the proposed £30 identity card fee. [21565]

Mr. McNulty: It will be affordable within current Home Office spending plans to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a standalone identity card which is valid for 10 years. Further decisions have yet to be made on the detailed charging strategy to be in place before introduction of the identity cards scheme.

Immigration

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the employment sectors in which the use of immigrant labour is filling long-term vacancies; [18734]

(2) if he will list the sectors of employment in which the use of immigrant labour is reducing skills shortages. [18735]

Mr. McNulty: Most non-EEA nationals coming to the UK for skilled employment require a work permit. Work permits can be issued in any sector as long as the occupation is on the shortage list or the role meets the requirements of the resident labour market test. In 2004, the top sectors for which work permits were issued were: health and medical services; computer services; hospitality and catering; administration, business and management services; education and cultural activities; financial services; entertainment and leisure services; manufacturing; retail and related services.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library monthly reports on the number of people detained under immigration law. [22683]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office currently publishes a quarterly snapshot of people held under Immigration Act powers on the last Saturday of every quarter. This is available from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Managed Migration Routes

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete the review of managed migration routes, with particular reference to the rules on ancestry. [18159]

Mr. McNulty: Following a statement to Parliament by the Home Secretary on 22 April 2004, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) are reviewing a number of managed migration routes to enter and remain in the United Kingdom. This review is ongoing across all managed migration routes. As a result, IND are unable to process some applications for leave to remain through the ancestry route at present. We will resume consideration of these applications as soon as possible.

Passport Return

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the immigration and nationality directorate will return the passports of the W. family of Aylesbury (case reference: W1004856; B23701/5). [22431]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The immigration and nationality directorate has not yet been able to locate the passports. A letter explaining that the passports could not be found was sent to the hon. Member's constituents on 24 October, together with a letter which may assist the family in obtaining new passports from their national authority.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken after the determination of a case for his Department to return passports and other personal documents to successful applicants for leave to remain in the United Kingdom was in the last period for which figures are available. [22432]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* General Group, who handle leave to remain applications, make every attempt to despatch passports and personal documents with the decision letter back to the applicant as soon as practicable after the determination of a case. General Group continually strive to meet published service standards for both charged and non-charge leave to remain applications.

This information is published on the immigration and nationality directorate website at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Police

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces have selected one of their basic command units to implement and champion neighbourhood policing; and if he will make a statement. [21930]

Hazel Blears: Each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales has selected a pathfinder basic command unit (BCD) to implement and develop neighbourhood policing. This is in addition to other BCUs in police forces that have also adopted a neighbourhood policing approach.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the expansion of the shoot-to-kill policy does not lead to an increase in mistaken killings by the police. [23394]

Hazel Blears: All police use of firearms is subject to the law on the use of force. In particular, the Criminal Law Act 1967 provides that the police may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to effect an arrest or to prevent crime. It is for the individual officer to justify their actions, if necessary in court.

Prisons

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convicted prisoners there were in each prison in England and Wales in the most recent period for which figures are available; and in which parliamentary constituency each prison is located. [23200]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, is provided in the table.

Sentenced prison population, by prison establishment and parliamentary constituency

England and Wales, 30 September 2005

Constituency	Establishment	Population
Arundel and South Downs	Ford	533
Aylesbury	Aylesbury	429
Banbury	Bullingdon	718
Bedford	Bedford	288
Berwick-upon-Tweed	Acklington	872
Berwick-upon-Tweed	Castington	261
Birmingham Ladywood	Birmingham	847
Bishop Auckland	Deerbolt	322
Blaby	Glen Parva	578
Boston and Skegness	North Sea Camp	270
Bridgend	Parc	952
Bristol, West	Bristol	339
Bromsgrove	Blakenhurst	644
Bromsgrove	Brockhill	63
Bromsgrove	Hewell Grange	157
Buckingham	Grendon/Spring Hill	548
Burton	Dovegate	790
Cambridgeshire, North East	Whitemoor	440
Canterbury	Canterbury	305
Cardiff, Central	Cardiff	519
Chelmsford, West	Chelmsford	312
Chorley	Garth	631
Chorley	Wymott	1,040
City of Durham	Durham	433
City of Durham	Frankland	694
City of Durham	Low Newton	192
Copeland	Haverigg	566
Daventry	Onley	495
Derbyshire, South	Foston Hall	196
Derbyshire, West	Sudbury	562
Devizes	Erlestoke	424
Devon West and Torridge	Dartmoor	616
Don Valley	Lindholme	707
Don Valley	Moorland Open	247
Don Valley	Moorland	776
Doncaster, Central	Doncaster	732
Dorset, North	Guys Marsh	565
Dorset, South	Portland	388
Dorset, South	The Verne	584
Dorset, West	Dorchester	120
Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	Wormwood Scrubs	738
Eccles	Forest Bank	653
Elmet	Wealstun	794
Elmet	Wetherby	291
Erith and Thamesmead	Belmarsh	467
Exeter	Exeter	302
Faversham and Kent Mid	East Sutton Park	98
Feltham and Heston	Feltham	153
Fylde	Kirkham	497
Gloucester	Gloucester	169
Haltemprice and Howden	Everthorpe	630
Haltemprice and Howden	The Wolds	296
Harborough	Gartree	489
Henley	Huntercombe	359
Hertfordshire and South West	The Mount	702
Hull, East	Hull	678
Huntingdon	Littlehey	696
Isle of Wight	Albany	528
Isle of Wight	Camp Hill	590
Isle of Wight	Parkhurst	493
Islington, North	Holloway	203
Islington South and Finsbury	Pentonville	417
Lancaster and Wyre	Lancaster	240
Lancaster and Wyre	Lancaster Farms	392
Leeds, West	Leeds	908
Leicester, South	Leicester	158
Leigh	Hindley	380
Lewes	Lewes	317
Lincoln	Lincoln	318
Liverpool Walton	Altcourse	719
Liverpool Walton	Liverpool	1,093
Maidstone and the Weald	Maidstone	548
Manchester Blackley	Manchester	881

Sentenced prison population, by prison establishment and parliamentary constituency

England and Wales, 30 September 2005

Constituency	Establishment	Population
Medway	Cookham Wood	181
Medway	Rochester	384
Milton Keynes, South West	Woodhill	412
Mole Valley	Send	215
Monmouth	Usk/Prescoed	416
Newark	Ranby	1,012
Norfolk, South West	Wayland	700
Northavon	Ashfield	270
Northavon	Eastwood Park	176
Northavon	Leyhill	457
Norwich, North	Norwich	539
Nottingham, East	Nottingham	268
Peterborough	Peterborough	579
Portsmouth, South	Kingston	192
Preston	Preston	336
Rayleigh	Bullwood Hall	145
Reading, East	Reading	192
Reigate	Downview	235
Reigate	Highdown	413
Richmond	Northallerton	205
Richmond Park	Latchmere House	205
Rochdale	Buckley Hall	191
Rugby and Kenilworth	Rye Hill	592
Rushcliffe	Whatton	357
Rutland and Melton	Ashwell	539
Rutland and Melton	Stocken	609
Selby	Askham Grange	111
Sherwood	Lowdham Grange	522
Shrewsbury and Atcham	Shrewsbury	182
Shropshire, North	Stoke Heath	615
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Elmley	596
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Standford Hill	465
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	Swaleside	768
Sleaford and North Hykeham	Morton Hall	254
Spelthorne	Bronzefield	200
Stafford	Stafford	670
Staffordshire Moorlands	Werrington	143
Staffordshire, South	Brinsford	224
Staffordshire, South	Featherstone	606
Stockton, North	Holme House	771
Stockton, South	Kirklevington Grange	220
Stone	Drake Hall	289
Streatham	Brixton	381
Suffolk, Coastal	Hollesley Bay	283
Suffolk, Coastal	Warren Hill	171
Suffolk, West	Edmunds Hill	219
Suffolk, West	Highpoint	811
Surrey Heath	Coldingley	384
Swansea, West	Swansea	311
Tamworth	Swinfen Hall	603
Tatton	Styal	281
Tooting	Wandsworth	855
Totnes	Channings Wood	639
Tunbridge Wells	Blantyre House	121
Wakefield	New Hall	272
Wakefield	Wakefield	562
Warrington, North	Risley	1,069
Warrington, North	Thorn Cross	219
Wavency	Blundeston	458
Wellingborough	Wellingborough	577
Wells	Shepton Mallet	183
Winchester	Winchester	446
Worcestershire Mid	Long Lartin	425
Yorkshire East	Full Sutton	582
Total		62,680

Proceeds of Crime Act

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timetable is for introducing Orders in Council under Part Eleven of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and if he will make a statement.[24630]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Order for co-operation between the United Kingdom jurisdictions was introduced in 2002 (S.I. 2002/3133).

The Government intend to lay the Order to enable international co-operation in the freezing and confiscation of the proceeds of crime in the next few weeks, with a view to having the legislation in place by the end of the year. The Order to facilitate international co-operation in financial investigations will follow in the new year.

Protection Programmes

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress with pilot protection programmes outside the EU which are due to be launched by the end of 2005. [20274]

Mr. McNulty: On 12 October 2005, the Justice and Home Affairs Council endorsed draft council conclusions, to be formally adopted at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 7 November 2005, which support the European Commission's proposals for pilot regional protection programmes in the western newly independent states (Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus) and sub-Saharan Africa (in particular the Great Lakes/East Africa). The conclusions invite the Commission to inform the Council of detailed programmes for the implementation of these proposed pilots by the end of November 2005.

Readmission Agreements

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the readmission agreements with third countries to be signed by the EU. [20275]

Mr. McNulty: As the current EU presidency, the UK attaches a high priority to the conclusion of readmission negotiations between the EU and international partner countries. Negotiations with Russia were finalised in time for the EU-Russia summit on 4 October. We intend to support the European Commission to make substantial progress in the negotiation of other agreements.

Refugees

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 10 countries from which most refugees originated in 2004. [16752]

Mr. McNulty: Information on grants of asylum at initial decision is published quarterly and annually. The information requested is published in the annual bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2004. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on EU co-operation with third countries in order to manage and reduce the intake of refugees into the EU. [20273]

Mr. McNulty: The Hague multi-annual programme, which was endorsed by the European Council on 4 and 5 November 2004, sets out the EU's work plan for strengthening the area of freedom, security and justice over the next five years and includes an EU strategy on the external dimension of asylum and migration. This covers co-operation with third countries in managing migration and asylum; development of EU regional protection programmes and the intensified co-operation with countries of transit to enable these countries to better manage migration and to provide adequate protection for refugees. The UK strongly supports work in this area and has taken it forward as a matter of priority under its presidency of the EU.

Schlumberger Sema Ltd.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the minutes of meetings between his Officials and Schlumberger Sema Ltd. [11149]

Mr. McNulty: The majority of meetings between departmental Officials and Schlumberger Sema Ltd. (SS) have been within its relationships between the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).

IND meetings took place in the context of three separate commercial relationships:

- support and development of the ASYS IT system;
- programme support and training services for the casework information database (CID) system redevelopment; and
- as a short listed (and eventually successful) bidder for the IND Procurement of Infrastructure and Development Services (IPIDS) contract for the outsourcing of IND's major IT services.

Other meetings also took place between Home Office (Centre) and Schlumberger Sema Ltd. (SS) in respect of the HOITS (Home Office IT Services) contract; from the formation of SS in 2001 through to the end of the HOITS contract on 31 March 2002 and then for a further short-term contract of a few months for support of the RDS and IND INDECS mainframe services until these were absorbed into the Sirius IT2000 agreement.

The engagement between IND and Schlumberger Sema Ltd. (SS) resulted in significant quantities of recorded minutes, covering all aspects of the working relationships.

Consideration could be given to making minutes of meetings or action plans available to address a specific query, subject to commercial confidentiality or disproportionate cost.

Sex Offenders

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reciprocal arrangements exist between the UK and *(a)* Northern and *(b)* Southern Cyprus on the exchange of information regarding the travel of those who have committed sex offences; and if he will make a statement. [13249]

Andy Burnham: The UK does not recognise Northern Cyprus. There are no formal arrangements in place to directly exchange information on those who have committed sexual offences.

No reciprocal measures exist between the UK and the Republic of Cyprus (southern Cyprus). However, in the UK, offenders who are subject to the notification requirements of Part two of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (which are often known as the sex offenders register) must notify the police of any intention to travel

overseas for a period of three days or more. When an offender notifies his intention to travel overseas the local police force will make a judgment as to whether, in their opinion, the authorities in the country concerned should be informed that the offender is travelling. If they decide that they should, then this information is passed to the National Criminal Intelligence Service who will then inform the destination country if there are reasonable grounds for believing that the offender will present a risk of offending within that community. The Republic of Cyprus does not have a similar requirement on offenders and so they would not routinely know if an offender was planning to travel, and would not be able to inform the UK.

The UK or the Republic of Cyprus may also request criminal record information on a national of the other state under the terms of the 1959 Council of Europe Mutual Legal Assistance Convention and the EU Council Decision on the exchange of information on extracted from the criminal record.

Tasar Stun Guns

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times the Metropolitan police has *(a)* deployed and *(b)* used Tasar stun guns in each of the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [21716]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner for the Metropolitan police has provided the information in the table.

Metropolitan police—Deployment of Taser

Number

	Deployed	*Fired*
October 2004	213	2
November 2004	168	1
December 2004	174	2
January 2005	148	1
February 2005	157	2
March 2005	176	2
April 2005	241	4
May 2005	262	3
June 2005	264	2
July 2005	301	3
August 2005	268	2
September 2005	273	2
October 2005	[1]45	0

[1] up to 7 October

TOGETHER Action Line

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many calls have been received by the TOGETHER ActionLine in each month since its inception; and if he will make a statement. [21980]

Hazel Blears: The total number of inquiries received by the TOGETHER ActionLine since its inception in February 2004 to September 2005 is 13,845. 11,878 phone calls were received and 1,967 e-mails.

The overall monthly average number of inquiries including calls and e-mails is 694.

The TOGETHER ActionLine is a separate service which provides help and advice to practitioners to improve their response to antisocial behaviour. The ActionLine, complimented by the TOGETHER website helps practitioners to become confident in using the powers available to them and gives them access to innovative and creative solutions and enables them to network and share knowledge and successes.

Visas

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the take-up of visas under the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme. [25312]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The Scottish Executive is monitoring and evaluating the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme and we are discussing with them how and when information on the scheme will be published.

As set out in the published policy, the Home Office are passing details of all those who have been granted leave under the scheme to the Scottish Executive. This is to enable them to contact participants at regular intervals.

The table shows the number of participants in the scheme so far, broken down by those who applied from overseas and those who applied from within the UK. This data is based on internal Management Information and is provisional and subject to change.

	Entry clearance[1]	*In country*
1	25	75
August	30	100
September	20	120
October	30	190
Total	100	485

[1] UKvisas makes every effort to ensure that statistics produced from our "Central Reference System" are accurate. However, the complexity of our global business, including technical failures or occasional inconsistencies in data entry across any of over 150 offices, means we cannot 100 per cent. guarantee accuracy. UKvisas continues to work on IT and working practices to improve the quality of the statistics we provide.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Young Offenders

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 496W, how many of the young people supervised by youth offending teams in 2004–05 that had a substance misuse need have received an intervention or treatment, broken down by type of intervention made. [20663]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table for 2004–05 gives a breakdown of the level of need, intervention and treatment received within 10 working days of the assessment. (Joint Youth Justice Board/National Treatment Agency performance indicator.) Of the 11,551 who were assessed as needing a Tier two, three or four intervention, 10,645 (92 per cent.) accessed an intervention or treatment service within 10 days of the assessment.

Data monitoring for 2005–06 has been improved to include the numbers of young people who accessed a service more than 10 days after assessment.

Intervention or treatment	Service provided—Tier description	Numbers of young people assessed with need	Those who received an intervention or treatment within 10 days of being assessed	Percentage
Tier 2	Practitioners with some drug and alcohol experience and youth specialist knowledge	8,224	7,672	93.3
Tier 3	Young people's specialist drug services and other specialised services that work with complex cases requiring multi-disciplinary, team-based work	3,155	2,826	89.6
Tier 4	Services providing very specialist medical forms of intervention for young drug misusers with complex care needs	172	147	85.5
Total		11,551	10,645	92.2

[1] Taken from the Youth Justice Board's Key elements of effective practice manual on Substance Misuse.

Zimbabwe

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements he has in place for Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries to apply for asylum. [15869]

Andy Burnham: The immigration rules require a person to be in the United Kingdom or at a port of entry in order to claim asylum here. Under our published asylum policy instruction on Applications from Abroad, IND may consider exceptionally outside the rules a claim for asylum made abroad if certain strict criteria are met.

A person cannot be a refugee for the purposes of the 1951 Refugee Convention while in their country of origin, so it would only be in truly exceptional circumstances that the UK would consider an asylum claim from a person within their own country.

The policy applies to Zimbabwean nationals on the same basis as it applies to others.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the deportation to Zimbabwe of asylum seekers. [16718]

Mr. McNulty: On 5–7 October 2005 the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal considered the appeal of a Zimbabwean asylum seeker. The basis of the appeal was that failed asylum seekers are at real risk of mistreatment on return from the UK to Zimbabwe. The AIT's country guidance determination was promulgated on 18 October 2005.

The Tribunal found that the particular way we were enforcing returns of failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers from the UK to Harare airport put them at risk. We will not be enforcing returns to Zimbabwe while we work to resolve the concerns identified by the Tribunal about the way we do so.

The Tribunal did not find that Zimbabwe was unsafe generally for failed asylum seekers or that those who return there voluntarily are at risk. Failed asylum seekers have no right to remain in the UK and we continue to expect them to return.

We will continue to provide protection through the asylum system to Zimbabweans who genuinely have a well founded fear of persecution but we do not accept that failed asylum seekers whose claims have been found on appeal to be unfounded are in this position.

We do not believe that this determination requires us, as a matter of law, to grant refugee status or any other form of leave to remain to failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers. We have already argued successfully before the Tribunal in one individual case since the country guidance case was promulgated that, in the light of the Government's commitment not to enforce returns while we work to identify a route and method which does not expose returnees to a risk contrary to our international obligations, Zimbabwean asylum claims must be decided on their individual facts.

We are considering appealing the AIT country guidance determination.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23726]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been working on carbon reduction programmes and are presently co-operating with the Carbon Trust on energy efficiency projects, designed to reduce the level of carbon created by its estate operations. Officials have been in contact with the Carbon Trust in respect of their offer to undertake an initial feasibility study on how the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would adopt a Carbon Management programme and its potential for managing its Carbon Footprint. A decision on whether to sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme will be taken once this feasibility study is complete.

Councils (Norfolk)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of unitary status for councils in Norfolk. [22093]

Mr. Woolas: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) on 7 November 2005 (UIN 24019).

Demotion Orders

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many demotion orders have been granted by *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* registered social landlords since their introduction. [24029]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has until this financial year, not requested local authorities to supply data on the number of secure

tenancies they demoted. We are now asking them to provide this information and the first tranche of this data will be available for 2005–06.

The Housing Corporation has commenced the collection of this data. According to its Regulatory and Statistical Returns for 2004–05, 76 tenancies have been demoted since June 2004 when this tool first became available.

Fire Service Personnel (Assaults)

John Cummings: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many assaults on fire service personnel in the course of their duties there have been in the County of Durham in the last five years. [25697]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has been maintaining records of attacks on firefighters since April 2004. Prior to that date their was no requirement for the fire and rescue service to report attacks on firefighters.

Since April 2004 there has been in place a procedure for attacks on firefighters to be notified to the ODPM using the Fires and Incidents of Special Interest (FOSI) reporting procedures, as detailed in a Dear Chief Fire Officer (DCOL) letter 3/2004 issued on 1 April 2005. Since 1 April 2004 there have been reports of eight attacks on firefighters of the Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

Firelink Contract

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Firelink contract successful bid is likely to be announced. [25369]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to announce the preferred bidder for the Firelink contract during November, with a view to signing the contract before Christmas.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account is taken of the number of proposed communication masts when assessing bids for the Firelink project. [25370]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of proposed communication masts has been taken into account as part of the technical assessment of supplier bids, where information about proposed coverage was provided by the suppliers. This is just one aspect of the assessment of the bids, as the overall evaluation has taken into account three other key areas: project management, procurement and whole life costs. It is the balance of this assessment that determines the outcome of the competition.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many full-time equivalent employee reductions have been made as a result of the Gershon review; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23689]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Progress on both headcount reductions in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Central), Government Offices for the Regions and ODPM's executive agencies and on cost savings was reported in the ODPM Departmental Annual Report, 2004. Further progress will be reported in the Autumn Performance Reports, which will include figures for headcount reduction in NDPBs as well as the core Department and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Efficiency savings relating to IT projects relating to the efficiency review will not start to flow until 2006–07.

Housing

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the potential environmental impact of its plans for new housing developments in the south-east; and if he will make a statement. [26393]

Yvette Cooper: The process for preparing regional plans for new development is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Accordingly, it is the South East England Regional Assembly which is responsible for appraising the sustainability of alternative development options as part of their drafting of the Regional Spatial Strategy (known as the "South East Plan"). After the Assembly submit their draft Plan to Government, there is further public consultation and testing by an independent Panel before the Plan is finalised by Government.

IT Projects

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list for each IT project his Department has undertaken since May 1997 which has incurred a total expenditure of £5 million or more *(a)* the name of the project, *(b)* its intended purpose, *(c)* the principal contractors involved and the payments made to each, *(d)* the original estimate of the cost of the project, *(e)* the actual outturn of expenditure on the project, *(f)* the intended date on which the project was to be fully implemented, *(g)* the actual date on which it was fully implemented or cancelled, *(h)* modifications which have been made to the project since it was first commissioned, *(i)* contractors on the project whose contracts have been cancelled, *(j)* replacement or additional contractors on the project, *(k)* the most reliable estimate of public expenditure saved as a result of implementing the project and *(l)* the most reliable estimates of improved performance of departmental functions as a result of implementing the project. [20626]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002, none of the IT projects we have completed has cost more than £5 million.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part Gateway reviews for these projects. [23522]

Jim Fitzpatrick: According to central records, 47 IT projects have either been completed or set in train since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established in May 2002.

Gateway reviews are conducted on a confidential basis for the Senior Responsible Owner and ODPM have not agreed for any report material to be made public. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 each request for the release of information contained in a Gateway Review is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Management Consultants

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on management consultants by *(a)* Norwich city council and *(b)* Norfolk county council in each of the last five years. [24393]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold this information for local authorities. However, we are advised that the information could be obtained from each authority and suggest that my hon. Friend contacts the Head of Efficiency at Norfolk county council and the Acting Director of Finance at Norwich city council in order to obtain the relevant figures.

Notting Hill Housing Trust

Mr. Hands: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many complaints have been received against the Notting Hill Housing Trust in each of the last five years; and how many have been investigated by the Ombudsman. [24528]

Mr. Woolas: Since 2001–02 complaints have been received against the Notting Hill Housing Trust (NHHT) by the following organisations:

Organisation	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Netting Hill Housing Trust[4]	[1]650	[1]700	688	470	[2]370
Housing Corporation	[3]2	14	6	7	1
ODPM	0	2	6	5	0

[1] Figures for 2001–02 and the first half of 2002–03 are estimated. During this period complaints were dealt with within NHHT area teams. NHHT launched its Complaint Team in November 2003 and the figures from this date are accurate.
[2] From 1 April to 31 October 2005.
[3] From 1 October 2001 to 31 March 2002.
[4] Data provided by NHHT.

Complaints against NHHT received by the Independent Housing Ombudsman (IHO) and the number of those that were investigated are set out as follows:

	Organisation	
	Received by the IHO	*Investigated by the IHO*
2001–02	32	3
2002–03	37	9
2003–04	48	11
2004–05	28	7
2005–06	15	4

Pensions

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the financial position of the London borough of Brent council pension scheme. [24476]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations require an actuarial valuation of each of the Scheme's funds every three years. At the valuation carried out as at 31 March 2004, the independent actuary appointed by the London borough of Brent reported that the fund held assets of £360 million against liabilities of £534 million. Accordingly the actuary set an appropriate employer contribution rate for the three financial years starting with 2005–06 to secure the solvency of the fund. Brent council has also published a Funding Strategy Statement, as required by the regulations, setting out its approach to managing its pension liabilities.

Regional Fire Control Centres

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his current estimate is of *(a)* the capital costs of the construction of a regional network of fire control centres, *(b)* the capital costs of the closure and relocation of England's 46 control rooms and *(c)* the revenue costs of running a network of regional fire control centres over their projected 15-year lifecycle. [26195]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The business case, on www.odpm.firecontrol.gov.uk, presents the "one-off" and "ongoing" costs for regional controls, which are related to (but not the same as) "capital" and "revenue" figures respectively. Accounting treatment is still under consideration.

The one-off gross cost of implementing networked regional control centres in England is forecast to be £160 million. This figure includes developing and installing the new ICT infrastructure, the costs associated with transition from existing control rooms to the new arrangements, and project management. The buildings will be leased from developers, who will meet the capital costs of their construction.

The business case does not contain any capital costs for closing existing control rooms. However, the one-off costs for relocating control room functions have been included in the £160 million cost referred to above.

The annual operating cost for providing control services with national network of regional centres, under steady state operating conditions, is currently forecast to be approximately £52 million.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his current estimate is of the cost savings which will be achieved through staff reductions arising from the relocation of existing control rooms to regional fire control centres. [26196]

Jim Fitzpatrick: After the last control centre goes live, it is estimated that the new network of regional fire control centres will achieve annual savings of over £20 million (30 per cent. reduction in annual running costs).

Staffing represents the largest cost element under both the current position and regional controls. Consequently, the largest relative savings will be generated in this area. There are additional contributions from the economies of scale achieved through the national infrastructure services contract, the avoidance of infrastructure replacement costs (including related project management), and the economies of scale achieved in servicing control centre accommodation.

Respect Unit

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 489W, on respect, whether any payment is being made by his Department to the Home Office specifically for the Respect Unit functions. [24700]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not made any payment directly to the Home Office for the Respect Unit's functions, although we have seconded a member of staff to work in the Unit.

I refer the hon. Member to the previous answer given on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 489W.

Standards Board for England

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases have been referred to the Standards Board for England in the last 12 months for which information is available; and of these how many were *(a)* found to be cases where the code of conduct had not been breached, *(b)* found to be cases where it was inappropriate for further action to be taken and *(c)* referred for investigation by an ethical standards officer. [25752]

Mr. Woolas: In the 2004–05 the Standards Board for England received 3,861 allegations that members of local authorities had breached the code of conduct for members. During that year, 1,543 allegations were not referred for investigation as the alleged conduct would not have involved a failure to comply with the code, 1,195 allegations were not referred for investigation because the allegations were found to be inappropriate for further action to be taken, and 949 allegations were referred for investigation.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in how many cases referred by the Standards Board for England for investigation in the last 12 months for which figures are available it was found that *(a)* there was no evidence of failure to comply with the code, *(b)* no further action was required, *(c)* the matter should be referred to the monitoring officer of the local authority and *(d)* the matter should be referred to the adjudication panel. [25753]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested in respect of the investigations completed by ethical standards officers of the Standards Board for England in 2004–05 is as follows.

(a) 310 cases—no evidence was found of a failure to comply with the code of conduct for members.

(b) 947 cases—no further action was required.

(c) 78 cases—referred to local authority monitoring officers.

(d) 111 cases—referred to the Adjudication Panel for England.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average cost of a case referred to the Standards Board for England was where the finding was *(a)* no breach, *(b)* no further action appropriate and *(c)* referred for investigation in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [25754]

Mr. Woolas: The Standards Board for England estimates that the average cost for them to make a referral decision in 2004–05 was £225, regardless of the decision made. The Board does not separately record costs in respect of the specific referral decisions made.

The average cost of an investigation into an allegation of a breach of the code of conduct by members of local authorities is about £5,000 per case.

Sustainable Development

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Department's performance against its key sustainable development impacts over the last 12 months. [24391]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister played a full part in preparing the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, "Securing the Future", which was launched in March 2005. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy makes clear that sustainable communities represent sustainable development at a local level.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Annual Report describes progress in creating sustainable communities and gives details on our key performance indicators.

Copies of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and the Department's Annual Report are in the Library of the House.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be producing a Sustainable Development Action Plan in December 2005, which will set out the steps the Office is taking to contribute to the delivery of the Strategy, including arrangements for monitoring progress.

Travellers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 445W, on Travellers, for what reasons copies of the written reports were not deposited in the Libraries at the time of the written answer; and whether copies have now been deposited in the Library. [22259]

Yvette Cooper: The letters were not deposited at the time of the written answer due to an administrative oversight for which I apologise. The documents have been made available in the Libraries of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

African Union

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress the Government have made in assisting the African Union in meeting its commitments, with particular reference to full troop deployment in Darfur. [24394]

Ian Pearson: The UK has committed £19 million funding this year to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). This brings our total contribution to AMIS, since its inception, to almost £32 million. We are using this money to provide equipment, including 950 vehicles of which we have already purchased 450, and to provide military and civilian policing advice, expertise and training. We have also used some of our contribution to fund airlift of troops into Darfur.

The UK and international partners have urged the African Union to carry out a further assessment mission to examine the effectiveness of the expanded AMIS and present recommendations for the future, including whether any further expansion is required. We expect this mission will take place in the coming weeks.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23844]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Skills Development Plan is the responsibility of Ms Gerry Reffo, Head of the FCO's Professional Development Policy Team.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23868]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is reviewing its departmental Skills Development Plan in line with the Professional Skills in Government (PSG) initiative, to reflect, in particular, the skills audit taking place at present and the changes in training that the PSG is helping to bring about. A revised version of the Skills Development Plan will be prepared by the end of January 2006 and placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Sponsorship

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22568]

Mr. Straw: The joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Home Office Forced Marriage Unit launched a full public consultation on whether to introduce a new forced marriage criminal offence. This was launched on 5 September and will last until 5 December. On 20 October we started a consultation on our Consular Guide, which sets out what the FCO can and cannot do for British nationals in difficulty abroad. This will last until the end of November. The FCO has also contributed to consultations of other Government Departments, such as the 16 week consultation on managed migration routes to the UK which was launched on 19 July and on which the FCO and Home Office organised a joint seminar with foreign embassies. In addition to formal consultations, we frequently seek the views of a range of stakeholders in setting strategy, for example our sustainable development strategy, published in March this year, and in forming policy.

Departmental Staff (Qualifications)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23776]

Mr. Straw: All entry points into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, save one, require candidates to have a minimum of a level 2 in English and Mathematics. The exception is for new recruits at Administrative Assistant level who are required to have a minimum of GCSE grade A*-C (or equivalent) in English Language. An educational qualification in Mathematics is not required, although numeracy is tested during ability tests.

In 2005–06, 65 candidates have been successful at Administrative Assistant level, subject to pre-appointment checks. Of these 65 candidates, 22 do not have the equivalent of a level 2 in Mathematics.

European Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made *(a)* to the European Commission and *(b)* to other EU member states on the inclusion of a €6 million provision in next year's EU budget for promoting the European Constitution. [26242]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The European Commission has requested a further €6 million from the EU budget to support work on the Future of Europe debate. The EU's budget for 2006 must be agreed between the European Council and the European Parliament. The Commission initiated this process by proposing a Preliminary Draft Budget, which was amended by the Council in its first reading on 15 July to form the Draft Budget. The European Parliament agreed its own amendments to the Draft Budget on 27 October, and the Council will conclude its second reading on 24 November. The budget will then go back to the European Parliament, hopefully for approval at its plenary on 13–15 December. In this context, the UK has worked closely with other member states to find agreement on the 2006 budget, but no member state has yet made any specific representations on the €6 million requested by the European Commission to support work on the Future of Europe debate.

European Union Border Controls

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will visit the new eastern border of the EU to see the border controls in place to protect the EU from illegal immigration. [25338]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK co-operates closely with all EU member states on measures to strengthen the external borders, including those responsible for managing the new Eastern border. We fully support the aims and objectives of Frontex, the new European Border Agency based in Warsaw, to which we have seconded two UK officials. This will ensure more structured and effective co-operation between member states. We also work bilaterally and through the EU with accession, candidate and third countries to strengthen their border management capacity, including through ministerial visits when necessary.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no plans at present to visit the Eastern border.

European Union Budget

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress towards agreeing a budget for the European Union under the United Kingdom's presidency. [24455]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the House on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 707–09.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to ask his French counterpart to increase that country's budget contributions to the EU. [25329]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 707–09. The Foreign Secretary made clear that we speak regularly to our French counterparts, as we do with all EU member states, on the way to take forward the future financing negotiations.

G8 Summit (Gleneagles)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost to public funds was of hosting the G8 summit at Gleneagles. [25832]

Ian Pearson: An estimate for the organisational costs of the G8 summit of £12.1 million has been made available on the G8 website at www.g8.gov.uk. A breakdown of this figure is nearly ready for publication. The process has been delayed to allow some suppliers to submit final invoices.

These details will be placed in the Library of the House, before also being made available on the G8 website.

Securing the Gleneagles summit was the responsibility of the Devolved Administration and I understand that Scottish Ministers are separately preparing to release details of these costs.

Ireland

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which of the bilateral treaties, conventions, agreements and similar instruments made between the United Kingdom and Ireland from 1921 to date are still in force. [24739]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The United Kingdom has entered into 66 bilateral treaties with Ireland since 1 January 1921. Five of those treaties have been expressly terminated leaving 61 still in force. A list of the treaties concerned has been placed in the Library of the House.

Pakistan

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in Pakistan. [25340]

Dr. Howells: We remain concerned by the human rights situation in Pakistan and we continue to raise these concerns with the Government of Pakistan, both bilaterally and through the European Union. We believe that doing this through the collective voice of the European Union is the most effective way of expressing these concerns.

Tibet

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Chinese Government on the arrest of *(a)* Sonam Gyalpo from Lhasa and *(b)* four monks from the Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in the Gansu Province of Tibet; and if he will make a statement. [24204]

Ian Pearson: The Government are very concerned about Tibetans who find themselves in prison for actions which we consider to be the peaceful expression of political, cultural, and religious rights. We have made representations on behalf of many such prisoners over the years and will continue to do so. The Government will look to raise specific cases of concern brought to our attention by non-governmental organisations at appropriate opportunities. A number of Tibetan prisoners were raised as part of the EU China Human Rights Dialogue held on 24 October in Beijing.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on the lifting of embargoes on the Turkish Republic of northern Cyprus. [24831]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are no actual embargoes in force against north Cyprus, but the lack of a settlement of the Cyprus problem and the suspension of the EU acquis in the north do make many issues, including trade, more difficult.

The Government strongly supports the EU's commitment, set out at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 26 April 2004, to end the isolation

of the Turkish Cypriot community and facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. We will continue our efforts during our Presidency of the EU in working with the European Commission and member states towards achieving this aim.

Uganda

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the outcome of the referendum in Uganda in July. [24434]

Ian Pearson: The UK issued a statement on 5 August, on behalf of the European Union, following the 28 July referendum on the political transition in Uganda. The statement welcomed the decision of the Ugandan people to endorse the re-introduction of a multi-party political system. This represents a significant step forward for democratic accountability in Uganda.

Uganda now needs to ensure that the necessary legislation for multi-party politics is in place well before the elections in February or March 2006. The ruling Movement party and in particular its Secretariat should also be fully separated from the state.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards a resolution to the conflict in Northern Uganda. [24436]

Ian Pearson: The UK remains concerned at the continuation of the 19 year conflict in Northern Uganda and the serious humanitarian situation for the more than 1.4 million people still living in camps for internally displaced people.

The UK continues to call on the Government of Uganda to ensure that all of its citizens are protected and provided for. A recent upsurge in violent attacks in northern Uganda has led to the UN and other humanitarian organisations suspending field missions. This is a matter of grave concern.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) unsealed its first warrants on 13 October for the arrest of five Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commanders. The UK is a strong supporter of the work of the ICC and calls on all those involved to work to facilitate the arrest of the individuals subject to the warrants. The UK is encouraging Uganda to work hard to encourage all members of the LRA, not subject to ICC or national arrest warrants, to seek amnesty, reconciliation and reintegration into their communities.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claiming *(a)* jobseeker's allowance and *(b)* disability benefit have more than five GCSEs or equivalent qualifications in (i) England, (ii) the Tees Valley and (iii) Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency. [26488]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received *(a)* housing benefit, *(b)* council tax benefit, *(c)* income support and *(d)* incapacity benefit in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead, in each year since 1997. [24039]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the tables.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit caseloads in Dacorum borough council, May 1997–2005

	Housing benefit	Council tax benefit
1997	8,100	9,000
1998	7,600	8,500
1999	7,100	8,000
2000	7,000	7,900
2001	6,700	7,600
2002	6,500	7,400
2003	6,700	7,500
2004	6,900	7,800
2005	7,100	8,200

Notes:

1. Figures for housing benefit and council tax benefit are not available for parliamentary constituencies.
2. The data refer to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
4. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
5. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in May 2005.

Income support claimants in the Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency, May 1997 to May 2005

1997	2,000
1998	2,000
1999	2,200
2000	2,400
2001	2,500
2002	2,500
2003	2,500
2004	2,500
2005	2,500

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. For comparison purposes, the income support figures do not include pensioners. Income support has not been payable to pensioners since October 2003.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, combination of Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study and 5 per cent. sample data.

Incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in the Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency, May 2000–05

1997	2,500
1998	2,500
1999	2,600
2000	2,500
2001	2,600
2002	2,700
2003	2,800
2004	2,800
2005	2,800

Notes:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Claimants include incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and national insurance contributions-only cases.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Kingston and Surbiton constituency have received *(a)* widows benefit, *(b)* housing benefit, *(c)* council tax benefit and *(d)* income support in each year since 1997. [23887]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the tables.

Bereavement benefit and widows benefit recipients in the Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency: May 2000–05

As at May:	Bereavement benefit	Widows benefit
2000	n/a	400
2001	n/a	300
2002	100	300
2003	100	200
2004	100	200
2005	100	200

Notes:

1. n/a = not applicable; bereavement benefit replaced widows benefit for new claims in April 2001
2. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Breakdown by parliamentary constituency is not available prior to May 2000.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit caseloads in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames: May 1997–2005

As at May:	Housing benefit	Council tax benefit
1997	6,600	7,600
1998	5,600	6,200
1999	6,000	6,600
2000	5,700	6,300
2001	5,900	6,500
2002	5,900	6,500
2003	6,100	6,800
2004	6,600	7,300
2005	7,000	7,800

Notes:

1. Figures for housing benefit and council tax benefit are not available for parliamentary constituencies.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
4. Council tax benefit totals exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.
5. Housing benefit figures exclude any Extended Payment cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in May 2005.

Income support claimants in the Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency: May 1997 to May 2005

As at May:	Claimants
1997	3,100
1998	2,900
1999	2,700
2000	2,600
2001	2,700
2002	2,600
2003	2,700
2004	2,700
2005	2,700

Notes:
1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.
2. For comparison purposes, the income support figures do not include pensioners. income support has not been payable to pensioners since October 2003.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, combination of Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study and 5 per cent. sample data.

Bereavement Benefits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of men who lost their wives and who claimed for widows and bereavement benefits prior to 1 April 2001 but whose claims were rejected are now eligible to claim retrospectively for *(a)* widow's bereavement allowance and *(b)* bereavement payment; and if he will make a statement on eligibility to backdated widows' and bereavement benefits in cases where the wife of a man died before 1 April 2001. [26259]

Mr. Plaskitt: Bereavement benefits were introduced on 9 April 2001 for both men and women. Prior to this date there was no provision to pay widows' benefits to men and this is still the case.

The Government have decided to offer settlement on claims for discrimination relating to widowed mothers' allowance and widow's payment, but only to those widowers who have an admissible case in the European Court of Human Rights and who satisfy the benefit conditions and made their original claim at the correct time. Widowers who were unsuccessful in the recent cases before the House of Lords were able to take their case to Europe provided they did so by 4 November 2005 (six months from the House of Lords ruling). We are not currently aware of how many cases may be involved.

Any claims for widow's payment or widowed mothers' allowance by a man whose wife died before 9 April 2001 and who has not previously made an application to the European Court or was not involved with the domestic cases will now be too late. Any claims received from widowers at Jobcentre Plus or social security offices will be subject to the usual late claim rules and will be disallowed because they are out of time. In deciding on this approach we have been guided by previous admissibility decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in widowers' cases.

Child Support

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many potential child support cases are awaiting processing at the point of entry for benefit cases via the Jobcentre Plus interface. [18698]

Mr. Plaskitt: At the end of August 2005 there were 85,000 such cases. However, in addition to new valid applications this figure includes applications where there is insufficient information available to identify the non-resident parent, and changes of circumstance in relation to an existing case.

Correspondence

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the correspondence dated 22 March and 1 April from the hon. Member for Kingston and Surbiton with regard to Mr. Stephen Stone, reference Ston010, sent again on 4 July. [23877]

Mr. Plaskitt: I replied to the hon. Member on 31 October. I am sorry that the hon. Member's correspondence was handled incorrectly in the Department.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22466]

Mr. Plaskitt: The figures for energy consumption and costs are in the table. The Department for Work and Pensions was created in June 2001. From July 2002, the figures include the Health and safety Executive, and from April 2004, the Rent Service.

	Consumption (KwH)	Cost (£)
2001–02	694,310,805	16,397,153
2002–03	715,754,197	19,051,582
2003–04	730,616,284	20,418,022
2004–05	757,031,373	24,501,543

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [22280]

Mrs. McGuire: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Gateshead, East and Washington, West will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 29 per cent. of adults and 6 per cent. of children in north-east region are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.8 million; in Gateshead, East and Washington, West, the proportion in employment has risen to 76.4 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.4 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with over 2,780 in Gateshead, East and Washington, West alone.

Significant progress has been made in tackling child poverty and the latest figures (for 2003–04) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02, increasing above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,800 families in Gateshead, East and Washington, West.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the least well off pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £11 billion extra in 2005–06 on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997. Almost half of this spending going to the least well off third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of May 2005, around 5,300 pensioners in Gateshead, East and Washington, West are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £36.44 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2005–06) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for 2005–06, eligible households with someone aged 65 or over, not receiving the guarantee element of pension credit will receive a one-off payment of £200 to help with their council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment, and one-off payment of £50 for pensioner households with someone aged 70 and over in receipt of the pension credit guarantee in recognition of the fact that the oldest and poorest pensioners are likely to be disproportionately affected by the rise in cost of living expenses.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 7 per cent. respectively. Some 15,200 pensioners in Gateshead, East and Washington, West have benefited from this increase.

Housing Benefit

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the annual cost to *(a)* the Exchequer and *(b)* local authorities of a 10 per cent. reduction in the housing benefit taper; [18677]

(2) what estimate he has made of the annual cost to *(a)* the Exchequer and *(b)* local authorities of a five per cent. reduction in the council tax benefit taper. [18678]

Mr. Plaskitt: There will be no cost to local authorities for paying additional benefit as this will be met by the Department. The only impact to local authorities will be associated with the processing and maintenance of additional new claims, the numbers of which are in the table. The Department does not collect management information relating to the cost to authorities of processing and maintaining claims.

The available information is in the table.

Cost associated with reducing housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) tapers

	Number of new beneficiaries floating on	*Number of existing beneficiaries gaining*	*Cost in annually managed expenditure (£ million per year)*
Reducing the HB taper from 65 per cent. to 55 per cent.	125,000	875,000	230
Reducing the CTB taper from 20 per cent. to 15 per cent.	370,000	1,115,000	155

Notes:

1. All figures are for Great Britain.
2. Beneficiaries are rounded to the nearest five thousand and costs are rounded to the nearest £5 million.
3. Each beneficiary represents a benefit unit, which can be a single claimant or a couple.
4. The impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06, using data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.
5. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average housing benefit payment was to tenants in social rented accommodation in each local authority area in England in *(a)* 1991 and *(b)* 2004. [24225]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available for 1991. The available information for 2004 has been placed in the Library.

Incapacity Benefit

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women (i) over and (ii) under the age of 50 years were claiming incapacity benefit in each (A) region and (B) country of the UK in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by the number of years for which claimants had been on the benefit. [25309]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the table.

Number of incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in Great Britain, by age, gender, region, and duration of claim at 31 May 2005

	All	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1–2 years	2–3 years	3–4 years	4–5 years	Thousand 5 years and over
All Regions	2,784.0	256.6	180.6	271.5	228.4	195.5	191.0	1,460.4
Men aged under 50	814.3	102.9	69.0	96.7	76.3	62.0	57.6	349.8
Men aged 50–64	796.8	48.1	35.8	59.5	54.8	50.7	52.9	495.1
Women aged under 50	663.3	76.4	52.4	76.1	62.2	50.9	47.5	297.9
Women aged 50–59	466.9	28.7	22.6	38.2	34.4	31.1	31.5	280.4
Men over SPA	6.9	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	6.3
Women over SPA	35.9	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.3	31.1
North East	178.3	16.0	10.4	15.5	13.4	11.7	12.1	99.2
Men aged under 50	50.0	6.6	4.0	5.4	4.5	3.7	3.6	22.3
Men aged 50–64	55.3	3.0	2.1	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.4	36.9
Women aged under 50	40.2	4.7	2.9	4.3	3.6	2.9	2.9	18.9
Women aged 50–59	30.2	1.7	1.3	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.0	18.9
Men over SPA	0.3	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	0.3
Women over SPA	2.3	0.1	[..]	[..]	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.9
North West	432.4	36.3	25.9	40.2	35.1	30.2	29.3	235.3
Men aged under 50	124.3	14.5	9.8	14.4	11.8	9.7	8.9	55.2
Men aged 50–64	127.2	6.7	5.4	9.0	8.4	7.8	8.3	81.6
Women aged under 50	100.8	10.9	7.3	11.1	9.5	7.8	7.1	47.1
Women aged 50–59	73.7	4.1	3.3	5.7	5.2	4.8	4.7	46.1
Men over SPA	0.9	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	0.8
Women over SPA	5.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	4.4
Unknown	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]
Yorkshire and the Humber	251.0	23.5	15.9	24.5	20.8	17.8	17.5	130.9
Men aged under 50	71.0	9.4	6.0	8.4	6.5	5.4	5.1	30.3
Men aged 50–64	76.5	4.6	3.4	5.7	5.5	5.0	5.1	47.1
Women aged under 50	57.5	6.7	4.4	6.6	5.4	4.4	4.3	25.7
Women aged 50–59	41.9	2.7	2.1	3.6	3.2	3.0	3.0	24.3
Men over SPA	0.5	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	0.5
Women over SPA	3.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	3.1
Unknown	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]
East Midlands	185.0	16.9	11.7	17.6	15.0	12.9	12.8	98.3
Men aged under 50	51.0	6.4	4.1	5.7	4.6	3.7	3.5	22.9
Men aged 50–64	55.9	3.6	2.7	4.4	4.0	3.7	3.7	33.8
Women aged under 50	42.8	4.9	3.2	4.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	19.9
Women aged 50–59	32.2	2.0	1.6	2.7	2.5	2.1	2.3	18.8
Men over SPA	0.5	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	0.4
Women over SPA	2.7	[..]	[..]	0.1	[..]	[..]	0.1	2.4
Unknown	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]
West Midlands	250.8	23.2	15.9	24.8	20.9	17.9	17.0	130.9
Men aged under 50	72.8	9.2	6.0	8.6	6.8	5.5	4.9	31.8
Men aged 50–64	74.0	4.9	3.3	5.9	5.4	5.0	5.2	44.4
Women aged under 50	58.1	6.6	4.4	6.8	5.5	4.5	4.0	26.4
Women aged 50–59	42.4	2.6	2.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.9	25.3
Men over SPA	0.5	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	0.5
Women over SPA	3.0	[..]	[..]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.6
Unknown	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]
East of England	180.7	18.8	13.0	18.3	14.9	12.6	12.1	91.0
Men aged under 50	52.9	7.4	4.8	6.3	4.8	3.9	3.6	22.1
Men aged 50–64	49.3	3.7	2.7	4.2	3.7	3.1	3.3	28.6
Women aged under 50	44.2	5.4	3.9	5.0	3.9	3.4	3.0	19.6
Women aged 50–59	31.1	2.2	1.7	2.7	2.3	2.1	2.2	17.8
Men over SPA	0.6	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	0.5
Women over SPA	2.7	[..]	[..]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.4
Unknown	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]	[..]
London	319.0	29.7	23.1	34.7	29.7	24.5	23.8	153.4
Men aged under 50	109.7	12.7	9.7	14.1	11.2	8.9	8.4	44.6
Men aged 50–64	76.1	4.4	3.5	5.8	5.5	5.2	5.5	46.0
Women aged under 50	81.0	9.5	7.4	10.5	8.9	6.8	6.2	31.7

Number of incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in Great Britain, by age, gender, region, and duration of claim at 31 May 2005

Thousand

	All	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1–2 years	2–3 years	3–4 years	4–5 years	5 years and over
Women aged 50–59	48.6	2.9	2.4	4.2	4.0	3.6	3.6	27.8
Men over SPA	0.8	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0.7
Women over SPA	2.7	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0.1	2.5
Unknown	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
South East	243.5	24.9	18.4	25.9	20.2	17.2	16.0	120.8
Men aged under 50	74.1	9.9	7.1	9.3	6.7	5.6	4.8	30.7
Men aged 50–64	65.6	4.7	3.6	5.6	4.8	4.3	4.3	38.3
Women aged under 50	59.7	7.4	5.3	7.4	5.7	4.6	4.0	25.3
Women aged 50–59	39.3	2.9	2.3	3.6	2.9	2.6	2.7	22.4
Men over SPA	0.9	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0.8
Women over SPA	3.8	[1]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	3.3
Unknown	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
South West	195.3	19.5	13.3	19.8	15.8	13.5	13.7	99.7
Men aged under 50	59.5	8.1	5.1	7.1	5.5	4.4	4.3	25.0
Men aged 50–64	54.8	3.7	2.7	4.3	3.8	3.6	3.6	33.0
Women aged under 50	46.3	5.5	3.8	5.5	4.1	3.4	3.4	20.5
Women aged 50–59	31.4	2.2	1.7	2.8	2.3	2.0	2.2	18.2
Men over SPA	0.6	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0.6
Women over SPA	2.7	[1]	[1]	0.1	[1]	0.1	0.1	2.4
Wales	212.9	17.8	12.1	18.4	15.6	14.0	14.0	120.6
Men aged under 50	54.4	6.8	4.3	6.1	4.7	3.9	3.8	24.7
Men aged 50–64	67.2	3.4	2.6	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.2	44.7
Women aged under 50	49.1	5.4	3.5	5.2	4.2	3.6	3.4	23.8
Women aged 50–59	38.3	2.1	1.7	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4	24.2
Men over SPA	0.4	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0.4
Women over SPA	3.1	[1]	[1]	0.1	0.1	[1]	0.1	2.8
Scotland	323.5	29.7	20.4	30.8	26.0	22.3	21.5	172.8
Men aged under 50	93.0	11.8	7.9	11.3	8.9	7.2	6.5	39.4
Men aged 50–64	88.9	5.2	3.7	6.3	5.8	5.5	5.7	56.7
Women aged under 50	81.9	9.5	6.3	9.1	7.4	6.1	5.8	37.8
Women aged 50–59	55.1	3.2	2.5	4.1	3.7	3.4	3.3	34.8
Men over SPA	0.9	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0.8
Women over SPA	3.8	0.1	[1]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	3.3
Overseas	12.0	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	7.5
Men aged under 50	1.5	[1]	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.8
Men aged 50–64	6.0	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	3.9
Women aged under 50	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.0
Women aged 50–59	2.7	[1]	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.7
Men over SPA	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Women over SPA	0.1	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]

[1] Nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. 'Claimant' figures include incapacity benefit credits only cases.
3. Totals include a very small number of cases where age/gender is unknown (only 40 cases at May 2005).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women (i) over and (ii) under 50 years were claiming incapacity benefit in each (A) (1) region and (2) country of the UK and (B) social services authority area in the last period for which figures are available. [25310]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the format requested. The information for Great Britain and local authorities in Great Britain has been placed in the Library.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the expenditure on incapacity benefit was in each *(a)* region and *(b)* country of the UK in the last period for which figures are available. [25311]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit expenditure 2003–04

£ million

	Nominal terms	Real terms (2005–06 prices)
Great Britain	6,641	6,942
England	5,184	5,418
North East	493	516
North West	1,106	1,156
Yorkshire and The Humber	623	651
East Midlands	475	497
West Midlands	630	659
East of England	409	427
London	509	532
South East	510	533
South West	428	448
Wales	611	638
Scotland	809	846

Notes:

1. Benefit expenditure in Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland office.
2. Great Britain expenditure consistent with Budget 2005.
3. Country and Government Office Region expenditure is derived from data underlying the Analysis of Public Expenditure by Country and Region 2005.
4. Does not include overseas expenditure.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of the 17,000 claimants with recorded job entries in Pathways to Work pilots *(a)* returned to incapacity benefits and *(b)* claimed jobseeker's allowance within (i) one month, (ii) two months, (iii) six months and (iv) 12 months in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the assessment that has been carried out of those claimants of incapacity benefit with recorded job entries in the pilot areas who subsequently returned to benefits. [26262]

Margaret Hodge: Moving into employment from incapacity benefits is a major transition for many people. Over half of those claiming incapacity benefits have been claiming for more than eight years and have a range of barriers to overcome in addition to their health condition. We recognise the challenge that the transition to work represents but we want to support and encourage people to make this transition to transform their life-chances. For example, we have already extended the linking rules so that people who take the risk of leaving incapacity benefits can return to previous benefit levels.

The statistical information requested is in the table.

Proportion of job entrants in Pathways to Work areas returning to benefit

	Incapacity benefit	*Jobseeker's allowance*	*Percentage Incapacity benefit or jobseeker's allowance*
Within 1 month	3	2	5
Within 2 months	5	4	9
Within 6 months	11	9	19
Within 12 months	14	12	24

Note:

Data are to the end of August 2005.

Sources:

1. The statistics quoted in this response are taken from the Pathways to Work Evaluation Database.
2. The benefits data are taken from the Department's 100 per cent. Benefits Database.

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his Department's contribution to the establishment of the New Deal for Skills. [21815]

Margaret Hodge: The Departments for Work and Pensions, Education and Skills, Trade and Industry and Treasury have worked jointly to develop a package of measures that are known collectively as New Deal for Skills. DWP and DfES are taking the work forward as a joint project.

New Deal for Skills comprises three main strands: Skills Coaching, Skills Passports and the Adult Learning Option. DWP have been actively involved in the design and delivery of the DfES funded Skills Coaching and Skills Passports trials. DWP are then funding and managing the evaluation work for the Skills Coaching and Skills Passports trials. We expect the full evaluation report to be available next summer.

DWP have lead responsibility for the work to pilot the Adult Learning Option from September 2006. This will test the effectiveness of providing financial support to encourage low skilled Jobcentre Plus customers to take up full-time Level 2 further education courses, where a lack of skills stops them entering the labour market.

More detail on the New Deal for Skills may be found in "Skills and the Global Economy" and "Skills:Getting on in Business, getting on at work"(Cm6483). Both documents are available in the Library.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which training companies providing courses under the new deal for young people he expects to have their contracts renewed. [25200]

Margaret Hodge: Contracts for new deal for young people are currently being re-tendered, to run for a minimum of two years from April 2006. The competitive tendering process is in two stages. The closing date for first stage bids is 4 November in most instances. All bids received will be carefully evaluated against published criteria, and those bidders who are successful at that stage will be invited to submit second stage bids. Contracts will be awarded in early 2006.

Organisations currently providing new deal training services for young people are entitled to bid for these new contracts. We cannot pre-empt the results of the procurement process, but it is likely that many current providers will be successful in winning further work for Jobcentre Plus, either in their own right or as sub-contractors to other training providers.

Pensions

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the number of people in receipt of UK state pensions which have been frozen due to their residence in countries without reciprocal pension arrangements with the UK; [26245]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* up-rating all frozen overseas pensions from 1 January 2006 and *(b)* backdating them to the point at which they were first frozen; [26243]

(3) what estimate he has made of the net cost of establishing reciprocal pension arrangements with all countries which have no such agreement with the UK. [26244]

Mr. Timms: At 31 October 2005 approximately 510,000 UK state pensions were in payment to people residing outside the European economic area (EEA) in a country with which the UK do not have a reciprocal agreement covering the uprating of pensions.

Benefits are normally uprated in April. The estimated cost of uprating these pensions from April 2006 is £20 million in 2006–07. This increases to £110 million by 2009–10 and with ongoing increases thereafter.

If the rate paid was restored to that which would have been payable had the individuals concerned remained in the UK and arrears of benefit were paid in respect of earlier periods during which the pension had not been uprated—the cost would be in the region of £3 billion in 2006–07, with ongoing costs of £400 million per annum rising over subsequent years

The UK state pension is currently paid in over 150 countries outside the EEA with which the UK do not have a reciprocal agreement covering the uprating of pensions. The fundamental requirements for any reciprocal agreement on the uprating of pensions are that the 'other' country has a system for paying the equivalent of the UK state pension and that there is reciprocity of costs. It is not possible to estimate the net costs of establishing reciprocal agreements as the Department do not hold information on:

a) what (if any) pension systems exist in many of the countries in question; and

b) the numbers of people resident in the UK who would as a result of reciprocal agreements become eligible for pensions under the systems of the countries in question.

Pension Commission

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of the Pension Commission has been to date. [25054]

Mr. Timms: The Pensions Commission's estimated monthly average costs between April 2003 and September 2005 are as follows:

	£
Cost of:	
Pensions Commissioners' time	0
Pensions Commission Secretariat staffing	33,000
Pensions Commission non-staff costs	8,000
Pensions Commission social research	8,000

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 1000.
2. The Department meets the costs of general office overheads e.g. accommodation, IT etc. Consequently, these costs are not separately identifiable from DWP's running costs.

Recycled Paper

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much paper his Department used in each year since 1997; how much was recycled paper; and if he will make a statement. [21611]

Mr. Plaskitt: Paper usage, for the Department for Work and Pensions, as reported in the Greening Government, and Sustainable Development in Government report, is summarised in the table.

	Office paper (reams)	*Percentage of recycled paper*	*Paper for printed publications (tonnes)*	*Percentage of recycled paper*
2001–02	[1] 1,330,392	1.35	[3] 8,434	16
	[2] 494,290	0.77	—	—
2002–03	1,933,634	3.17	5,164	41
2003–04	2,149,853	5.3	5,655	4.2
2004–05	1,908,633	10.85	[3] —	[3] —

[1] DSS only.
[2] ES
[3] Information not available.

The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment including the former Employment Service (ES).

In September 2005 new contracts for stationery and paper for printed publications were let. This will make the use of recycled paper the standard across DWP.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the off-flow from jobseeker's allowance was in each year since 1997 for *(a)* the UK, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each parliamentary constituency, broken down by reason; and what percentage of jobseeker's allowance off-flow this represented in each case. [18622]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information has been placed in the Library.

Unemployment

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many unemployed or economically inactive adults wanting to work *(a)* held a Level 2 qualification and (i) had and (ii) did not have a limiting longstanding health condition and *(b)* did not hold a Level 2 qualification and (A) had and (B) did not have a limiting longstanding health condition in (1) 1997 and (2) 2005. [23285]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is in the following table:

	1997	*2005*
Number of unemployed or economically inactive adults wanting to work who held a Level 2 qualification or above	2,223,000	1,958,000
Of these:		
Number of those with limiting longstanding health condition	259,000	292,000
Number of those without a limiting longstanding health condition	1,964,000	1,666,000

	1997	2005
Number of unemployed or economically inactive adults wanting to work who did not hold a Level 2 qualification	2,082,000	1,345,000
Of these:		
Number of those with limiting longstanding health condition	411,000	321,000
Number of those without a limiting longstanding health condition	1,671,000	1,024,000

Notes:
1. The figures are for Great Britain.
2. The figures are based on ILO definitions of unemployment and economic inactivity.
3. The economic inactive group includes students and retired people.

Source:
The 1997 Labour Force Survey (summer quarter) and the 2005 Labour Force Survey (summer quarter).

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the change was in claimant count unemployment attributable to *(a)* new claims and *(b)* changes in the duration of existing claims in each of the last 12 calendar months. [24766]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is in the following table.

Unemployment claimant count September 2004 to September 2005

	Claimant count	Inflows—new claimants	Stock—existing claimants	Monthly change in claimant count	Monthly change in inflows	Change due to changes in duration
September 2004	836,000	198,300	637,700	—	—	—
October 2004	836,400	200,300	636,100	400	2,000	-1,600
November 2004	831,900	198,900	633,000	-4,500	-1,400	-3,100
December 2004	825,000	201,200	623,800	-6,900	2,300	-9,200
January 2005	813,800	197,700	616,100	-11,200	-3,500	-7,700
February 2005	817,700	201,500	616,200	3,900	3,800	100
March 2005	831,300	203,900	627,400	13,600	2,400	11,200
April 2005	842,100	204,400	637,700	10,800	500	10,300
May 2005	856,100	211,700	644,400	14,000	7,300	6,700
June 2005	863,200	204,900	658,300	7,100	-6,800	13,900
July 2005	864,600	201,300	663,300	1,400	-3,600	5,000
August 2005	867,300	202,400	664,900	2,700	1,100	1,600
September 2005	875,500	197,600	677,900	8,200	-4,800	13,000

Notes:
1. Figures are for UK, seasonally adjusted, and to the nearest 100.
2. Inflows are standardised to a four ½ week month.

Source:
Office for National Statistics data (available at www.nomisweb.co.uk).

Widow's Benefit

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will issue clear guidance on how claimants should claim widow's benefit following the European Court of Human Rights ruling. [26219]

Mr. Plaskitt: We are unable to issue guidance for claims to widows' benefits from men. We introduced Bereavement Benefits from 9 April 2001 for both men and women but before this date there was no provision for the payment of widows' benefits to men. This remains the case today.

On 5 May 2005 the House of Lords unanimously rejected widowers' claims concerning payment of widows' payment and widowed mothers' allowance before April 2001. They also found the Government to be justified in not paying Widows Pension to widowers.

Any application for widows' payment or widowed mothers' allowance from a man whose wife died before 9 April 2001 and who either has not made an application to the European Court of Human Rights or was not part of proceedings in the domestic courts will now be too late.

Mental Health (Employment)

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had on helping those with mental health problems to find work. [22066]

Margaret Hodge: There are ongoing discussions with officials, lobby groups and our voluntary community and private sector partners about how we can do more to help people with mental health problems find work. We will ensure that the needs of this group are considered as part of our wider welfare reform plans.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many legal aid franchises in asylum work were operating in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Yorkshire and Humberside region in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [19038]

Bridget Prentice: The information is as follows:

(a) The numbers of immigration asylum and non-asylum legal aid franchises in England and Wales are as follows:

April to March each year	Franchises
2000–01	545
2001–02	591
2002–03	644
2003–04	604
2004–05	491
2005-To date	398

(b) The numbers of immigration and asylum legal aid franchises in the Yorkshire and Humberside region are as follows:

April to March each year	*Franchises*
2000-01	32
2001-02	32
2002-03	33
2003-04	31
2004-05	25
2005-To date	15

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken by the Legal Services Commission to ensure adequate legal advice for asylum seekers in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. [19041]

Bridget Prentice: There are currently 15 specialist providers of immigration and asylum services across the Yorkshire and Humberside region funded by the Legal Services Commission (LSC), working across 19 different locations.

The LSC recognises that there is currently an imbalance between the adequacy of legal advice provision in the South Yorkshire and Humber area as compared to West Yorkshire, with a degree of unmet need occurring in South Yorkshire and Humber.

As a result, the LSC is currently tendering for 3,335 additional New Matter Starts, which increases the amount of legal aid work suppliers can do to match demand, in immigration to ensure adequate provision of publicly funded immigration and asylum services across the Yorkshire region. The emphasis will be on Hull for the Humber area, and on Sheffield for the South Yorkshire area.

In addition, the LSC has worked with the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS), a national supplier of legal services, to establish an outreach service run in conjunction with members of the local Community Legal Service Partnership. This service has been extremely successful and has recently extended its availability to two days per week.

Coroners

Grant Shapps: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1164W, when she expects to make a statement on reforms of the coroners' system. [25611]

Ms Harman: I expect to make a statement in early 2006.

Electoral Administration Bill

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library annotated copies of Acts proposed to be substantially amended by the Electoral Administration Bill, showing in each *(a)* the omissions and *(b)* the additions proposed by the Bill. [24966]

Ms Harman: The only Act that is substantially amended by the Electoral Administration Bill is the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA). A Keeling schedule for the RPA, setting out the amendments proposed in the Bill, is available on the DCA website at http://www.dca.gov.uk/legist/keeling.htm and will be placed in the Commons Library.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 752W, on the Electoral Administration Bill, if she will deposit copies of the responses received by her Department in the Library. [25589]

Ms Harman: I will be happy to place the responses in the Library once I have confirmed with the authors that they are content for me to do so.

Entry Clearance

Tony Baldry: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when Balvir Kamar reference IMM/ECR/1195812/OJ/NS will receive notification of his application for entry clearance. [25465]

Bridget Prentice: Checks with officials at UK Visas have confirmed that that the reference provided in the question relates to an appeal from a Balvir Kaur, and not the name provided.

Officials at the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) have confirmed that the appeal of Balvir Kaur has been received from the diplomatic post, processed and allocated a case number. The appeal will be allocated a hearing date before an Immigration Judge within the next 10 working days which will be confirmed to all parties to the appeal in writing.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when Muhammad Shabir (reference 973021) will receive notification of appeal for entry clearance. [25466]

Bridget Prentice: The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) has confirmed that the appeal for Muhammad Shabir, matching the reference provided in the question, has been received from the diplomatic post, processed and allocated a case number. The appeal has been listed for a substantive hearing before an Immigration Judge on 2 December 2005 with a notice of hearing confirming this date sent to all parties to the appeal.

Freedom of Information

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 have been submitted to the Central Clearing House in each month since the inception of that unit, broken down by public authority. [25051]

Ms Harman *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The Access to Information Central Clearing House received 3,006 referrals between 1 January and 31 October 2005.

I will write to my hon. Friend providing a full response to his question breaking down this volume of referrals both by month and department and copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many IT projects have been developed for her Department since 2001; and whether she has agreed to make public the Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23515]

Bridget Prentice: In common with any large organisation, IT based change projects in my Department range in scale from the very small (say simply involving a small number of new PCs) to those having strategic importance for the Department as a whole. In the strategic group, there have been three change programmes: Libra (covering the magistrates courts); CTMP (covering the Crown court and county court) and ARAMIS (covering headquarters areas).

The basis of Gateway Review is that they are conducted on a confidential basis for the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO). This is to promote an open and honest exchange between the programme/project teams and review teams. For this reason, gateway reports are not routinely published by my Department.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act, requests for disclosure of Gateway reviews are dealt with on a case by case basis. Of the three DCA programmes, one gateway review—the Libra Gate 3 review report—has, in part, been released.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what new parliamentary constituencies the Government expect to be in operation following the reviews made by the Boundary Commission for England. [25587]

Ms Harman: The final report of the Boundary Commission in relation to parliamentary constituencies in England has yet to be published. The Boundary Commission for England is an independent body and the Government cannot comment on any potential final recommendations at this stage.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Government expect to lay the draft order implementing the recommendations of the Boundary Commission for England in relation to changes to parliamentary boundaries. [25588]

Ms Harman: The final report of the Boundary Commission in relation to parliamentary constituencies in England has yet to be published. The report and draft order will be laid before Parliament as soon as practicable after they have been submitted to the Secretary of State.

Skills for Life Strategy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which individual is responsible for developing and implementing her Department's Skills for Life strategy. [23854]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

HEALTH

Nursing Degrees (Placements)

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to ensure that satisfactory placements are available to students studying for degrees in nursing. [22051]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* This is a matter for higher education institutions in discussion with the national health service. Strategic health authorities continue to work with the NHS and higher education partners to ensure that there are high quality placements for the number of nursing students in training. The provision and quality of clinical placements are also important elements of the new national contract for commissioning nurse training.

Ambulance Service Trusts (West Midlands)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* administration and *(b)* management costs by each NHS ambulance service trust in the West Midlands area, expressed (i) as a percentage of their total budgets and (ii) as the cost per head of population in the areas they cover, in the latest year for which figures are available. [22625]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested for 2004–05, the latest available year, is shown in the following table.

Administration and management costs by national health service ambulance trust in the West Midlands, 2004–05

NHS ambulance trust name	*Management costs £ thousand*	*Management costs as a percentage of turnover*
Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance NHS Trust	1,051	4.6
Hereford and Worcester Ambulance NHS Trust	1,090	6.6
Staffordshire Ambulance Service Trust	1,757	7.0
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	3,410	5.7

Notes:
1. Administration costs are not identified separately so all information given relates to management costs only.
2. It is not possible to provide 'cost per head of population' for NHS ambulance trusts as the Department does not maintain trust population figures.
3. 'Total budget' has been interpreted as total income (turnover) for NHS ambulance trusts.
4. 'West Midlands area' has been interpreted as the area covered by the Shropshire and Staffordshire, Birmingham and Black Country and West Midlands South strategic health authorities.

Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the named trusts.

Avian Influenza

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to support research into *(a)* a vaccine for the H5N1 strain of avian flu, *(b)* drugs to treat a potential influenza pandemic and *(c)* enhanced diagnostic techniques to identify and research new infections; and if she will make a statement. [20029]

Ms Rosie Winterton [*holding answer 20 October 2005*]: The Department is currently finalising a strategy that will ensure that its vaccine, anti-viral and diagnosis related research activities are in line with those of other research funders in the United Kingdom, in Europe and in North America. To that end, the Medical Research Council will hold a workshop in December to identify particular strategic research needs for pandemic influenza. When this consultation process is complete, we will be in a position to commission high quality research that is both applicable to the needs of the UK and coordinated with the efforts of other countries.

The strategy will build on the body of Government funded research completed in the recent past and currently underway. This includes, for example, a £400,000 study commissioned by the Department into the optimum dose and dosing schedule for influenza vaccine when given to people for the first time.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likelihood of the strain of avian influenza found in Turkey mutating to a human virus. [21595]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We seek advice on threat assessments of avian influenza from the World Health Organisation (WHO). The strain of avian influenza in Turkey is very similar to that currently circulating in South East Asia. The WHO advised in May that the viruses are continuing to evolve and pose a continuing and potentially growing pandemic threat. It is monitoring the situation but has not raised the alert level.

Experts are concerned that the H5N1 virus has demonstrated the ability to jump the species barrier to cause disease and death in humans, but there is no confirmed evidence of person to person transmission of this virus. Thus, the risk of a human pandemic of H5N1 is considered to be low.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the UK plans to provide assistance to countries that may be affected by avian influenza variants at an earlier stage than the UK, including by providing supplies of vaccines. [21774]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The United Kingdom is working with international partners, including the European Union and the World Health Organisation (WHO), to enhance global preparedness for an influenza pandemic. We have already contributed £500,000 to the WHO to improve surveillance in South East Asia.

The WHO is securing three million courses of antiviral drugs as part of the immediate response to a pandemic. These drugs may help to contain an emerging pandemic virus or slow its spread.

Any requests for UK contributions to expand the WHO stockpile, or for vaccine when it becomes available, will be considered on a case by case basis.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her statement of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 629, on Avian influenza, what total funding has been provided to test NHS plans for an influenza pandemic locally; where this funding has been allocated; and what further spending she anticipates to ensure NHS bodies contingency plans will be effective in the event of an influenza pandemic. [22654]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The development and testing of local plans to deal with an influenza pandemic, takes place within the existing resources available to national health service bodies.

Blood Donation (Leeds)

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will allocate further resources to encourage people in Leeds, North-West to give blood. [24000]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Blood and Transplant Authority (NHSBT) is responsible for managing blood supplies in England and North Wales. NHSBT blood stocks are currently satisfactory and are meeting demands from hospitals. In fact, every hospital demand in the last six years has been met.

NHSBT plans the resources required to meet demand for blood in advance, and continually reviews and redistributes stock across the country, as necessary. At present no additional resources are required to maintain adequate blood stocks. Maintaining blood stocks and raising awareness among blood donors, is carried out through a range of marketing and communication techniques.

Breast Screening

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on the breast screening results from Epping hospital; and if she will make a statement. [22789]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There have been no representations to Secretary of State for Health on breast screening results from Epping hospital.

Cancer

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will discuss the effectiveness of Herceptin on early stage treatment of breast cancer with the Secretary of State for Scotland. [20994]

Ms Rosie Winterton: My right hon. Friend has no plans to discuss the effectiveness of Herceptin with my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Scotland. Both have announced plans for the managed introduction of Herceptin once it is licensed.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which groups are typically under-represented in the NHS routine breast cancer screening programme; and what steps she is taking to increase the uptake of routine breast cancer screening among these groups. [23968]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Evidence shows that groups who are less likely to attend for screening are those who live in deprived areas and women from some ethnic minority groups.

We have taken a number of steps to encourage those women who are under represented to attend for screening. These include:

The leaflet, "Breast Screening: The Facts", which is sent out with every invitation for screening, has been translated into 19 languages.

Many primary care trusts, particularly those in inner-city areas, have local initiatives in place, such as screening in community centres to encourage local women to attend their appointments.

In 2003, national health service cancer screening programmes published "Inequalities of Access to Cancer Screening: A Literature Review" and they have appointed a member of staff who is responsible for implementing the review's recommendations.

A communications pack, designed to raise awareness and increase the number of women attending for screening, has been issued to all local NHS breast cancer screening programmes.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from *(a)* NHS organisations and *(b)* other interested parties on failures to ensure that the three-year interval for screening under the NHS routine breast cancer screening programme is being met. [23969]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Health Service Cancer Plan, published in 2000, stated that we would extend invitations for breast screening to women aged 65 to 70 and introduce two-view mammography at all screening rounds. Over 98 per cent. of local screening programmes have now implemented these changes. However, the changes together represent a 40 per cent. increase in the workload of the programme. We are aware that this has had an impact on some services maintaining the three-year interval for screening and we are taking steps to bring all screening intervals back to three years.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to produce culturally-sensitive breast cancer awareness information in a variety of formats and languages. [24708]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* It is important that all women are breast aware and report any changes to their doctors. That is why in 1999 we produced the leaflet, "Be Breast Aware", in collaboration with Cancer Research UK, giving advice on this issue. The leaflet has been translated into Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Vietnamese, Greek, Hindi and Turkish. Over 3 million copies of the leaflet have been distributed since 1999, over 200,000 of which were in the translated versions.

In addition to the standard print versions, the Department is committed to providing alternative publication services and we supply on-demand to all requests for alternative formats, such as Braille, audio-tape and large print.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost per capita was of treating cancer in England in each of the last five years. [19902]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We do not hold information about the proportion of national health service expenditure spent on treating cancer patients. It is for individual primary care trusts to decide the level of funding they allocate to cancer services for their population.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the implications of the development of a vaccine for the virus which causes cervical cancer for the cervical cancer screening programme. [21777]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The vaccines in development are a preventative measure; however, they are only effective against approximately 80 per cent. of human papilloma viruses thought to be linked to cancer; they need to be given to women and girls before they become sexually active and we do not yet know how long they are effective for. We would therefore expect little or no effect on the cervical screening programme for a decade or more after the introduction of any vaccination programme.

Cervical screening currently remains the most effective way of preventing cervical cancer and the programme continues to encourage strongly all women between 25 and 64 to attend for regular screening when invited. The programme also continues to strive to improve its high quality, world-leading service through new research and developments in technology that could benefit both women and staff.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to fund the provision of HER2 testing for the suitability of Herceptin to all women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer. [21963]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In this financial year, the funding for the provision of HER2 testing will have to come from existing budgets. However, Roche, the manufacturer of Herceptin, has undertaken to assist cancer networks in ensuring that high quality testing arrangements are put in place, for example through the provision of training for laboratory staff.

Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the UK's financial contribution to the cost of running the EU's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use was in each of the last five years. [20988]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency does not make any direct financial contribution to the European Medicines Agency for the cost of running the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use, now known as the Committee on Human Medicinal Products.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to publish her Department's response to the Primary Care Dental Salaried Services Review; and if she will make a statement on the reason for the time taken to do so. [23279]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Plans for publication of the response to the review of salaried dentists in primary care have not been finalised. We are currently considering the significant issues raised by the review's proposed reform of the career structure of the salaried services.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 205W, on NHS dentistry, how many patients were registered with an NHS dentist in each primary care trust in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05, excluding those patients who pay for the whole of their treatment. [23892]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The relevant available information was placed in the Library. We have updated the information up to September 2005 and this has been placed in the Library.

The Department does not collect data on those patients who pay for the whole of their treatment because these are private patients.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list formal consultations being sponsored by her Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22569]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows the 10 public written consultations currently being undertaken by the Department. The Department does not gather or hold information about consultations carried out separately by its executive agencies or other arm's length bodies.

All current and closed consultations are listed on the Department's website at

www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations.

Department/ agency	*Title of consultation*	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Department of Health (DH)	Arrangements for the provision of dressings, incontinence appliances, stoma appliances, chemical reagents and other appliances to primary and secondary care	24 October 2005	23 January 2006
DH	Proposed changes to the regulatory framework for adult social care services	14 October 2005	14 January 2006
DH	European Commission proposal for a programme of community action in the field of health and consumer protection 2007–13	10 October 2005	6 January 2006
DH	Consultation on the future governance arrangements for the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control	10 October 2005	31 December 2005
DH	The acutely or critically sick or injured child in the District General Hospital: a team response	15 August 2005	31 December 2005
DH	Draft Revised Colorectal Measures for the Manual for Cancer Services 2004	30 September 2005	30 December 2005
DH	Proposals to simplify the reimbursement arrangements for NHS dispensing contractors: a consultation	7 September 2005	30 November 2005
DH	Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act: a public consultation	16 August 2005	25 November 2005
DH	Your Health, Your Care, Your Say	12 September 2005	04 November 2005
DH	Code of Conduct for Payment by Results: draft for consultation	4 August 2005	4 November 2005

Generic Medicines

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent assessment she has made of the reimbursement scheme to pharmacists for the supply of Category M generic medicines; and if she will make a statement; [23626]

(2) what assessment she has made of the price differential between generic medicines obtained via NHS prescription and those available over-the-counter in supermarkets; and if she will make a statement. [23627]

Jane Kennedy: The newly introduced category M of generic medicines has two objectives: to reduce the cost of annual reimbursement to community pharmacy in England by £300 million and to set reimbursement prices of individual medicines in a manner which reflects the underlying market prices. Each category of the tariff is recalculated quarterly in the light of the best estimate of the achieved reduction in cost: in that sense, the area is reviewed quarterly and is meeting its objectives.

Category M reimbursement prices are reflective of the underlying market prices and are intentionally set at a level which leaves unrecovered discount available to community pharmacies as part of the new pharmacy contractual framework. The prices of over-the-counter medicines are determined by a consumer market in which the Department has no economic locus. There is, therefore, little expectation that prices of medicines available over the counter would coincide with the category M reimbursement prices.

Hand Gels

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the level of use of hand gels by health professionals in hospitals for the purposes of infection control. [20857]

Jane Kennedy: The "cleanyourhands" campaign was launched in September 2004 and aims to improve hand hygiene compliance by national health service staff through the use of alcohol handrub. Product consumption (usage) levels are being recorded for all trusts ordering their handrub product through the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency/logistics route and a 65 per cent. increase in handrub consumption occurred from September 2004 to September 2005.

Health Care Recruitment

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with the private sector on signing up to the code of practice on the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals. [24205]

Mr. Byrne: I have had no such recent discussions.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health care professionals originally from developing countries continued to work in the NHS after their temporary contracts ran out in each year since 2001 for which records are available. [24207]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the NHS has used healthcare recruitment agencies based outside the UK for the recruitment of healthcare professionals from developing countries since the code of practice was agreed. [24217]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers is responsible for monitoring the code of practice and maintaining the register. No information is available centrally regarding contracts between agencies which have signed up to the code of practice and the national health service.

Hospices

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will *(a)* increase financial support for and *(b)* promote the expansion of the hospice movement. [24191]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible within the national health service for commissioning and funding services for their resident population, including palliative care. The Government have met their commitment in the NHS Cancer Plan to invest an extra £50 million per annum in specialist palliative care. Over half of this additional funding went to the voluntary sector, mainly hospices, in 2003–04. PCTs, having assessed their local priorities, can invest more. This investment must be in line with local strategic plans and an assessment of need, which may, or may not indicate the need to provide more specialist palliative care beds.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital beds there were in each health trust in Suffolk in each of the last three years. [22260]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Average daily number of available[1] beds 2002–03 to 2004–05

Primary care trust (PCT)/national health service trust	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Suffolk West PCT	29	30	19
Central Suffolk PCT	86	86	43
Ipswich PCT	-	15	15
Suffolk Coastal PCT	122	122	105
Waveney PCT	69	69	58
Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust	767	782	756
Local Health Partnerships NHS Trust	432	410	408
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust	638	676	631

[1] Includes occupied and unoccupied beds.

Source:
Department of Health form KH03.

Hospital Construction

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the building of a new hospital in Hatfield depends on East and North Hertfordshire NHS trust balancing its budget in 2005 to 2008. [22171]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Performance against the break-even duty must be achieved over the medium term, such that an organisation with a deficit in any year must plan to return to break-even and clear its accumulated deficit within three years, or exceptionally five years.

In any period in which a trust reports a deficit, it is required to have an agreed recovery plan in place to restore financial balance. Such a plan might include postponement of capital investment or postponement of private finance initiative (PFI) developments that are being worked up, but there is no requirement that recovery plans must envisage postponement of investment decisions.

Before a large and complex scheme, such as that in development by East and North Hertfordshire national health service trust can advertise in the Official Journal of the European Union for potential PFI partners, it must demonstrate convincingly in its outline business case (OBC) that it will be able to afford its scheme.

It is therefore conceivable that, in the year in which the OBC is submitted, the trust could still have a deficit, but it would have to demonstrate that it had a robust financial plan both to recover its deficit and go on to afford the eventual unitary payment of its scheme. It would also need to demonstrate an ability to achieve its financial plans.

PFI contractors will have their own financial criteria that they expect a NHS trust to meet before they will have sufficient confidence to bid for its scheme. We would expect these to be no less stringent than the above.

Infection Control Report

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will monitor levels of co-operation by NHS trusts with the director of infection control in enabling publication of her annual report by the deadline announced. [19355]

Jane Kennedy: "Winning Ways", published in December 2003, asked all national health service organisations to appoint a director of infection prevention and control (DIPC). However, the Department will not be monitoring the reports from DIPCs, as effective assessment would depend upon local knowledge. Under the proposals to strengthen measures to tackle healthcare associated infections set out in the Health Bill, the Healthcare Commission will take on the responsibility for ensuring compliance with the new code of practice. DIPCs will be key in implementing this code.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she intends to quantify available critical care capacity in the independent sector; and if she will secure agreements with independent sector providers to secure this capacity for NHS use in the event of an influenza pandemic. [23038]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The amount of critical care capacity in the private sector has not been quantified. Under the local health community emergency plans, if the level of a future influenza pandemic warrants it, the

command arrangements that are already in place can enable the use of any health facility including the independent sector and private nursing homes.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate for influenza vaccinations was in each *(a)* strategic health authority and *(b)* primary care trust in England in each year since 2002–03. [24097]

Caroline Flint: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* healthcare workers, *(b)* Government Ministers and other officials and *(c)* other workers in key industries will be given priority treatment with antivirals in the event of an influenza pandemic. [22088]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As the stockpile is intended to be large enough to cover all those likely to be infected, the issue of prioritisation between competing claims for the drugs ought not to arise.

We are aware of the possibility that a pandemic may strike before the antiviral stockpile is complete and our antiviral storage and distribution framework takes this into account. Antivirals will need to be prioritised, initially to healthcare workers and to those who fall into one of the 'clinical at risk' groups (as defined for seasonal 'flu).

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what restrictions her Department plans to place on the movement of the public in the event of an influenza pandemic. [22089]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the event of a pandemic, the Department will issue advice to the public. It will continue to keep the situation under review, taking account both of the circumstances at the time and of advice from the World Health Organization.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action her Department is taking to help ensure other countries are *(a)* prepared for an influenza pandemic and *(b)* able to stockpile antiviral drugs; and if she will make a statement. [22091]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is working closely with other countries and international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Union (EU). We are sharing information through events such as the pandemic influenza workshop, jointly hosted by WHO and the EU in Copenhagen. We are engaged in the development of the United States of America initiative for an international partnership on avian and pandemic flu and are contributing to the meeting in Geneva co-hosted by WHO, Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Organisation for Animal Health on 7–9 November. The United Kingdom will continue to work with WHO, fellow EU member states, the European Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and with other internal partners to support international preparedness.

In addition, the UK has provided £500,000 to the WHO to enhance international influenza surveillance in South East Asia.

The WHO has secured 3 million treatment centres of antiviral drugs for international use. These could be used to try to slow down or prevent the spread of a pandemic virus in the country of source. Any requests for UK contributions to expand the WHO stockpile will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she plans to publish *(a)* clinical management guidelines for patients suffering from pandemic influenza and *(b)* infection control guidelines in the event of an influenza pandemic; [22094]

(2) when her Department plans to publish *(a)* the clinical management guidelines to help inform management of patients suffering from pandemic influenza and *(b)* the infection control guidelines for an influenza pandemic. [22123]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Clinical management guidelines have been developed with the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the British Thoracic Society to help inform management of patients suffering from pandemic flu. We have also produced infection control guidelines with the HPA. Both sets of guidelines are available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what auditing measures her Department has undertaken to ensure that *(a)* primary care trusts, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* NHS trusts are prepared for an influenza pandemic. [22097]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department published the revised, "UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan" on 19 October, which will inform the work undertaken at local and national levels to prepare for an influenza pandemic. We also produced in May 2005, Operational Guidance for National Health Service planners on preparing for an influenza pandemic to inform local plans.

The Department is putting in place procedures to ensure that NHS organisations' plans can be audited for assurance of their capability in planning for and responding to, an influenza pandemic.

In addition, pandemic influenza exercise programmes have taken place around the country which have enabled NHS organisations to test the plans they have in place. The Health Protection Agency has also developed an off the shelf exercise package for use in testing influenza pandemic preparedness plans.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the Department's pandemic co-ordinator for an influenza pandemic is. [22122]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Liam Donaldson, is the Department of Health's pandemic influenza coordinator.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to stockpile influenza drugs other than Tamiflu; and if she will make a statement. [22150]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are stockpiling 14.6 million treatment courses of Tamiflu, which should be sufficient to treat those who may fall ill in an influenza pandemic.

There are currently no plans to procure a stockpile of other antiviral drugs, but we are keeping the options under constant review.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what powers she has, and under which legislation *(a)* to prevent large public gatherings, *(b)* to close football matches and other similar sporting events characterised by mass attendance and *(c)* to prevent movement of people across large geographical distances in the event of an influenza pandemic. [23974]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As explained in "The UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan" (Annex E, paragraphs 8–10), there are powers in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which could be used in the event of an emergency.

Those powers are designed to allow the Government to respond quickly and effectively to the most serious emergencies where existing powers prove to be insufficient. There can be no automatic assumption that the Civil Contingency Act powers would need to be used in the event of an influenza pandemic.

Any use of emergency powers must satisfy a range of robust legal safeguards that ensure their use would be tailored to the specific circumstances at hand. It is therefore not possible, and would be potentially misleading, to comment on any specific measures that could be taken using emergency powers in the event of a pandemic: it would depend on the specific circumstances prevailing at the time.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government have taken to respond to an influenza pandemic. [24497]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the oral statement given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 629–38 and to the written statement I gave on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 57–58WS.

Lupus

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated over the past five years *(a)* to raise awareness of Lupus and *(b)* for research into effective treatment. [24427]

Mr. Byrne: It is for primary care trusts to decide how to spend the funding allocations they are given in he light of local needs and priorities. Information on the amount spent on raising awareness of lupus is not held centrally.

The NHS Direct website contains specific information on lupus. The musculoskeletal framework, a best practice guide to supporting people with musculoskeletal conditions, will be published later this year. This will do much to raise awareness amongst health professionals and the general public for all musculoskeletal conditions, including lupus.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to, and managed by, national health service organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a significant number concerned with lupus, are to be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research. The Medical Research Council, an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology, also funds medical research. It is not possible to identify the total amount spent on research into the treatment of lupus.

Macular Holes

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the standard of care offered to those suffering from a macular hole. [23034]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The vast majority of individuals with macular hole have their condition diagnosed by an optometrist during a routine sight test. Sight tests are free under the national health service to people aged 60 and over, children, individuals at particular risk of eye disease and those on a low income. Individuals who are identified as requiring further investigation can now be referred directly to hospital following an NHS funded sight test.

There is only one proven treatment for individuals diagnosed with macular hole and that is surgery. This is available in most large eye units that provide vitreoretinal surgery.

The Department has put a number of measures in place aimed at reducing waiting times in the NHS. By the end of 2005, no patient will have to wait more than 13 weeks for an out-patient appointment or more than six months for surgery, and most waits will be much shorter than this.

In many cases, surgery can stop the visual disturbances getting worse and can help sight to recover to a high standard. The final visual outcome, however, will depend on the size of the hole that has been treated. For those individuals whose sight is still affected after surgery, low vision aids may be of help. The NHS hospital eye service provides optical devices and loans low vision aids, such as high-powered reading lenses, hand-held and stand magnifiers and telescopes, to people with visual impairment. In addition, some primary care trusts have local arrangements for the provision of low vision aids through community based opticians.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished episodes of care relating to the treatment of macular holes there have been in each year since 1997; and what the *(a)* mean and *(b)* median waiting time was in each year. [23035]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following table shows the number of finished in-year admission episodes and the mean and median waiting times for those individuals whose primary diagnosis was degeneration of the macular and posterior pole.

Count of finished consultant episodes, mean and median time waited in days, national health service hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished in-year admission episodes	Mean waiting time in days	Median waiting time in days
1997–98	2,825	58	40
1998–99	2,972	57	35
1999–2000	2,766	60	34
2000–01	2,666	64	37
2001–02	3,206	55	30
2002–03	2,909	67	36
2003–04	3,325	65	40

Note:
A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Mental Health

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated to preventative and early intervention services for children's mental health disorders in *(a)* Normanton constituency, *(b)* Wakefield East primary care trust (PCT), *(c)* Wakefield West PCT, *(d)* Wakefield district and *(e)* West Yorkshire in 2005–06. [24247]

Mr. Byrne: Funding is allocated directly to primary care trust (PCTs). It is for PCTs, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

The table shows the funding allocations made to the West Yorkshire PCTs, including Eastern Wakefield PCT and Wakefield West PCT, for 2005–06 to 2007–08.

£000

	Allocations		
West Yorkshire PCTs	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Airedale	122,014	147,328	159,132
Bradford City	160,758	195,932	214,724
Bradford South and West	158,353	192,836	210,881
Calderdale	215,534	254,621	275,396
East Leeds	179,743	212,695	230,027
Eastern Wakefield	208,492	255,393	283,337
Huddersfield Central	144,457	172,344	186,412
Leeds North East	160,333	192,073	207,743
Leeds North West	172,126	208,941	228,463
Leeds West	123,183	145,982	157,882
North Bradford	98,680	119,364	129,248
North Kirklees	178,807	215,698	236,133
South Huddersfield	80,382	97,051	104,967
South Leeds	163,518	192,333	208,252
Wakefield West	156,303	189,155	205,849
Total	2,322,682	2,791,746	3,038,445

Motor Neurone Disease

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on the availability of non-invasive positive pressure ventilation to motor neurone disease sufferers. [23817]

Mr. Byrne: Data on non-invasive ventilation for patients with motor neurone disease are not collected by the Department.

A team from University College London and the University of Newcastle upon Tyne have been chosen to lead a £20 million initiative to speed up the development of new medical treatments for dementia and neurodegenerative disease. The team will co-ordinate a network of national health service staff and resources across the country to expand the number and range of clinical trials of medical treatments for neurodegenerative diseases including motor neurone disease.

The network will offer unprecedented opportunities to bring the latest clinical treatments and trials to people in the United Kingdom. The new scheme will operate in close partnership with patient organisations to ensure that we are addressing the research questions that are of most importance to patients.

MS Therapy Centres

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on proposals for inspection charges for multiple sclerosis therapy centres. [19007]

Jane Kennedy: I am satisfied that multiple sclerosis therapy centres should continue to be subject to the Healthcare Commission's regulatory regime. The Commission is developing costed options for regulating independent healthcare providers, including multiple sclerosis therapy centres. I expect these options to reflect the risk-based approach to inspection which the Commission has been developing. The Commission intends to consult on its proposals shortly.

NHS Budgets (Oxford)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will visit Oxford to assess the impact of changes proposed in *(a)* mental healthcare and *(b)* other local NHS budgets. [19488]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 19 October 2005]:* My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State currently has no plans to visit Oxford, as her autumn schedule is now fixed. If my right hon. Friend would like to invite the Secretary of State for a visit then a formal request should be sent to the ministerial visits Unit room 448 Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS, for consideration.

NHS Commissioning

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking under the reforms proposed by commissioning a patient-led NHS to provide for the employment and management of those primary care trust staff and functions which do not form part of the management and delivery of out-sourced commissioning. [18718]

(2) what guidance she plans to issue on the procedures for bidding for the provision of management and delivery of commissioning in Oxfordshire. [18719]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Strategic health authorities are expected to provide proposals for local commissioning arrangements to the

Department by 15 October. A human resources framework for dealing with any subsequent organisational change will be published in due course. All proposals including staff implications will be subject to full local consultation. Once final decisions have been taken the Department will consider what guidance is needed.

NHS Deficits

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total deficit is for all strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and other NHS trusts in England brought forward from 2004–05, broken down by *(a)* authority and *(b)* trust; and if she will make a statement. [24728]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service as a whole ended 2004–05 with an overall deficit of around £250 million, or 0.4 percent., of available resources. Information on the 2004–05 financial position of individual NHS organisations—strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts—has been placed in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

This information shows those NHS organisations that reported an overspend in 2004–05.

NHS Trusts (Sickness Absence)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rate of employee absence due to sickness at *(a)* Dacorum Primary Care Trust and *(b)* West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust has been in each year since 1997. [23024]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the sickness and absence rates for Dacorum Primary Care Trust (PCT) and West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust. The sickness and absence data goes back to 2000 and all figures between 2000 and 2004 have been included where available. There are no figures for 2000 for Dacorum PCT, which only came into being in 2001.

Sickness and absence rates for Dacorum PCT and West Hertfordshire hospitals national health service trust, 2000–04

Organisation name		*Sickness absence rate (percentage)* 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
RWG	West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust	4.7	4.6	4.9	5.0	4.9
5GW	Dacorum PCT	[1]—	4.7	4.1	5.1	6.3
England		4.7	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.6

[1] The organisation did not exist in that particular year.

Notes:

1. Sickness absence rate is defined as the amount of time lost through absences as a percentage of staff time available.
2. This does not cover maternity leave, carers' leave or any periods of absence agreed under family friendly/flexible working policies.
3. General practitioners and their staff are not included in the above figures. The overall England figures are estimates, as some organisations in the NHS did not provide figures for sickness absence.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre sickness absence surveys, 2000–2004.

PET Scanners

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many PET scanners are operated by NHS acute trusts, broken down by location; and if she will make a statement. [24311]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are five positron emission tomography-computed tomography (PET-CT) scanners and one PET scanner currently operated by national health service trusts.

Two PET-CT scanners are jointly owned and managed by Guy's and St. Thomas's NHS Trust and King's College London. University College London Hospital NHS Trust, the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust (NHSFT), and University Hospital Birmingham NHSFT also have PET-CT scanners. The one PET scanner is at Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust.

On 11 October 2005, the Department published "A Framework for the Development of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Services in England". The intention of the framework is to provide guidance to commissioners and potential service providers on the development of services and to ensure that there is equitable access to scans for cancer patients across the country.

While there are a number of NHS and NHS/independent sector (IS) partnership schemes in development, it has been recognised that there is unequal access to current provision. To address this, £20 million capital funding will be made available to the NHS over two years for investment in PET-CT scanners. An additional 25,000 scans will be purchased annually over five years from the IS as part of the wider IS diagnostic procurement.

Podiatry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps are being taken to ensure that the matching of job descriptions to pay bands in podiatry is consistent throughout England; [19175]

(2) what assessment she has made of the consistency of pay banding for podiatry staff, with particular reference to new posts across different primary care trusts; what assessment she has made of the effects of differences in pay banding on recruitment; and if she will make a statement. [19176]

Mr. Byrne: A full range of national profiles has been produced, covering podiatry posts from band two through to band nine.

A national computer-aided job evaluation system has been purchased to support organisations in applying the scheme consistently throughout England and the job evaluation group, a subgroup of the NHS Staff Council, has responsibility for production of the national profiles. This group consists of representatives from both staff and management side. Job profiles are based on current jobs in the service and profiles are subject to consultation with a wider reference group prior to being agreed for publication by the executive of the NHS Staff Council. Where a post locally does not match a national profile, local evaluation will take place based on the same national health service job evaluation scheme.

Individual NHS employers ultimately are responsible for consistency checking for their organisation based on the agreed national guidance, but this is supported by both national and strategic health authority-level processes.

Premature Births

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many babies were born prematurely in England in each year since 1997; [23824]

(2) how many babies were born at *(a)* under 24 weeks, *(b)* 24 to 28 weeks, *(c)* 28 to 32 weeks and *(d)* 32 to 37 weeks in England in each year since 1997. [23825]

Mr. Byrne: The available information is published in table 21 of the statistical bulletin "NHS Maternity Statistics, England". Figures are available for the financial years 1997–98 and 2000–01 to 2003–04. Copies of the bulletins are available in the Library and on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the impact for patient care in Barnet of *(a)* a potential merger of Barnet primary care trust (PCT) into a larger PCT and *(b)* the removal of Barnet PCT's role in providing services; and if she will make a statement; [20572]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact on patient services of Barnet primary care trust's co-terminosity with other public sector providers including the borough council; and if she will make a statement. [20575]

Jane Kennedy: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have recently submitted their proposals for the re-configuration of primary care trusts (PCTs), which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. These proposals will be assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests. The panel will determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in the document, "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS", published in July 2005. If the criteria are judged to have been met, the proposals will go forward to a three month public consultation, in which the wider impact of PCT re-configuration will be considered, including issues surrounding co-terminosity with local authorities and other local partner organisations. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.Similarly, no decisions on the future provision of community and primary healthcare services will be taken until after the White Paper on community healthcare services has been published. The White Paper will be informed by the results of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" listening exercise, which is currently under way. Clinical services will continue to be provided by PCTs unless and until those PCTs decide otherwise. These decisions would be driven locally, following our White Paper deliberations and will only be implemented following full local public and staff consultation.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cumulative deficit is for the *(a)* Dacorum Primary Care Trust, *(b)* West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust and *(c)* Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Strategic Health Authority; and if she will make a statement. [23286]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cumulative breakeven position for 2004–05 for West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust is a deficit of £14.4 million.

The term cumulative deficit does not apply to strategic health authorities (SHAs) and primary care trusts (PCTs). The 2004–05 outturn of the PCT and SHA against the revenue resource limit is shown in the table.

National health service organisation	*2004–05 under/(over) spend against the revenue resource limit (£ thousand)*
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	1,976
Dacorum PCT	(4,840)

Source:
2004–05 summarisation schedules.

The term "cumulative deficit" does not apply to SHAs or PCTs. Therefore, there is no cumulative deficit position available for SHAs and PCTs. Therefore, the 2004–05 outturn of the SHA and the PCT against the revenue resource limit for 2004–05 has been given.

If a SHA or PCT reports a deficit position in one year, that deficit is recovered by deducting it from the resources available to it in the subsequent year. Therefore, its current performance represents its cumulative position.

If, on the other hand, a NHS trust reports a deficit, it has its income reduced in the following year. In addition to this, it has a statutory duty to make good that deficit by reporting a surplus to offset it within the following two years, or four years by exception. It is the net deficit incurred during these years that is defined as the cumulative deficit for NHS trusts.

The financial position of the NHS as a whole ended 2004–05 with an overall deficit of around £250 million. This has to be seen in relation to the overall NHS spending; it represents only around 0.4 per cent. of resources. This and the latest available data on the 2004–05 financial position for all NHS organisations—SHAs, PCTs and NHS trusts—was put in the public domain on 19 September. It was based on the 2004–05 summarisation schedules that were released to the *Financial Times* and made available on the Department's website.

It is the responsibility of SHAs to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance. However, there is a degree of flexibility in how this is managed at a local level. In circumstances where a surplus cannot be generated in the following year, SHAs can agree a recovery plan which phases the recovery of deficits over a number of years. This would require other NHS organisations within the health economy to underspend over the same period. Any such arrangements would have to be subject to the agreement of local providers, commissioners and the managing SHA.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* administration and *(b)* management costs by each primary care trust in the West Midlands area, expressed (i) as a percentage of their total budget and (ii) as the cost per head of population in the areas they cover, in the last year for which figures are available. [22624]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested for 2004–05, the latest available year, is shown in the table.

Administration and management costs for primary care trusts in the West Midlands area, 2004–05

Primary care trust (PCT) name	*Management costs (£ thousands)*	*Management costs as a percentage of net operating costs*	*Management costs per weighted head of population (£)*
Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth	3,639	2.5	28.16
Cannock Chase	2,185	1.7	18.83
Coventry Teaching	7,131	1.8	21.20
Dudley Beacon and Castle	2,676	2.3	24.10
Dudley South	4,210	2.0	22.59
East Staffordshire	2,349	1.9	21.73
Eastern Birmingham	6,192	2.1	22.21
Heart of Birmingham Teaching	6,354	1.8	18.81
Herefordshire	3,375	1.8	20.10
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1,975	1.7	20.03
North Birmingham	3,141	1.6	19.04
North Stoke	4,135	2.4	28.67
North Warwickshire	5,177	2.9	28.45
Oldbury and Smethwick	2,387	1.9	20.09
Redditch and Bromsgrove	2,847	1.8	18.11
Rowley Regis and Tipton	2,066	2.0	22.45
Rugby	1,466	1.6	19.97
Shropshire County	5,390	1.8	21.41
Solihull	3,760	1.8	20.89
South Birmingham	4,460	1.0	12.63
South Stoke	3,004	1.9	20.96
South Warwickshire	4,693	1.9	20.98
South Western Staffordshire	2,324	1.3	13.54
South Worcestershire	3,770	1.3	13.29
Staffordshire Moorlands	2,038	1.7	21.11
Telford and Wrekin	3,438	2.2	23.04
Walsall Teaching	6,362	2.1	22.83
Wednesbury and West Bromwich	2,714	2.0	20.37
Wolverhampton City	5,586	2.0	20.76
Wyre Forest	2,257	2.1	20.35

Notes:
1. Administration costs are not identified separately, so all information given relates to management costs only.
2. 'Total budget' has been interpreted as net operating costs for PCTs.
3. 'West Midlands area' has been interpreted as the area covered by the Shropshire and Staffordshire, Birmingham and Black Country and West Midlands South strategic health authorities.

Sources:
1. Audited summarisation schedules of the named PCTs.
2. Weighted population figures for the PCTs.

Public Consultation

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Your Health, Your Care, Your Say events are planned; and what population each is intended to cover. [23834]

Mr. Byrne: Four regional events were held in Gateshead, Leicester, London and Plymouth, where the audiences reflected the adult populations for the surrounding area. A national citizens' summit was held in Birmingham with the 998 participants broadly reflecting the adult population of England. In addition, a series of locally organised events have been taking place around England, attended by people from local populations, while some voluntary organisations have held their own meetings, which have included people in seldom heard groups.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether representations from members of the public to her Department concerning proposals to alter healthcare provision by Suffolk West Primary Care Trust will be considered as part of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise; [23225]

(2) how many members of the public from the Sudbury area of Suffolk have been selected to take part in the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise. [23227]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The provision of healthcare in Suffolk West is a matter for the Suffolk West Primary Care Trust and its local residents can contribute to the consultation, "Modernising Healthcare in West Suffolk" until 12 December. Members of the public can

take part in the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation in various ways, including an online questionnaire at: www.nhs.uk/yoursay.

Information on how many members of the public from the Sudbury area of Suffolk have been selected to take part in the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise is not available.

Pulmonary Disease

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the availability of pulmonary rehabilitation for those suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. [24310]

Mr. Byrne: In England, health professionals in primary care trusts are responsible for determining which health services their local population requires, including pulmonary rehabilitation, and ensuring provision of these services. Data regarding the availability of local services for individual medical conditions is not collected centrally.

Radiotherapy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to measure waiting times for radiotherapy. [23965]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to introduce data collection to measure radiotherapy waiting times. The NHS Cancer Plan set out maximum waiting time targets for cancer treatment, which include radiotherapy where this is given as a first definitive treatment. Standards of a maximum wait of one month from diagnosis to first treatment and a maximum two month wait from urgent general practitioner referral to first treatment for breast cancer are already in place. From December 2005, these targets will be in place for all cancer patients.

Schizophrenia

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the incidence of death from a respiratory infection in people with schizophrenia compared with the standardised mortality rates for respiratory infection. [24025]

Ms Rosie Winterton: While no assessment has been made by the Department, an independent study by Harris and Barraclough—British Journal of Psychiatry (1998), 173, 11-53—describes the increased risk of premature death from natural and unnatural causes for the common mental disorders. Analysing six studies which looked at respiratory disease as cause of death among patients with schizophrenia, the standardised mortality ratio was found to be significantly raised.

In the "Choosing Health" White Paper, 2004, the Government recognise the importance of physical health care for people with severe mental illness. This is why £7 million has been allocated to Spearhead primary care trusts to support them in improving physical health checks for this group.

Shropshire Health Authority

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed in communication roles in Shropshire Health Authority in October. [25335]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority employs three people in communications roles.

Smoking

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many submissions she received following the recent consultation on banning smoking in public places; how many submissions supported the Government's preferred option; and how many submissions supported the option which would ban smoking in all enclosed workplaces and private members clubs and bars and pubs not selling food. [24045]

Caroline Flint: We received over 57,000 responses to the consultation on the Smokefree Elements of the Health Bill. We intend to publish a summary of the results shortly.

Social Care Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she initiated her review of health and social care regulation; what the remit of the review is; who is carrying out the review; when she expects the review to be completed; whether it will be published; whether the results will be subject to public consultation; and when she expects to lay before Parliament the legislation needed to enact the results of the review. [23113]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement I made on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 56-57 WS.

The review was initially announced by the Government in the Chancellor's budget report in March 2005. The terms of reference for the review were published on 19 October. Any plans for further legislation, should that be needed, will be announced in the Queen's Speech next year as usual.

Sun Beds

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations her Department has received from cancer charities about coin-operated sunbed tanning retail outlets. [20813]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is aware of concerns expressed by Cancer Research UK about the use of coin-operated sunbeds in tanning retail outlets, particularly where they are unsupervised. The charity is keen that there should be clear notices wherever sunbeds are used describing those most at risk of skin cancer and advising against their use, especially for young people under 16 years. Cancer Research UK is currently itself in discussions with the sunbed industry about self-regulation and about improving information for both staff and customers, including the displaying of

information. The Health and Safety Executive also issued guidelines in 1995 on the use of sunbeds both for operators and customers, with the recommendation that the guidance should be made available to the public.

Swale Primary Care Trust

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists serve the Swale Primary Care Trust area. [24620]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* As at 30 September 2005, there were 33 national health service dentists with either a general dental services or personal dental services contract within Swale Primary Care Trust.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Iraq

Peter Law: To ask the Solicitor-General what discussions his Department has had with the Information Commissioner since April in respect of outstanding applications for information on the policy formulation of the Attorney-General's opinion on the legality of military action against Iraq made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [25507]

The Solicitor-General: The Government do not comment on cases which are or may be under consideration by the Information Commissioner.

Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will review the policy on prosecutions of police officers following deaths following action taken by police officers in the execution of their duty. [25983]

The Solicitor-General: The Police Reform Act 2002 as amended by the Serious and Organised Crime Act 2005 and the Police Act 2005 creates a statutory duty on the police to refer to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) incidents when persons have died following some form of direct or indirect contact with the police and there is reason to believe that the contact may have caused or contributed to the death. It is then for the IPCC to oversee the investigation into the death with the appropriate level of external supervision.

The evidence will be considered by the IPCC to decide whether the evidence indicates that a person whose conduct was under investigation may have committed a criminal offence. If the IPCC decides that this threshold has been reached then the file should be referred to the Crown Prosecution Service to consider whether or not any individual should be charged.

A Crown prosecutor will then review the evidence against the guidance contained in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The Code has two stages to a decision to prosecute.

The prosecutor will first consider whether or not there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction against each defendant on each charge. In undertaking this consideration of the evidence the prosecutor must consider what the defence case may be, including a defence case of self-defence, and how that is likely to affect the prosecution case.

If the case does pass the evidential test then the reviewing prosecutor must consider whether a prosecution would be in the public interest. The prosecutor will consider what if any public interest factors may weigh either in favour of, or against, a prosecution. A prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors tending against a prosecution, which clearly outweigh those tending in favour.

The policy guidelines set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors are kept under review. The last review, which included a public consultation exercise, took place in 2004 with the current edition of the Code having been published in November 2004. It is a publicly available document issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions under section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. There are no immediate plans for the Code to be reviewed.

NORTHERN IRELAND

2012 Olympics

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has made to his Cabinet colleagues about attracting some of the events of the 2012 Olympic games to Northern Ireland. [25491]

Mr. Hanson: There is regular liaison with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in support of the London Bid and to maximise the opportunities for Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland are represented at a senior level on the Nations and Regions Committee. I recently attended a meeting of the Sports Cabinet in Cardiff chaired by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the right hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Tessa Jowell). At this meeting, the issue of attracting events and participation to Northern Ireland was discussed. Further discussion will continue.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in each board area have died of abdominal aortic aneurysm in the last five years, and if he will make a statement. [25020]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in each Health and Social Services Board area in each year between 2000 and 2004 where the underlying cause of death was recorded as abdominal aortic aneurysm[1]

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code I71.3 and I71.4 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes 441.3 and 441.4 for year 2000.

Table: Number of deaths due to abdominal aortic aneurysm, by Health and Social Services Board, registered in Northern Ireland (2000–04)

Health and Social Services Board	Abdominal aortic aneurysm				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[1]
Eastern	37	43	60	51	65
Northern	25	27	25	25	31
Southern	15	19	12	12	15
Western	15	12	12	19	12
Northern Ireland	92	101	109	107	123

[1] Data for 2004 is provisional.

Ards Hospital (Psychiatry)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to improve psychiatry facilities on the Ards hospital site. [24885]

Mr. Woodward: The Eastern Health and Social Services Board is developing a business case for its Primary and Community Care Infrastructure. Consideration of a full range of options for the future provision of psychiatry services on the Ards hospital site will be a major element of the business case.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many admissions there have been to the psychiatry unit at Ards hospital in each of the last five years. [24886]

Mr. Woodward: The number of admissions to the psychiatric unit at Ards hospital in each of the last five years is detailed in the following table:

Financial year	Number of admissions
2004–05	257
2003–04	398
2002–03	326
2001–02	348
2000–01	317

Source:
Ulster Hospital and Community Trust.

Benefit Fraud

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of benefit fraud in the Province in each of the last five years. [24900]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows:

Benefit Fraud

The levels of benefit fraud are estimated on the basis of a programme of benefit reviews carried out on a random selection of cases selected by the Department's statisticians. The following table provides details of the estimated monetary value of fraud and the percentage of overall expenditure this represents. The estimates relate to the main benefits but do not include some benefits where the risks of fraud are believed to be small.

Estimated value of undetected benefit fraud

	Total value £ million	Value as percentage of benefit expenditure
2000–01	46.06	1.5
2001–02	60.45	1.9
2002–03	32. 29	1.0
2003–04	36.62	1.2
2004–05	23. 74	0.7

Breast Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether breast cancer sufferers in the Province are informed immediately if they are found to be suitable for trastuzumab treatment. [24912]

Mr. Woodward: All women diagnosed with breast cancer in Northern Ireland are automatically tested for suitability for Trastuzumab (Herceptin) treatment. Patients are informed of their suitability as soon as possible after the results become available.

Buckley Report

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department received Sir Michael Buckley's report on the university of Ulster; and if he will publish the report. [22643]

Angela E. Smith: The Department for Employment and Learning has not received Sir Michael Buckley's report, nor does it hold a copy. As the Department passed the draft report to Sir Brian Fender last March, an official read a copy in order to ascertain whether there were any issues of accountability which were relevant to the Department.

The publication of Sir Michael Buckley's report is a matter for the university of Ulster.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to publish Sir Michael Buckley's report regarding the University of Ulster. [23080]

Angela E. Smith: The publication of Sir Michael Buckley's report is a matter for the University of Ulster.

Child Protection

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure that children in Northern Ireland are afforded the same legislative protection from abuse as is afforded to children in England and Wales. [25304]

Mr. Woodward: Yes.

The Ministerial Sub Group on Children chaired by Lord Rooker has decided that a cross departmental review of current legislation provision in England and Wales, led by OFMDFM, will be undertaken to identify gaps in the legislative provision which exist within Northern Ireland. The review will be conducted over the next few months and will include child protection legislation.

DHSSPS are already developing proposals for public consultation on new legislation, which will bring Northern Ireland closer to England and Wales in terms of strengthening a number of child protection arrangements.

All Articles (except Article 46) of the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order (NI) 2003, which introduced statutory barring and vetting as an aid to employment procedures in relation to children and vulnerable adults, commenced with effect from 1 April 2005 and brings the existing legislative framework into line with England and Wales. Officials from DHSSPS, DE and NIO are also working closely with counterparts in England and Wales on the extension of a proposed new Bichard vetting and barring scheme to Northern Ireland.

Class Sizes

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average number of pupils in primary school classes was within each education and library board in the Province in 1997. [25798]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Education and library board area	*Average class size (1997–98)*
Belfast	24.3
Western	22.9
North Eastern	23.7
South Eastern	24.8
Southern	23.0
Northern Ireland average	23.7

Note:
Figures apply to those pupils in year 1 to year 7 only.

Community and Voluntary Sector Funding

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what date the Department of Social Development Taskforce Report on funding for the community and voluntary sector will be published. [24852]

Mr. Hanson: In March 2005, the Government published 'Positive Steps', its response to "Investing Together", the Report of the Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector. It sets out a significant agenda for change and investment to help ensure that the voluntary and community sector is better placed to cope with social and economic change and imminent changes to the funding environment. An Implementation Group consisting of Senior Officials will oversee implementation of the actions contained within the report. An Annual Report on progress will be presented to the Joint Government/Voluntary and Community Sector Forum.

Consultancy Firms

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list consultancy firms engaged to provide advice to each Northern Ireland Department in the last five years in respect of the outsourcing of Civil Service functions and services; how much has been paid to each consultancy firm by each Department; and if he will make a statement. [22144]

Angela E. Smith: The following table sets out the list of consultancy firms engaged to provide advice to Northern Ireland Departments in respect of the outsourcing of civil service functions and services, and how much has been paid to each consultancy firm by each Department in the last five years.

Year contract awarded	*Name of firm*	*Amount paid (£) 2004–05*	*[1]2005–06*	*[1]Total*	*Service*	*Department*
2004	Deloitte MCS Limited	272,233	175,119	447,352	e-HR Contract	DFP
2005	Grant Thornton UK LLP	—	58,088	58,088	e-HR Contract	DFP
2004	Helm Corporation	32,102	—	32,102	Broadband Aggregation Project	DFP
2004	Mason's Communications	4,900	—	4,900	Broadband Aggregation Project	DFP

[1] Figures reflect position up to 30 September 2005.

Payments made by the Strategic Investment Board to consultancy firms providing legal advice on the eHR project are listed separately as follows. These payments, although strictly not made by departments, are included for completeness.

Year contract awarded	*Name of firm*	*Amount paid (£) 2003–04*	*2004–05*	*[1]2005–06*	*[1]Total*	*Service*
2003	Denise Wheatley Associates	—	13,512	—	13,512	e-HR Contract
2003	Denton Wilde Sapte	146,718	853,469	811,643	1,811,830	e-HR Contract

[1] Figures reflect position up to 30 September 2005.

Contraceptive Advice

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what obligations school nurses are under to inform school staff when they are approached by 11-year-old girls seeking contraceptive treatment on school property. [24917]

Mr. Woodward: None, but given the girls' age the school nurse is required to discuss such cases with social services in accordance with child protection policies and procedures which implement the Department's guidance on Co-operating to Safeguard Children issued in May 2003.

Council of Catholic Maintained Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Protestants sit on the Council of Catholic Maintained Schools; and if he will make a statement. [25196]

Angela E. Smith: There are currently eight members appointed by the head of the Department of Education to serve as members on the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. Of this total there are two Protestants and six Roman Catholics. The Department

does not hold community background information on the remaining 28 members of the Council as they are not appointed by the head of the Department.

Departmental Recruitment

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23772]

Angela E. Smith: The vast majority of appointments to the NICS non-industrial grades are for administrative positions in which candidates must hold at least a grade C or better pass in GCSE or equivalent. The majority of NICS posts do not require a mathematics qualification. Applicants for each post are required to provide details of those qualifications which are necessary to demonstrate their eligibility for the advertised post. It should be noted that many new recruits are assessed by test prior to being appointed. These tests may comprise a number of elements which measure numeracy and literacy.

There are no formal educational requirement for staff appointed to support grades e.g. messengers, security guards etc., however these applicants are required to pass a numeracy and literacy aptitude test. Staff appointed to industrial grades, e.g. drivers etc., do not require qualifications in English or mathematics.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23791]

Angela E. Smith: All appointees to posts at administrative assistant, administrative officer, executive officer and staff officer positions in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are required to satisfy a minimum standard through tests which measure 'following procedures', 'numerical reasoning' and 'speed and accuracy'. These specifically test numeracy, while literacy is tested through candidates' ability to understand and follow procedures correctly.

The selection process for the graduate staff officer grade also includes assessment centre exercises. Recruitment to other specialist grades within the NICS involves testing in the specific competences required for the post, e.g. assistant statisticians, assistant scientific officers and IT specialists which all have a mathematical element.

District Councils

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the staff breakdown by community background is of each district council in Northern Ireland; which district councils in Northern Ireland have implemented affirmative action measures in response to staff under-representation; and what affirmative action measures have been taken by district councils with identified under-representation in each case. [25301]

Angela E. Smith: The staff breakdown by community background for each district council, set out in the following table, has been taken from the Equality Commission's 2003 Monitoring Report.

District council	*P.*	*R.C.*	*N.D.*	*Total*
Antrim	190	82	8	280
Ards	339	63	26	428
Armagh	139	115	0	254
Ballymena	231	52	15	298
Ballymoney	90	19	12	121
Banbridge	155	39	4	198
Belfast	1,455	868	106	2,429
Carrickfergus	172	13	21	206
Castlereagh	464	43	51	558
Coleraine	227	74	20	321
Cookstown	112	92	3	207
Craigavon	258	165	11	434
Derry	137	443	12	592
Down	76	219	19	314
Dungannon and South Tyrone	150	138	18	306
Fermanagh	101	139	4	244
Larne	110	39	5	154
Limavady	80	53	7	140
Lisburn	352	85	19	456
Magherafelt	99	96	0	195
Moyle	33	75	11	119
Newry and Mourne	56	343	6	405
Newtownabbey	434	57	8	499
North Down	404	48	45	497
Omagh	136	270	34	440
Strabane	59	107	3	169
Total	6,059	3,737	468	10,264

Note:

P = Protestant; RC = Roman Catholic; ND = Non-denominational

District councils are listed in Schedule 1 of the Fair Employment (Specification of Public Authorities) Order (Northern Ireland) 2000 as one of the public authorities required to secure fair participation in employment. However, details about the implementation of affirmative action measures are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Education and Library Boards

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Roman Catholics sit on education and library boards; and if he will make a statement. [25195]

Angela E. Smith: The members of the education and library boards were appointed by the Minister for Education and were selected in accordance with legislative requirements and the code of practice laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Each Board has 35 members of which 14 were nominated by the relevant local councils, eight were nominated by the Transferors and Trustees and 13 were appointed through an open competition process that is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner's independent assessor found the process used to have met the exacting standards set down by OCPA.

The information available in respect of the community background of members of each of the education and library boards is detailed in the following table. To enable Ministers and Departments to ensure that the pool of candidates from which appointments are made contains a fair and equitable representation of the Northern Ireland community, in accordance with OCPA guidelines, details of community background are sought from each candidate for monitoring purposes.

This information is not made available to the shortlisting and interview panels or to the Minister when decisions on appointments are being made.

Number

	Protestant	*Roman Catholic*	*Other*
BELB			
District Council Nominees	6	7	1
Transferor/Trustee Reps	4	4	—
General Interest Members	4	9	—
Total	14	20	1
NEELB			
District Council Nominees	12	2	—
Transferor/Trustee Reps	6	2	—
General Interest Members	6	4	3
Total	24	8	3
SEELB			
District Council Nominees	12	2	—
Transferor/Trustee Reps	6	2	—
General Interest Members	10	3	—
Total	28	7	—
SELB			
District Council Nominees	7	6	1
Transferor/Trustee Reps	4	4	—
General Interest Members	6	7	—
Total	17	17	1
WELB			
District Council Nominees	3	11	—
Transferor/Trustee Reps	3	5	—
General Interest Members	8	4	1
Total	14	20	1

Electronic Human Resources Contract

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department of Finance and Personnel expects to designate a company as the preferred bidder for the Northern Ireland Civil Service electronic Human Resources Contract. [24925]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Finance and Personnel expects to designate a company as preferred bidder for the Northern Ireland Civil Service electronic Human Resources Contract by the end of November 2005.

Enzyme Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of people in the Province who suffer from enzyme disorders. [24918]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of people suffering from enzyme disorders is not available.

Enzyme deficiency disorders result in a very wide spectrum of clinical consequences depending on the enzyme involved.

Fuel Poverty

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many people he estimates are living in fuel poverty within each Westminster parliamentary constituency in the Province; [24870]

(2) if he will estimate the number of people living in fuel poverty within each district council area in the Province. [24884]

Mr. Hanson: Figures on fuel poverty are classified in terms of households rather than individual people and are collected on a district council, rather than a parliamentary constituency basis. The estimated number of people in fuel poverty based on the 2001 House Condition Survey is as follows:

District council area	*Estimated number of households in fuel poverty*
Antrim	6,800
Ards	7,910
Armagh	5,060
Ballymena	8,150
Bally money	4,070
Banbridge	4,680
Belfast	42,960
Carrickfergus	3,400
Castlereagh	5,650
Coleraine	6,520
Cookstown	3,610
Craigavon	13,450
Deny	13,090
Down	6,040
Dungannon and South Tyrone	3,670
Fermanagh	6,460
Larne	4,400
Limavady	4,020
Lisburn	10,570
Magherafelt	5,690
Moyle	2,170
Newry and Mourne	6,650
Newtownabbey	10,040
North Down	7,650
Omagh	5,100
Strabane	5,450
Northern Ireland total	203,260

An interim House Condition Survey was carried out in 2004 and the results of this are currently being analysed.

GCSE Qualifications

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of *(a)* males and *(b)* females in the Province left school with no GCSE passes in each of the last 10 years. [25791]

Angela E. Smith: Figures for 2004–05 are not yet available. Figures for the previous 10 years are as follows:

	Percentage of males who left school with no GCSE passes	*Percentage of females who left school with no GCSE passes*
1994–95	7.5	3.4
1995–96[1]	5.0	2.3
1996–97	7.8	4.5
1997–98	7.1	3.6
1998–99	6.5	2.7
1999–2000	6.9	3.4
2000–01	7.8	3.7
2001–02	8.1	3.4
2002–03[2]	n/a	n/a
2003–04	7.3	3.9

n/a = not available

[1] Qualifications data were missing for approximately 3 per cent. of school leavers.

[2] Due to software difficulties with the schools' administrative system, the 2002/03 School Leavers' Survey had to be abandoned.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of *(a)* males and *(b)* females in the Province achieved passes in mathematics and English at GCSE level in each of the last 10 years. [25792]

Angela E. Smith: Information is not available for 1995–96 and not yet available for 2004–05. For the other years requested the figures are as follows:

Percentage of pupils aged 15 at the start of each school year who achieved grades A-G*

Gender/Subject	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*
Female				
English	94	93	93	93
Mathematics	90	89	90	91
English and Mathematics	90	88	89	90
Male				
English	86	85	86	86
Mathematics	85	83	85	86
English and Mathematics	82	80	82	83

Gender/Subject	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Female				
English	94	93	93	93
Mathematics	91	92	91	90
English and Mathematics	90	91	90	89
Male				
English	85	85	86	87
Mathematics	85	87	86	85
English and Mathematics	82	83	83	83

Hospital Beds

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hospital beds there are within each hospital trust in the Province dedicated to addictions treatment. [24889]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Number of beds in Northern Ireland designated for the treatment of addictions at 31 March 2005

Provider trust	*Designated beds for the treatment of addiction*
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	10
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	14
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	10
South and East Belfast HSS Trust[1]	12
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	7
Northern Ireland	53

[1] South and East Belfast HSS Trust and North and West Belfast HSS Trust jointly manage the 12 beds designated for the treatment of addictions.

Source:

Northern Ireland HPSS Trusts.

Illegal Waste Disposal

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimates have been made of the tonnage of illegally dumped waste originating from the Irish Republic and deposited in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [23083]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service took over responsibility for the regulation of illegal waste activity, including incidents of illegal dumping of material originating in the Republic of Ireland, in October 2002. Between that date and the end of 2004, some 250,000 tonnes of biodegradable ROI waste was detected in Northern Ireland. It is not possible to determine the year in which the waste was disposed of, so the figure cannot be broken down into annual tonnages. An updated amount to reflect the period up to end 2005 is being calculated and will be available early in 2006.

Lagan College/Millennium Primary School, Strangford

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost has been of upgrading roads and footpaths at *(a)* Lagan College and *(b)* the Millennium Primary School in the Strangford constituency. [25014]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 8 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what the total cost has been of upgrading roads and footpaths at *(a)* Lagan College and *(b)* the Millennium Primary School in the Strangford constituency.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Following the receipt of a number of requests from various interested parties, Roads Service carried out a minor works improvement scheme at the junction of Manse Road and Glencregagh Road at a cost of £660,000.

The scheme, which was completed in 2004, included the provision of a new widened and realigned carriageway; right turn pockets at Lagan College and Glencregagh Road; improved sightlines at the Manse Road/Glencregagh Road junction; and the construction of approximately 1.3 km of new footway to provide continuous pedestrian access on Manse Road between Four Winds Roundabout and Lagan College.

Colleagues in the Department of Education (DE) have also confirmed that road improvement works were carried out at the site of the new Millennium Primary School in 2003 as a condition of the school's planning approval. These works, which were necessary to ensure satisfactory means of access in the interests of road safety and the convenience of road users, cost approximately £330,000 and were funded by DE.

Subsequent to the school opening, it became apparent that drivers were not observing the signs and road markings and that safety was being threatened by illegal overtaking manoeuvres in the vicinity of the school. To address this, Roads Service installed further traffic islands, signs, road markings and lighting at a cost of £29,000.

I hope this information is helpful.

Marriage Licences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many marriage licences were issued by each local government councils in each of the last five years. [24144]

Angela E. Smith: Prior to 1 January 2004, all civil marriages were carried out either by registrar's certificate or registrar's licence but separate statistics are not available for each form of authority. Table 1 gives the total number of civil marriages by local government district between 2000 and 2003.

New marriage legislation introduced from 1 January 2004 provided for universal civil preliminaries with a schedule issued by the registrar constituting the authority for all marriages, religious or civil, to take place. Table 2 gives the number of marriages carried out by schedule and the number of civil marriages by schedule by local government district in 2004. In addition, table 2 gives the number of civil marriages that took place in 2004, under the previous legislation.

Table 1: Total number of civil marriages by local government district, 2000 to 2003

Local government district	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antrim	59	60	67	46
Ards	86	80	82	75
Armagh	47	41	69	80
Ballymena	59	60	71	86
Ballymoney	22	24	14	24
Banbridge	48	43	63	54
Belfast	502	490	463	485
Carrickfergus	68	69	81	76
Castlereagh	73	80	91	96
Coleraine	85	92	114	111
Cookstown	12	15	21	18
Craigavon	86	85	84	89
Derry	95	95	104	124
Down	53	45	63	48
Dungannon	23	22	20	20
Fermanagh	38	57	42	43
Larne	39	31	41	42
Limavady	20	15	22	20
Lisburn	88	118	176	160
Magherafelt	20	9	22	20
Moyle	8	8	8	13
Newry and Mourne	67	44	45	65
Newtownabbey	77	88	102	105
North Down	181	173	207	195
Omagh	34	24	20	25
Strabane	20	13	21	14
Northern Ireland	1,910	1,881	2,113	2,134

Table 2: Total number of marriages carried out by schedule, the number of civil marriages by schedule, and the number of civil marriages under the previous legislation, by local government district, 2004

Local government district	All marriages by schedule	Civil marriages by schedule	Civil marriages under previous legislation
Antrim	185	57	3
Ards	231	78	4
Armagh	285	89	1
Ballymena	292	108	9
Ballymoney	109	27	4
Banbridge	147	41	1
Belfast	1,422	699	29
Carrickfergus	179	90	5
Castlereagh	172	71	3

Table 2: Total number of marriages carried out by schedule, the number of civil marriages by schedule, and the number of civil marriages under the previous legislation, by local government district, 2004

Local government district	All marriages by schedule	Civil marriages by schedule	Civil marriages under previous legislation
Coleraine	294	109	4
Cookstown	186	29	1
Craigavon	333	88	5
Derry	480	143	4
Down	294	76	6
Dungannon	253	21	0
Fermanagh	349	85	4
Larne	161	36	0
Limavady	145	19	2
Lisburn	425	167	13
Magherafelt	198	9	0
Moyle	100	13	1
Newry and Mourne	495	105	4
Newtownabbey	243	62	5
North Down	478	235	13
Omagh	249	29	1
Strabane	134	14	2
Northern Ireland	7,839	2,500	124

Mental Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the prevalence of mental ill health in the Province. [24863]

Mr. Woodward: There has been no survey of the prevalence of mental ill health in Northern Ireland however; a survey carried out in 2000 by the Office for National Statistics in Great Britain indicate that one in six people will suffer from a mental illness at any one time.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on mental health services in the Province in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [24894]

Mr. Woodward: Expenditure on mental health services for the last five financial years is listed in the following table.

	Mental health expenditure (£ million
1999-2000	124.033
2000-01	133.206
2001-02	139.345
2002-03	150.773
2003-04	161.141
Total	708.498

The Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability includes a specific expert working committee whose responsibility is to cost the recommendations emerging from the Review. This will inform future funding decisions in the development of mental health services.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on mental health promotion in the Province in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [24895]

Mr. Woodward: Mental health promotion is included as part of the work of a wide range of health and social services professionals and it is not possible to distinguish amounts spent on it by them. However since the publication of the draft Strategy for Promoting Mental and Emotional Health in Northern Ireland my Department has allocated the following specific amounts towards promoting mental health.

	£
2001-02	50,000
2002-03	200,000
2003-04	300,000
2004-05	350,000
2005-06	600,000

The Mental Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan contains 30 actions to promote mental health and prevent suicide. The Strategy is being overseen by a Multi-sectoral Implementation group.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the priorities agreed at the World Health Organisation European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health in January. [24896]

Mr. Woodward: The priorities stated in the Mental Health Declaration for Europe are fundamental to a modern mental health service and are principles fully espoused by the current Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability, which will inform the reform and modernisation of mental health services here.

MOT Vehicle Tests

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used in Northern Ireland for MOT vehicle tests; and whether there is a requirement for speedometers to include kilometres per hour as well as miles per hour. [24849]

Angela E. Smith: The criteria used in Northern Ireland for MOT vehicle tests are contained in the Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 which specify the class of vehicles subject to testing and the related test items. Schedule 2 of these regulations cites the speedometer as a testable item for Class IV vehicles (motor cars). Regulation 40 of the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 provides for a motor vehicle to be fitted with a speedometer which indicates speed both in miles per hour and kilometres per hour, either simultaneously or, if required, separately.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated by each health board in the Province for disease modifying therapies for multiple sclerosis in each of the last five years. [24891]

Mr. Woodward: The health and social services boards have advised that expenditure on disease modifying therapies for multiple sclerosis in each of the last five years was as shown in the following table:

£

	Eastern	*Northern*	*Southern*	*Western*	*NI Total*
2000-01	1,178,036	749,244	401,934	292,179	2,621,393
2001-02	1,538,340	1,076,476	610,937	431,455	3,657,208
2002-03	1,435,745	993,850	558,862	438,132	3,426,589
2003-04	1,544,745	1,150,891	714,420	439,930	3,849,986
2004-05	1,637,315	1,267,089	796,111	565,149	4,265,664

Nurses

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the reasons for nurses leaving the NHS in Northern Ireland; and if he will take steps to increase the number of nurses trained each year. [25522]

Mr. Woodward: During the year ended 31 March 2005 a total of 893 nursing and midwifery staff left the Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS). This figure will include retirements and those who have left the NI HPSS to join the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales. Information on the actual destination of leavers is not collected.

The annual intake of student nurses has increased from 480 in 1999 to the current level of 750. This level is kept under review through the Department's ongoing workforce planning process.

National Match-funded Money

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which schemes the national match-funded money has been spent on in each year since modulation was introduced; and how much has been spent on each scheme. [25786]

Angela E. Smith: The schemes and associated amounts on which modulation match funding has been spent in each year since the introduction of modulation are detailed in the following table.

Scheme name	*Financial year (£)*				
	2001-02	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*	*2005-06 (to date)*
Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme	—	13,540.14	149,095.20	198,895.29	130,282.94
Organic Farming Scheme	98,604.63	51,234.89	44,631.11	24,271.23	53,992.83
Countryside Management Scheme	—	473,977.67	1,041,198.55	1,608,446.91	770,999.76

Scheme name	Financial year (£) 2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06 (to date)
Farm Woodland Premium Scheme	47,501.67	80,541.14	122,848.61	140,577.70	—
Short Rotation Coppice Challenge Fund	—	—	—	—	59,667.25
Total	146,106.30	619,293.84	1,357,773.47	1,972,191.13	955,275.53

NHS Complaints

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been made against general practitioners in the Province in each of the last five years. [24860]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

	Number of complaints
2000–01	[1] 314
2001–02	[2] 536
2002–03	611
2003–04	587
2004–05	665

[1] no figures available for WHS SB or SHSSB areas during 2000–01
[2] no figures available for SHSSB area during 2001–02

Northern Area Plan

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on the draft Northern Area Plan in Northern Ireland; and how many individuals have been affected because their planning application has been either deferred or refused as a result. [25712]

Angela E. Smith: The closing date for receipt of representations on the Northern Area Plan (NAP) was 6 July 2005. To date, 5,600 representations on the plan have been recorded and these are currently being analysed. It is likely that these will require to be addressed through the public inquiry process for NAP. It is too early in the process to give an indication of when a public inquiry will be held.

The Planning (Development Plans) Regulations (NI) 1991, as amended, requires the Department to make copies of all objections to a development plan available for inspection prior to the inquiry. Copies of the representations will be put on public display as soon as possible and the Department will invite counter-objections, which must be submitted within an 8-week period.

Approximately 350 planning applications have been affected by the draft NAP. Of that, 81 have the draft NAP as the sole reason for refusal. It should be noted that many of these applications are by the same applicant.

Planning Enforcement

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning enforcement officers there are in each area of Northern Ireland. [25219]

Angela E. Smith: The number of enforcement officers by Divisional Planning Office is set out in the following table.

Division	Number of enforcement officers
Ballymena	7.5
Belfast	5.0
Craigavon	6.5
Downpatrick	3.0
Coleraine/Londonderry	9.5
Omagh/Enniskillen	7.5
HQ Special Studies Section	4
Total	43

Police Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many industrial tribunal applications were lodged against the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2004–05; and what the status is of each case. [25153]

Angela E. Smith: During 2004–05 there were 61 individual applications registered against the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The status of these is that 16 applications were withdrawn and 45 remain current.

Porphyria

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what treatment is available on the NHS in Northern Ireland for porphyria variegate; how many consultants in the Province specialise in this area of medicine; how many sufferers there are in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [24982]

Mr. Woodward: Variegate porphyria is a very rare condition. Patients suffering from this disease can vary greatly in their clinical symptoms and therefore are likely to receive treatment from clinicians in a number of specialties including general medicine and dermatology. The symptoms of this illness can be severe however many adverse effects can be reduced or avoided by prompt diagnosis, sustained intervention and monitoring. The first line of treatment is to avoid factors which trigger acute attacks and there is also specific treatment for difficult cases. This treatment is all available within the HPSS in Northern Ireland.

There are two consultants in Northern Ireland who have an interest in inherited metabolic disorders of this type. Information on the number of patients in the Northern Ireland suffering from variegate porphyria is not available centrally but is thought to be very small.

Prisons

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of maintaining the prison population in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the average cost per prisoner was in each year. [24154]

Mr. Woodward: The hon. Gentleman asks for the average cost per prisoner. The Northern Ireland Prison Service NIPS) does not publish figures for the average

cost per prisoner in its annual report and accounts. The Northern Ireland prison service uses the average cost per prisoner place, which is one of the service's key PSA targets agreed with Treasury.

The net cost of operations and CPPP for the financial years requested are:

Financial year	Net cost of operations (£000)	CPPP(£)
2003–04	112,461	81,426
2004–05	115,495	85,935

In 2003–04 the CPPP target was £83,275 and 2004–05 was £86,800. The Northern Ireland Prison Service achieved the target in both years.

Property Valuations

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to bring forward legislation to introduce a discrete capital value system of local taxation in Northern Ireland. [24592]

Angela E. Smith: The first of two Orders in Council to give effect to a range of rating reforms in April 2007, including the change from rental to capital values for domestic property, was published for consultation on 7 October. The draft Rates (Capital Values, etc.) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 provides for the determination, publication and revision of the capital values of domestic property in Northern Ireland. These capital values will be published in April 2006. The second Order in Council will be published for consultation next year.

Pupil Expulsions

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used in the decision to expel a pupil in *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* grammar school in the (i) controlled, (ii) maintained, (iii) integrated and (iv) voluntary sectors of education. [25763]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education has not issued criteria to be used in the decision to expel a pupil from any school in Northern Ireland.

All schools are required by law to have a discipline policy, which sets out sanctions, including expulsion, which the school will impose for breaches of school discipline. It is for individual schools to draw up their own discipline policy, including the criteria they will use in decisions to expel a pupil from school.

Railways

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage change there has been in numbers of passengers on the Northern Ireland rail network in the past three years. [26580]

Mr. Woodward: The percentage change in numbers of passengers on the Northern Ireland rail network in the past three years has been:

	Percentage
2002–03	+5.5
2003–04	+5.2
2004–05	-0.9

Road Safety

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list locations of traffic calming schemes that the road service expects to introduce in the Province within the next 12 months. [24898]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of the roads service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mrs Iris Robinson, dated 8 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding the locations of traffic calming schemes that Road Service expects to introduce in the Province within the next 12 months.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as chief Executive of Roads Service.

In relation to the provision of traffic calming measures, I am sure you will appreciate that, although the funding allocated to traffic calming has been increased significantly year on year, demand far outstrips our capacity to meet all such requests and priorities have to be established. We do this by taking account of a number of factors: the accident history of the site, with additional weighting being applied to collisions involving vulnerable road users; the speed, volume and type of traffic; and the characteristics of the general area. Of these we give the highest priority to safety because we believe it is only right to treat sites with an accident history before those with a reasonably good safety record. Implicitly, this assessment process takes cognisance of the overall cost of road traffic collisions to society in general. This approach has led to a substantial reduction in collisions and personal injuries at those sites, over a number of years.

Table A attached lists the locations of traffic calming schemes Roads Service has programmed for completion this financial year. Our programme of traffic calming works for 2006/2007 has not yet been finalised and Table B attached is a preliminary list of schemes under consideration at this stage. Naturally, implementation of these schemes will be subject to the successful completion of the statutory processes including local consultation and the resolution of any objections.

I hope this information is helpful.

A—Traffic Calming Schemes Programmed for Completion in 2005–06

A26 Newry Road, Banbridge
Alexander Park, Katesbridge
Altcar Park, Londonderry
Antrim Road Lurgan
Armagh Road, Charlemont
Ashgrove Road, Portadown
Ashgrove schemes, Newry
Ballycoleman area, Strabane (phase 2)
Ballyeaston Village, Newtownabbey
Ballygomartin Road, Belfast
Ballyhenry/Glenvarna, Newtownabbey
Ballylinderry Village, Lisburn
Ballylough Road, Annsborough
Ballymartin Village
Ballystrudder, Islandmagee
Bangor Road, Newtownards

Bloomfield Park, Londonderry
Brackaville Road, Coalisland
Brookdale Crescent, Londonderry
Brookdale Park, Londonderry
Brookmount Road, Omagh
Burnside Village, Newtownabbey
Burnthill/Richmond area, Newtownabbey
Cable Street, Londonderry
Callan Bridge Road, Armagh
Carncastle, Larne
Carnvue Road, Newtownabbey
Cashelhill Park, Londonderry
Cavehill Road, Belfast
Chancellor's Road, Newry
Chichester Park area, Ballymena
Church Road Glengormley, Newtownabbey
Church Road, Londonderry
Churchill/Woodside, Portadown
Clooney Road, Greysteel, Co Londonderry
Cloughmills, Ballymoney
Coleshill, Enniskillen
Colinbridge area, Newtownabbey
Conlig Village, North Down
Crevenish Road, Kesh
Culcavy Village, Lisburn
Cunninghams Lane, Dungannon
Darkly Road, Keady
Dove Gardens, Londonderry
Ederowen Park, Londonderry
Elaghmore Park, Londonderry
Elmwood Road, Londonderry
Fairview Road, Newtownabbey
Fern Park, Londonderry
Gallows Street, Dromore
Gilford Road, A50, Portadown
Glen caw Park, Londonderry
Glengoland Estate, Lisburn
Godfrey Avenue, North Down
Granshа Road, Castlereagh
Green Park Estate, Armagh
Harberton Park, Belfast
Hatmore Park, Londonderry
Heather Road, Londonderry
High Street, Newry
Highfield Drive area, Belfast
Hill Street area Lurgan
Hillsborough Road/Princess Street, Dromore
Hospital Road, Omagh (phase 2)
Huntley Road, Banbridge
Inverary Area, Belfast
Iris Drive, Belfast
Killowen Street, Kyles Brae and Shuttle Hill, Coleraine
Killyman Village, County Tyrone
Kilrea Gateways, Kilrea, Co Londonderry
King Street, Newcastle
Knockeden/Flush, Belfast
Knockmore Estate, Lisburn
Kylemore Park, Londonderry
Lack Village, County Fermanagh
Lake Street, Lurgan
Leafair Gardens, Londonderry
Leafair Park, Londonderry
Lenamore Pass, Londonderry
Lenamore Road, Londonderry
Looplane Park, Belfast
Main Street Hamiltonsbawn
Manse Road, Carrowdore
Mayfair, Castlereagh
Meeting Street, Dromore
Mill Street, Ballymena
Milltown Road, Burren
Moneyreagh Village, Castlereagh
Moss Road, Lisburn
Mount Merrion Avenue, Castlereagh
Moygashel Village, Dungannon
Newtownbreda Village, Castlereagh
Newry Street/Newry Road, Kilkeel
Old Warrenpoint Road, Newry
Parkhall Road and Steeple Estate, Antrim
Peggys Loaning, Banbridge
Pomeroy, County Tyrone
Portadown Road, Tandragee
Portaferry Village
Queens Park, Newtownabbey
Rathgill Park, North Down
Rathmore Drive Rathcoole, Newtownabbey
Scarva Street, Banbridge (Reilly Street to Limewood Roundabout)
Scrabo Estate Stage 1
Scrabo Estate Stage 2
Shrigley Road, Killyleagh
Sion Mills village (phase 2)
Sloan Street, Lurgan
Springfarm/Durnish Road, Antrim
Springfield Park, Belfast
Springhill Park, Strabane
Stanley's Walk, Londonderry
Stewartstown Village, Cookstown
Stoneyford Village, Lisburn
Sunnyside Street, Belfast
Tullybrannigan Estate, Newcastle
Upper Whiterock Road, Belfast
Warden/Summerfield/Suffolk Street and Fisherwick Gardens, Ballymena
Westland Road, Belfast
Windmill Heights, Enniskillen

B—Preliminary List of Traffic Calming Schemes Programmed for Completion in 2006–07

Ardenlee Avenue, Belfast
Backwood Road, Lisburn
Ballintoy Gateways, Co Antrim
Ballyholme Road, North Down
Ballykeel 1, Ballymena
Ballyregan Road, Castlereagh
Barnetts Road, Belfast
Belmont Church Road, Belfast

Benmore Drive, Belfast
Bracken Drive, Newtownabbey
Bryansford Road, Newcastle
Carnhill (part), Londonderry
Carnhill Road, Newtownabbey
Carrickmore Village, County Tyrone
Cashel Drive, Newtownabbey
Castle Park Road, North Down
Causeway End Road, Lisburn
Cedar Street, Londonderry
Chapel Street/Boat Street, Newry
Circular Road, Belfast
Cladymore Village
Clandeboye Road, North Down
Clarawood Park, Belfast
College Hill and Portadown Road, Armagh
Connsbrook Avenue, Belfast
Cranley Road, North Down
Creggan Village, Antrim
Crumlin, Antrim
Derrykeighan, Ballymoney
Doran's Hill, Newry
Downpatrick Road, Crossgar
Drumnacanvy Village
Duncairn Gardens, Belfast
Earlswood Road, Belfast
Erin vale Avenue, Belfast
Fintona Village, County Tyrone
Fort. St/Old Newry Rd, Banbridge
Glenview Avenue, Londonderry
Glenview Street, Londonderry
Gracehill, Ballymena
Harbour Road, Kilkeel
Hawthorn Street, Londonderry
Holland Drive, Belfast
Irish Street Estate, Londonderry
Kevlin Road, Omagh, County Tyrone
Kildrum Gardens, Londonderry
Killinchy Village
Killough Village
Knockenagh Avenue, Newtownabbey
Laurelvale Village
Lawrencetown Village
Lenaghan area, Castlereagh
Lincoln Courts, Londonderry
Lockview Road area, Belfast
Loughgall Village
Loughinisland Village
Lower Braniel Road, Castlereagh
Lower Springfarm Road, Antrim
Macfin, Ballymoney
Main Street/Central Promenade, Newcastle
Manse Road, Kilkeel
Meadowbrook Estate, Craigavon
Millbrook/Drumahoe Road, Larne
Moneyslane Village
Mountnorris Village
Norburgh Park, Londonderry
Old Ballygowan Road, Comber
Parsonage Road, Kircubbin
Poyntzpass Village
Prehen Park, Londonderry
Railway Street/Glen Link, Comber
Rathkeele Way, Londonderry
Rathkeltair Road, Downpatrick
Rathlin Drive, Londonderry
Roemill Road, Limavady
Rooney Road, Kilkeel
Saintfield
Scarva Street, Banbridge (Commercial Road to Reilly Street)
Scotch Street Village
Scrogg Road, Kilkeel
Scroggy Road, Limavady
Skipperstone Road, North Down
Southway, Londonderry
Stirling Avenue, Castlereagh
Straid Village, Newtownabbey
Town centre, Ballymena
Upper Movilla Street/Old Movilla Road, Newtownards
Upper Waterloo Road, Larne
Victoria Road/Clifton Road, Bangor
Waringstown Village
Willowvale Gardens, Belfast
Windsor Avenue area, Belfast

Saville Inquiry

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will break down by main category of expenditure the total and final cost to public funds of the Saville Inquiry into events in Londonderry in January 1972. [25713]

Mr. Hanson: On the figures available at the end of October 2005 the total cash spend of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry was £163 million. Breaking this down into the main categories previously requested by the hon. Member gives the following figures. Some limited expenditure will continue until the Tribunal submits its final report to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

		£ million
	NIO	*MOD*
(a) legal fees	55.535	29.711
(b) accommodation	14.954	—
(c) transportation	3.217	—
(d) provision of IT equipment	12.836	—
(e) hiring of halls	7.574	—
(f) other	[1] 36.179	[2] 3.034

[1] For the NIO this figure includes salary costs of Tribunal members (except Lord Saville) and Inquiry staff, witness expenses, expert witnesses, office services and security, telecommunications and other miscellaneous office expenditure.

[2] For the MOD this figure includes Inquiry related staff and support costs, accommodation, a Police Investigation and other miscellaneous fees and expenses.

School Transport

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by each of the education and library boards in Northern Ireland on the provision of school transport for primary school children who leave school at 2 pm in each year since 2000. [25497]

Angela E. Smith: Information with regard to pupils finishing school at 2 pm who are eligible for school transport assistance is not available in the format requested. However, on the basis of boards' expenditure figures it is estimated that the cost of transporting these pupils by board vehicles was as follows:

£ million

	BELB	*NEELB*	*SEELB*	*SELB*	*WELB*	*Total*
2000–01	0.2124	0.2962	0.2551	0.6562	0.883	2.3029
2001–02	0.2691	0.3120	0.3234	0.6533	1.0199	2.5777
2002–03	0.763	0.5766	0.243	0.9506	1.146	2.9925
2003–04	0.1131	0.5985	0.7019	0.9287	1.0181	3.3603
2004–05	0.1166	0.7174	0.3523	0.9004	1.1284	3.2151

South Tyrone Hospital

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what medical and surgical services are provided by the South Tyrone Hospital in Dungannon. [25523]

Mr. Woodward: The following services are provided from the South Tyrone Hospital site:

Geriatric Inpatient and Day Services

Minor Injuries Service

Day Case Services—General Surgery, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Pain Management, Oral Surgery, Community Dentistry, Gastroenterology, Rheumatology, ENT

Paediatric Ambulatory Care services

Outpatient Services

Pain Management, Palliative Medicine, Anti-Coagulant, Dermatology, General Medicine, Thoracic Medicine, Cardiology Medicine, Diabetology, Geriatric Medicine, Geriatric Assessment, Haematology, Paediatric, Rheumatology, Neurology, Day Hospital, Colposcopy, Gynaecology, Obstetrics, ENT, General Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Ophthalmology, Renal, Varicose Ulcer, Continence, Optometry.

Road Safety Bill

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will take steps to secure the extension of the provisions of the Road Safety Bill to Northern Ireland; [25638]

(2) what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues in relation to the extension of the Road Safety Bill to Northern Ireland. [25639]

Angela E. Smith: Road Traffic legislation is a transferred matter and responsibility for its progress in Northern Ireland rests with the Department of the Environment. For this reason the provisions of the Road Safety Bill do not, in general, apply to Northern Ireland. There is a general convention to replicate, where possible, the position in Great Britain and this will be done through the draft Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 that was issued for public consultation on 6 October 2005 with a closing date for comments of 12 January 2006.

The Road Safety Bill seeks to extend Part 2 of the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001(c.3) (regulation of number plate suppliers) to Scotland and Northern Ireland. This is a reserved matter that cannot be included in the draft Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order.

The arrangements for replicating measures contained in the Road Safety Bill were made at official level and there has been no correspondence between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Cabinet colleagues on this matter.

Staff Absence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the rate of worker absence has been in each Department in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [22649]

Angela E. Smith: Sick absence statistics for the Northern Ireland Departments are analysed by financial year as opposed to calendar year. The information set out as follows represents the total number of days lost due to sickness absence in each of the Departments of the NI Administration and the NIO for each year since 2001–02. The figures for 2004–05 are currently being compiled and the annual report will be published later this year.

NI Departments:

Absence information 2000–01

Department/agency	*Average days lost per staff year*	*Absence rate percentage of available working days lost*
DARD	12.2	5.5
DCAL	14.7	6.7
DE	15.7	7.1
DEL	17.9	8.1
DETI	12.4	5.6
DFP	12.8	5.8
DHSSPS	12.9	5.8
DOE	14.6	6.6
DRD	12.2	5.5
DSD	18.6	8.4
OFMDFM	9.7	4.4
MO	12.8	5.8
NI prison staff(civilian)	16.6	[1]

[1] No figures available.

Notes:

1. Staff from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Complaints and the Planning Appeals Commission are included in the DFP figures.
2. Staff from HSENI and OFREG are included in the DETI figures.

Absence information 2001–02

Department/agency	*Average days lost per staff year*	*Absence rate percentage of available working days lost*
DARD	11.8	5.3
DCAL	14.6	6.6
DE	13.2	5.9
DEL	19.0	8.6
DETI	13.0	5.9
DFP	13.5	6.1
DHSSPS	14.6	6.6
DOE	14.1	6.4
DRD	11.4	5.2
DSD	18.4	8.3
OFMDFM	11.6	5.3
NIO	13.4	6.1
NI prison staff (civilian)	13.6	[1]

[1] No figures available.

Notes:

1. Staff from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Complaints and the Planning Appeals Commission are included in the DFP figures.
2. Staff from HSENI and OFREG are included in the DETI figures.

Absence information 2002–03

Department/agency	*Average days lost per staff year*	*Absence rate percentage of available working days lost*
DARD	13.4	6.1
DCAL	13.8	6.3
DE	12.5	5.7
DEL	18.7	8.4
DETI	12.7	5.7
DFP	13.6	6.2
DHSSPS	13.2	6.0
DOE	14.5	6.5
DRD	10.7	4.9
DSD	19.1	8.6
OFMDFM	12.2	5.5
MO	13.7	6.2
NI prison staff (civilian)	19.4	9.6

Notes:

1. Staff from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Complaints and the Planning Appeals Commission are included in the DFP figures.
2. Staff from HSENI and OFREG are included in the DETI figures.

Absence information 2003–04

Department/agency	*Average days lost per staff year*	*Absence rate percentage of available working days lost*
DARD	12.4	5.5
DCAL	15.1	6.8
DE	11.7	5.2
DEL	17.7	8.0
DETI	11.8	5.3
DFP	14.3	6.4
DHSSPS	12.3	5.5
DOE	13.4	6.0
DRD	12.0	5.4
BSD	19.7	8.8
OFMDFM	12.6	5.7
MO	14.0	6.3
NI prison staff (civilian)	20.7	10.3

Notes:

1. Staff from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Complaints and the Planning Appeals Commission are included in the DFP figures.
2. Staff from HSENI and OFREG are included in the DETI figures.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1238W, on waiting lists, if he will take steps to record waiting times for radiotherapy in the Province. [24916]

Mr. Woodward: There is no evidence to suggest that there is any difficulty accessing radiotherapy services in Northern Ireland. A national audit of radiotherapy waiting times has recently been carried out by the Royal College of Radiologists. Data were collected for all patients who commenced treatment in Northern Ireland during the week beginning 26 September 2005. Preliminary local analysis indicates that no emergency patient waited more than 24 hours and that waiting times for other patients were in line with national guidelines. The Department has no plans to record waiting times for radiotherapy on an ongoing basis.

Appeals

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of Crown court convictions in Northern Ireland have been successfully appealed in each of the last five years. [25640]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

	Number of Crown court convictions (non-scheduled)	*No. of convictions quashed in Court of Appeal*	*Percentage of appeals quashed compared to convictions in the Crown*
2004	962	5	0
2003	742	0	0
2002	670	2	0
2001	635	5	0
2000	761	5	0

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of convictions in the Diplock courts have been successfully appealed in each of the last five years. [25641]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

	Number of Diplock convictions	*Number of convictions quashed in Court of Appeal*	*Percentage of appeals quashed compared to convictions in the Diplock Courts*
2004	30	0	0
2003	53	2	4
2002	47	1	2

	Number of Diplock convictions	Number of convictions quashed in Court of Appeal	Percentage of appeals quashed compared to convictions in the Diplock Courts
2001	22	3	14
2000	35	5	14

Teacher Training

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on teacher training in the Province in each of the last five years. [25793]

Angela E. Smith: Funds allocated for teacher training in Northern Ireland in each of the last five financial years are provided in the table.

Funds allocated for teacher training in Northern Ireland between 2001–02 and 2005–06

	£ million
Actual allocation	
2001–02	31.855
2002–03	32.409
2003–04	35.129
2004–05	36.057

Funds allocated for teacher training in Northern Ireland between 2001–02 and 2005–06

	£ million
Estimated allocation	
2005–06	41.090

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications there have been to construct or add to existing telecommunication masts in each local authority in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years; and how many applications were *(a)* approved and *(b)* refused in each year. [25156]

Angela E. Smith: The number of applications to construct or add to existing telecommunication masts is set out in the following table.

Number of applications for telecommunication masts by council area between 2000 and 2005 (including prior approval applications)

Council area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005[1]
Antrim	17	19	17	11	6	9
Ards	26	22	7	4	3	5
Armagh	33	21	14	8	3	2
Ballymena	34	17	15	1	5	0
Ballymoney	7	3	3	0	1	1
Banbridge	19	5	12	3	0	0
Belfast	48	134	69	36	23	15
Carrickfergus	7	6	5	0	2	2
Castlereagh	8	20	13	5	6	2
Coleraine	16	33	20	1	5	5
Cookstown	15	6	4	2	1	0
Craigavon	30	21	14	2	11	11
Derry	23	44	21	9	20	9
Down	22	26	10	7	9	7
Dungannon	45	25	13	7	8	1
Fermanagh	24	19	8	5	6	2
Larne	11	16	9	3	1	1
Limavady	18	14	12	6	2	4
Lisburn	43	47	37	12	17	9
Magherafelt	12	3	9	2	3	3
Moyle	12	4	5	5	0	4
Newry and Mourne	34	15	19	4	6	9
Newtownabbey	14	25	14	4	10	4
North Down	27	35	11	6	19	6
Omagh	24	16	10	4	3	7
Strabane	12	12	4	1	1	2

[1] So far.

It is only possible to provide accurate data for the last five years as all the information for previous years is not held electronically and could be extracted only at a disproportionate cost.

It should be noted that figures up to 2002 also include applications made under the prior approval process. In June 2002 Permitted Development rights were removed by statute except in the case of an emergency and applications for telecommunications equipment were subject to the full planning process.

Details of how many applications were refused or approved since 2000 is set out in the following table.

Decisions issued on telecommunication masts by council area between 2000 and 2005

Council area	2000		2001		2002	
	Refused	Approved	Refused	Approved	Refused	Approved
Antrim	1	13	4	9	4	12
Ards	3	19	1	12	0	5
Armagh	7	27	5	18	2	12
Ballymena	0	17	2	14	0	14
Ballymoney	1	4	0	4	0	4

Decisions issued on telecommunication masts by council area between 2000 and 2005

Council area	2000		2001		2002	
	Refused	Approved	Refused	Approved	Refused	Approved
Banbridge	0	11	0	6	0	12
Belfast	8	30	11	106	5	61
Carrickfergus	0	2	0	8	0	2
Castlereagh	0	8	2	15	3	7
Coleraine	3	6	8	26	5	14
Cookstown	3	8	1	5	1	1
Craigavon	2	22	1	25	3	7
Derry	1	18	6	34	3	18
Down	2	18	7	14	1	7
Dungannon	7	28	10	9	3	9
Fermanagh	5	15	2	6	0	3
Larne	0	12	2	9	1	10
Limavady	2	14	1	11	0	7
Lisburn	1	26	2	28	4	26
Magherafelt	0	4	2	2	0	11
Moyle	0	8	1	6	0	3
Newry and Mourne	5	25	9	10	0	6
Newtownabbey	2	14	1	21	2	11
North Down	1	28	6	30	2	20
Omagh	4	10	3	8	0	2
Strabane	0	2	0	10	0	7

Council area	2003		2004		2005[1]	
	Refused	Approved	Refused	Approved	Refused	Approved
Antrim	0	11	0	8	0	6
Ards	0	7	0	2	0	4
Armagh	1	1	0	5	0	4
Ballymena	0	2	0	2	0	2
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	0	1
Banbridge	0	2	0	1	0	0
Belfast	2	23	1	26	3	11
Carrickfergus	0	2	0	1	0	2
Castlereagh	0	6	0	2	0	6
Coleraine	1	3	0	0	0	4
Cookstown	0	2	0	2	0	0
Craigavon	1	3	0	6	0	10
Derry	0	6	0	7	4	12
Down	0	3	0	4	1	4
Dungannon	0	4	1	7	2	1
Fermanagh	1	4	0	6	0	4
Larne	0	3	0	1	0	0
Limavady	0	5	0	6	0	3
Lisburn	1	9	1	17	1	7
Magherafelt	0	0	0	2	1	1
Moyle	0	5	0	1	1	2
Newry and Mourne	3	1	0	1	0	7
Newtownabbey	1	4	0	7	0	5
North Down	0	6	1	6	1	14
Omagh	3	7	0	3	0	4
Strabane	0	2	0	1	0	1

[1] So far.

It should be noted that there is no direct correlation between the number of applications submitted per year and the number of decisions issued.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he plans to put in place for telecommunication mast sharing. [25157]

Angela E. Smith: Prevailing planning policy for telecommunications development in Northern Ireland, set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 10 'Telecommunications', already strongly encourages the sharing of masts where this represents the best environmental option in a particular case.

To promote sharing through the planning process, the PPS advises that all applications for new masts should be accompanied by evidence that the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast or other structure has been explored and should outline the specific reasons why this course of action is not possible. Where the evidence regarding the consideration of alternative options is not considered satisfactory, then planning permission can be refused.

Vehicle Certification

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of providing the vehicle testing service in Northern Ireland has been in each of the last five years. [25215]

Angela E. Smith: The cost of providing the vehicle test service in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Cost (£000)
2000–01	9,476
2001–02	9,931

	Cost (£000)
2002–03	13,411
2003–04	16,322
2004–05	16,999

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been received through vehicle test fees in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [25216]

Angela E. Smith: Money received through vehicle tests in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is set out in the table:

	Fee earned (£000)
2000–01	9,113
2001–02	10,161
2002–03	14,155
2003–04	18,097
2004–05	18,395

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the current average waiting time is for a vehicle test in Northern Ireland. [25217]

Angela E. Smith: The current average waiting time for a vehicle test in Northern Ireland is currently 27 calendar days.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many households received funding from the Warm Homes Scheme in the last 12 months in each Westminster parliamentary constituency in the Province. [24871]

Mr. Hanson: Under the Warm Homes Scheme, eligible applicants are provided with insulation measures. The Warm Homes Plus scheme provides heating and insulation measures for all eligible pensioners.

The information is as follows:

Constituency	Number of households in receipt of insulation measures[1]	Number of households in receipt of heating measures[1]
Belfast East	304	134
Belfast North	477	235
Belfast South	253	82
Belfast West	508	246
East Antrim	255	139
East Londonderry	331	179
Fermanagh/South Tyrone	476	319
Foyle	627	232
Lagan Valley	356	145
Mid-Ulster	583	325
Newry and Armagh	683	324
North Antrim	379	192
North Down	402	145
South Antrim	392	209
South Down	562	265
Strangford	319	125
Upper Bann	594	265
West Tyrone	509	210

[1] These columns include those households which received both heating and insulation measures.

Water Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was raised in gross revenue in domestic water rates in Northern Ireland in 2004–05; and how much he expects to be raised in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [24690]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 7 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the gross revenue raised from domestic water rates in Northern Ireland in 2004–05, and the estimated gross revenue for 2005–06 and 2006–07. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

There are no domestic water charges in Northern Ireland and therefore no income has been or will be raised from water rates in the 3 year period to March 2007. In September this year, the Government announced that domestic water and sewerage charges would be introduced in Northern Ireland from 1 April 2007.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by her Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24466]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills currently has nine non-geographic 0870 numbers in use as follows:

	Number of lines
Main DfES Switchboard Number	1
Public Communications Unit (PCU)	1
Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA)	1
Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SEN Tribunal)	5
EDUBASE (Provision of schools data to the public)	1

The Department for Education and Skills does not participate in revenue share schemes associated with 0870 telephone numbers and therefore derives no revenue from the use of these numbers.

16 to 18-year-olds

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of young people aged 16 to 18 were *(a)* in full-time education, *(b)* in employment, *(c)* in training and *(d)* not in education, employment or training in each year since 1997, broken down by local authority area. [24096]

Bill Rammell: Tables showing numbers and proportions of 16 and 17-year-olds in *(a)* full-time education and *(c)* work based learning (e.g.

apprenticeships) are available at local authority level for 1997 onwards. These were published in the Statistical First Release "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17 year olds in each local area in England". Figures for 18-year-olds are not available at a local level.

The publication is accessible on the DfES website via the link:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/index.shtml

The specific figures are available through the following link:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/SFR11-2005tables_lea.xls

Information for young people *(b)* in employment and *(d)* not in education, employment or training (NEET) are not available at local authority level.

Ability Grouping

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of lessons is recorded as set by ability in *(a)* Year 7, *(b)* Year 8, *(c)* Year 9, *(d)* Year 10 and *(e)* Year 11 in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted between 1995 and 2004. [24008]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his letter has been placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell to Mr. Nick Gibb, dated 8 November 2005:

Your recent parliamentary question has been referred to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of schools, for reply.

You asked what percentage of lessons is recorded as set by ability in *(a)* Year 7, *(b)* Year 8, *(c)* Year 9, *(d)* Year 10 and *(e)* Year 11 in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted between 1995 and 2004.

The tables (attached) show the percentage of lessons seen by inspectors during the academic years 1996/97 and 2002/03. The data were not recorded by inspectors for 1995/96 and in 2003/04 inspectors were not required to distinguish between setting and banding in the information they recorded about lessons.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

	1996–97		1997–98		1998–99		1999–2000	
Year group	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lessons*	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lessons*	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lessons*	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lessons*
Year 7	27,542	16.4	16,414	20.6	22,361	19.8	17,544	19.9
Year8	27,431	30.8	16,341	32.8	21,792	35.6	16,769	35.2
Year 9	27,161	37.9	16,692	40.6	23,489	41.9	18,810	41.0
Year 10	24,651	39.0	17,047	38.2	24,481	37.9	18,536	38.2
Year 11	38,008	36.0	17,686	38.1	24,543	39.3	18,490	39.6
Total Year 7–11	144,793	32.2	84,180	34.2	116,666	35.1	90,149	35.0

	2000–01		2001–02		2002–03	
Year group	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lesson*	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lesson*	*Total number of lessons*	*Percentage of setted lesson*
Year 7	14,011	24.3	12,532	25.8	11,257	27.9
Year8	13,416	40.3	11,552	37.7	10,255	38.4
Year 9	16,117	46.0	14,388	43.8	13,152	43.3
Year 10	14,802	41.0	13,212	38.3	12,073	37.1
Year 11	15,108	42.6	13,812	40.6	12,982	39.9
Total Year 7–11	73,454	39.1	65,496	37.5	59,719	37.6

Notes:

1. Framework changes occurred in January 2000 and September 2003. Changes in the way groupings in lessons were recorded may mean that data are not directly comparable from periods of one framework to another.
2. From January 2000 to July 2003, the inspection arrangements included full and short inspections. The majority of lessons observed

Academies

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what freedoms are available to academies that will not be automatically available to Trust schools. [24281]

Jacqui Smith: Academies are fully independent of the local authority, and have considerable freedoms around staffing, curriculum and governance. They have the freedom to establish their own pay and conditions system for staff with the exception of those who transfer from the predecessor school under TUPE. They must offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have the freedom to establish this in their own innovative way, with the assistance of the Department. Academy sponsors can appoint the entire governing body, except for three places which are reserved for an LEA representative, and elected parent and staff representatives.

Trust schools are part of the local authority family of schools. Like other maintained schools they must follow the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and the National Curriculum, unless they demonstrate that proposed changes will raise standards and obtain permission to innovate from the Secretary of State. In terms of governance, Trusts will be able to appoint a majority of governors and places will be reserved for representatives of parents, staff, LEA and the community.

Admissions Code

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will publish the responses to the Consultation on the Draft Admissions Code; and if she will make a statement. [25946]

Jacqui Smith: We expect to be able to publish results on the Department's Consultation website by early December—well within the three months of the end of consultation time scale recommended by the Cabinet Office.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues about the advice to be issued to schools in the event of a civil contingency caused by the outbreak of an avian influenza pandemic. [25393]

Phil Hope: This Department has taken part in discussions with ministerial colleagues, which are to continue. In due course, the Government will issue interim advice to local emergency planners, which will include advice on schools.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many call centres were run by her Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23303]

Bill Rammell: The Department operated one call centre (the DfES Publications Line) in 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to date. Call answering statistics for each of these years for this call centre are:

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06[1]*
Calls handled by an adviser	547,477	543,264	245,042
Calls receiving engaged tone	4,492	2,224	2,131
Percentage of total	0.8	0.4	0.87
Calls abandoned	9,250	8,984	3,912
Percentage of total	1.6	1.6	1.6

[1] To date.

The Department currently has no Agencies and did not have any in the years covered by the question.

Child Care

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places were available in each of the past 10 years in Cleethorpes constituency. [26478]

Beverley Hughes: The Department is unable to provide details of available child care places in the past 10 years, additionally we are unable to provide details of places within each constituency. Statistics have only been collected by local authority area since 1999 following the introduction of the National Childcare Strategy for England.

The following table details the stock of child care places in North East Lincolnshire, each year since 1999.

Stock of child care places

March	*Number*
1999	154
2000	73
2001	611
2002	930
2003	1,578
2004	2,199
2005	2,597

Disabled Students' Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff are employed to deal with applications for the disabled students' allowance. [26558]

Bill Rammell: Applications for disabled students' allowances (DSAs) are handled by awards officers in local authorities, which decide individually on appropriate staffing levels. The Open university acts similarly with regard to students on OU courses receiving DSAs. Statistics of local authority and OU staff administering student support applications are not kept centrally.

Education Funding

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many hon. Members *(a)* she, *(b)* the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education and *(c)* the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills have met formally since February to discuss (i) adult education and (ii) funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges. [23620]

Phil Hope: The Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills also invited all hon. Members to attend open meetings in June on funding for further education. 39 hon. Members accepted although no formal record was made of attendance at the meetings.

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has met three hon. Members formally since February to discuss funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges.

The Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education has, since February, formally met: one hon. Member to discuss adult education; one hon. Member to discuss funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges; and four hon. Members to discuss both.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills has, since February, formally met: two hon. Members to discuss funding for 16 to 19-year-olds; and one hon. Member to discuss both adult education and funding for 16 to 19-year-olds.

Extended Schools

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what criteria will be used by local authorities in deciding which schools receive priority for extended school funding; [24228]

(2) how many extended schools she expects will operate in each of the most deprived local authorities, as defined by the Index of Local Deprivation, by 2008; [24229]

(3) what steps she will take to ensure that access to 'charged for services' in extended schools is maximised among families who are *(a)* unwaged and *(b)* in receipt of tax credit. [24230]

Beverley Hughes: It will be for each local authority, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to extended services through schools. As part of that strategy, local

authorities and schools will need to take into account a number of factors such as what services are already available in the local community, levels of deprivation and how the proposed extended services will be delivered. Funding will be released to schools in accordance with that strategy. The aim is to avoid schools 'bidding' for funding but ensure that funding is released against the priorities identified. A key priority will be to fill gaps in services, such as child care. We anticipate that there will be gaps in services in many deprived communities and hence these areas will be prioritised.

The Government's aim is that half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools will be offering access to a core set of extended services by 2008. We anticipate that many of them will be located in areas of high deprivation (in allocating the funding we have factored in deprivation levels into the distribution formula). We are providing £840 million to support the development of extended services.

For some of these services, such as child care, we expect them to become sustainable longer term by charging. Parents on low income may be eligible to apply for the child care element of the working tax credit to support the cost of school based child care. Local authorities are well placed to provide schools and parents with advice on accessing the tax credits available and can work with schools to encourage greater take up of tax credits in deprived communities. We will expect children from unwaged families to access a good range of study support activities free of charge through schools. In addition to the resources that schools already have within their existing budgets for study support programmes, the Government is investing a further £335 million by 2007–08 for secondary schools to develop a more personalised programme of study support. For those schools with the highest number of pupils who have fallen behind in their learning, the Government will provide a further £60 million shared between the primary and secondary sectors in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08. Every school should therefore be well placed to ensure that every child in their school has access, free of charge, to the study support that they need. For other services such as health and social care and adult learning opportunities, local authorities, using children's trust arrangements, will be able to provide resources to support services in deprived areas where that is appropriate.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the potential requirement for additional training of staff for extended schools. [25001]

Beverley Hughes: My department has made available £680 million over the next two years for schools and local authorities to deliver extended services. This is in addition to the £160 million that we have already spent. This funding can be used flexibly by local authorities and schools to overcome any barriers to the development of extended services. We anticipate that some of this funding will be used to ensure that staff working in extended services get the training and support they need in their roles, including on important issues such as health and safety requirements. We have made it clear from the outset that there is no expectation that teachers will deliver these services. Schools will need to work with existing providers from both the private and voluntary sectors and other children's services and make good use of their expertise and skills. It may also be the case that, following consultation, some existing school support staff may be interested in taking up some of these roles. We have also appointed the National Remodelling Team, within the Training and Development Agency, to work with schools to ensure that they have the right skills in place for developing extended services.

Foreign Language Degrees

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have studied a foreign language at degree level in an English university in the last 10 years after living for over five years in the country where the foreign language is the native tongue. [21087]

Bill Rammell: Information is not held centrally on the number of native foreign language speakers taking degrees in their native language at English universities. The Higher Education Statistics Agency collects data annually on the number of overseas students enrolled at English higher education institutions but they do not collect data on the native language of students. The available information from HESA shows the number of foreign domiciled students studying the language of their country of domicile, but it does not necessarily follow that students from a particular overseas country will be a native speaker of that country.

Free Transport

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in *(a)* England, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* Tamworth receive free transport to (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools. [26164]

Jacqui Smith: A joint survey conducted by DfES, the Confederation of Education and Childrens Service Managers, and the Audit Commission, covering local authority school transport policies, expenditure and pupil numbers carried, was published for the first time in January 2004. It reported that about 700,000 pupils received free and assisted home to school to mainstream schools in England, and that just over 7,500 pupils received free or assisted transport to mainstream schools in Staffordshire in 2001/02. No more detailed information is available.

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when *(a)* the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, *(b)* the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills and *(c)* she was informed orally or in writing of the conclusions of the Learning and Skills Development Agency's report entitled "The Funding Gap—Funding in schools and colleges for full-time students aged 16 to 18"; and if she will make available the minutes of discussions on the report. [20651]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Development Agency's report was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council as part of their agenda for change

proposals. My predecessor and the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills were made aware of the conclusion of the work being undertaken by LSDA to assess the size of the gap in early March 2005 and the Secretary of State was informed shortly after. However, there were no detailed discussions of the conclusions of the report until the end of June 2005, shortly before the report was made public. There are no minutes of discussions on this report. The Minister of State for Schools and 14–19 Learning signalled in her statement to the House of Commons on 21 July that we intend to explore the scope for addressing the technical anomalies between the school sixth form and further education funding systems. We aim to announce decisions on the way forward shortly.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her most recent assessment is of the comparative performance of students studying in *(a)* sixth-form colleges, *(b)* further education colleges and *(c)* sixth-forms in schools; and if she will make a statement. [24874]

Bill Rammell: Comparable data for sixth form colleges (SFCs), general further education colleges (GFECs) and sixth-forms in schools are available for people studying for GCE and VCE A/AS-levels and Key Skills at level 3 qualifications.

When data are adjusted for prior attainment (average GCSE grade attained in year 11) there is a small performance advantage for SFCs over schools (about one tenth of a grade in each A-level taken) and for schools over GFECs (about one sixth of a grade in each A-level taken).

Further information can be found in paragraphs 85 to 90 of the DfES document: "Success for All Delivery Plan—Evidence Report".

(http://www.successforall.gov.uk/index.cfm?pg = 160)

GCSEs

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of 15-year-olds achieved five or more grades at *(a)* A* to C and *(b)* A* to G at GCSE, excluding equivalents, in each year since 1995. [23527]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following table:

		GCSE only[1]			
	Number of 15-year-old pupils2 (thousands)	*Number achieving 5 + A*-C (thousands)*	*Percentage achieving 5 + A*-C*	*Number achieving 5 + A*-G (thousands)*	*Percentage achieving 5 + A*-G*
2005[3]	637.2	325.0	51.0	555.2	87.1
2004	643.6	322.8	50.2	564.4	87.7
2003	622.1	310.2	49.9	549.5	88.3
2002	606.6	303.7	50.1	537.8	88.7
2001	603.3	297.4	49.3	535.2	88.7
2000	580.4	282.9	48.7	515.4	88.8
1999	581.0	276.3	47.6	513.3	88.4
1998	575.2	264.9	46.1	502.8	87.4
1997	586.8	264.2	45.0	506.9	86.4
1996	594.0	264.5	44.5	511.5	86.1
1995	578.2	251.4	43.5	495.5	85.7

[1] This includes GCSE full courses only, GCSE Short courses and vocational GCSEs are not included in these figures.
[2] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31st of August).
[3] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.

Grandparents (Child Care Arrangements)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on grandparents who are raising their grandchildren full-time. [19536]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 20 November 2005]:* The Department for Education and Skills has not commissioned research specifically on grandparents who are raising their children full-time. The Department regularly reviews available research evidence on different aspects of parenting, including fostering by relatives, to inform policy development. It recently published a comprehensive review of research on foster care[1] which includes evidence on the role of relatives as foster carers. Nearly half of these relatives are grandparents.

[1] 'Fostering Now: messages from research', Ian Sinclair, 2005. Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers on behalf of DfES.

Homework Clubs

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to homework clubs in schools in *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire in 2005–06. [25811]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available. Homework clubs may form part of a school's or local authority's study support (out of school hours learning) programme, for which funding is available through their base budgets, and the School Development Grant (SDG). Schools and local authorities may use their SDG for any purposes linked to school improvement, and it is for them to determine the amount to be allocated to study support.

Study support forms an integral part of the Government's extended services agenda, which will require schools to offer a varied menu of activities from 8 am to 6 pm year round, including during school holidays. Additional funding of £680 million is being made available up to 2008 to support the start up of extended services in schools.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 961W, on the Learning and Skills Council, what the cost of support per capita was at each level. [25060]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows the funding per learner for the academic year 2003/04, by level of qualification:

Table 1: Funding per learner by level of qualification, 2003/04[1]

Level	*Cost per learner 2003/04 (£)*
Below level 2	540
Full level 2	1,140
Part level 2	520
Full level 3	1,540
Part level 3	740
Level not specified	230

[1] These funding per learner is an annual cost and not whole qualification costs.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role the Learning and Skills Council played in developing the support strategy set up for redundant Rover workers. [25087]

Bill Rammell: The LSC played a central role in developing a support package that reduced the devastating impact on individuals and the West Midlands economy of the closure of MG Rover. Working with a range of partners, including Jobcentre Plus, the LSC put in place a range of measures including:

A manufacturing Job Match Hotline—for all companies who were interested in taking over former MG Rover employees.

A £22 million package of support drawn from European Funds to support training and to help fund skills advisors who have worked with 3,500 workers to develop individual skills needs plans.

Funding skills advisors to work in Business Link offices to help identify company and employee skills needs.

Establishing a network of Further Education Colleges across the West Midlands to co-ordinate an offer for retraining opportunities through colleges and other providers.

Placing more than 2,500 people into tailored retraining programmes and supporting almost 600 people, through re-skilling them, into alternative jobs in manufacturing.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the savings to be made by the Learning and Skills Council as a result of the changes to running costs announced on 16 September in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [25518]

Bill Rammell: The LSC's core administration costs have fallen steadily from 4.6 per cent. of total funding in 2001–02, to 2.5 per cent. of its planned total budget in 2005–06. The LSC's Administration Budget for 2005–06 is almost £255 million. The Administration Budget for future years was set out in the Secretary of State's Grant Letter issued on 31 October 2005. This Grant Letter provides the LSC with just over £252 million (2.4 per cent. of planned total budget) for 2006–07 and just under £240 million (2.2 per cent. of planned total budget) for 2007–08 to cover its administration costs including the cost of capital and depreciation. This reflects efficiency savings already agreed. It is too early to say what further savings will arise. The overall Administration Budget will be reassessed when the results of the consultation on the LSC's "Agenda for Change", particularly its restructuring, are finalised. Further savings could then be released to the sector.

Learning and Skills Development Agency

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what effect she expects *(a)* the splitting of the Learning and Skills Development Agency and *(b)* the establishment of the Learning and Skills Network to have on costs; and if she will make a statement. [25067]

Bill Rammell: Re-structuring the Learning and Skills Development Agency to form the Learning and Skills Network and the Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning will enable us to achieve significant efficiency savings in future years in line with the Department's commitments to the Gershon Review. It is a key part of our streamlining and rationalisation programme to reduce costs and complexity in the sector.

National Skills Academies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many of those graduating from national skills academies since they were established have found work in the sectors for which they were trained; [24987]

(2) how many of those graduating from national skills academies since they were established left with *(a)* Level 2, *(b)* Level 3 and *(c)* Level 4 qualifications; [24988]

(3) how many young people have studied in national skills academies since they were established; [24989]

(4) how many young people have successfully completed courses at national skills academies since they were established; [24990]

(5) how many of those graduating from national skills academies since their inception have gone on to higher education. [24998]

Phil Hope: The Fashion Retail Academy opened in September 2005 with 50 students studying at Level 2 and Level 3. Building on this, we announced on 31 October that a further four sectors would be supported to develop their proposals for national skills academies through more detailed business planning. It is therefore too early to provide any information on students graduating from national skills academies.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the contribution from public funds to the four proposed national skills academies will be; and how much funding will come from industry. [24997]

Phil Hope: Public funds will be available to help meet the four sectors further develop their proposals for national skills academies (including, for example, business planning and research and development costs). If these proposals are accepted, funding may then be available to support the capital and revenue costs of each academy. The amount will be negotiated by the Learning and Skills Council with each sector and will depend on the size and nature of each proposal.

Capital funding will be available to support the up front investment required to establish a national skills academy. This will be drawn from a range of contributors. On average, around 35 per cent. will come from Government via the Learning and Skills Council

(LSC), 50 per cent. from employers sponsoring the academy and the remaining 15 per cent. from a range of other sources and partners.

The day to day revenue income of national skills academies will be earned by delivering skills training and will come from a variety of sources including the LSC and from employers purchasing training services.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role the skills councils of the relevant industries will have in each of the proposed National Skills academies. [25037]

Phil Hope: Expressions of Interest to develop a National Skills Academy must have the formal endorsement of the relevant Sector Skills Council. Each of the four proposals to develop National Skills Academies now moving into detailed business planning are led by a Sector Skills Council. We expect the Sector Skills Councils to continue to work with employers and other key partners to develop business models, governance and other arrangements which meet the needs of their sectors.

Nursery Places

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many nursery places were available through the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative in each participating authority in 2004–05; and what the average cost per place was in each area. [24233]

Beverley Hughes: The Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative aimed to create 45,000 new full-time child care and early education places for children aged 0 to 5 in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged areas in England by March 2004. £100 million of capital funding from the New Opportunities Fund (now the Big Lottery Fund), £28 million of Sure Start capital and £243 million of start-up revenue funding from the Sure Start Unit was made available to 142 of the 150 local authorities to support the development and delivery of these places. The places have been developed through a diverse range of local and national providers and are intended to be responsive to local needs and preferences. By end March 2005, over 49,000 places across over 1,390 neighbourhood nursery projects had been delivered.

Information on the number of nursery places open as part of the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative in each participating local authority in 2004–05 is in the following table.

Information on the average cost per place in each area is not available. One of the conditions set for all providers taking part in the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative was that fees charged should not exceed the level of help available to parents towards the costs of child care through the working tax credit for the period that the nursery received its initial start-up funding from the Government.

Local authority	*Places*
Barking and Dagenham	307
Barnet	68
Barnsley	808
Bath and North East Somerset	130
Bedfordshire	220
Bexley	160
Birmingham	1,435
Blackburn with Darwen	743
Blackpool	276
Bolton	456
Bournemouth	205
Bracknell Forest	56
Bradford	719
Brent	288
Brighton and Hove	205
Bristol	509
Bromley	63
Buckinghamshire	109
Bury	452
Calderdale	278
Cambridgeshire	105
Camden	60
Cheshire	315
Cornwall	539
Coventry	518
Croydon	196
Cumbria	667
Darlington	155
Derby	330
Derbyshire	331
Devon	240
Doncaster	448
Dorset	123
Dudley	380
Durham County	769
Ealing	352
East Riding of Yorkshire	163
East Sussex	260
Enfield	167
Essex	296
Gateshead	458
Gloucestershire	190
Greenwich	312
Hackney	780
Halton	315
Hammersmith and Fulham	311
Hampshire	317
Haringey	270
Hartlepool	291
Havering	100
Herefordshire	211
Hertfordshire	72
Hillingdon	70
Hounslow	220
Isle of Wight	221
Islington	261
Kensington and Chelsea	227
Kent County	607
Kingston upon Hull	377
Kirklees	470
Knowsley	389
Lambeth	524
Lancashire	809
Leeds	730
Leicester City	378
Leicestershire	180
Lewisham	576
Lincolnshire	250
Liverpool	620
Luton	366
Manchester	827
Medway	264
Merton	94
Middlesbrough	370
Milton Keynes	140
Newcastle upon Tyne	567
Newham	580
Norfolk	397
North East Lincolnshire	352

Local authority	Places
North Lincolnshire	340
North Somerset	119
North Tyneside	369
North Yorkshire	267
Northamptonshire	327
Northumberland	579
Nottingham City	520
Nottinghamshire	626
Oldham	477
Oxfordshire	298
Peterborough	252
Plymouth	461
Poole	206
Portsmouth City	245
Reading	234
Redbridge	272
Redcar and Cleveland	336
Rochdale	261
Rotherham	361
Salford	350
Sandwell	430
Sefton	291
Sheffield	724
Shropshire	210
Slough	257
Solihull	265
Somerset	363
South Gloucestershire	60
South Tyneside	427
Southampton	239
Southend	171
Southwark	449
St. Helens	373
Staffordshire	425
Stockport	263
Stockton-on-Tees	320
Stoke-on-Trent	491
Suffolk	461
Sunderland (City of)	764
Surrey	75
Sutton	178
Swindon	110
Tameside	405
Telford and Wrekin	459
Thurrock	275
Torbay	358
Tower Hamlets	329
Trafford	168
Wakefield	596
Walsall	505
Waltham Forest	368
Wandsworth	105
Warrington	200
Warwickshire	260
West Sussex	276
Westminster	240
Wigan	315
Wiltshire	252
Windsor and Maidenhead	84
Wirral	369
Wolverhampton	480
Worcestershire	305
York	125
Total places 2004/05	49,114

Nursery Places

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Braintree constituency attended nursery in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and how many children in Braintree have taken up free nursery places since the policy was introduced. [21803]

Beverley Hughes: All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-year-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

The available information on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Braintree parliamentary constituency area and Essex local authority is shown in the tables. For 2005, information for private and voluntary providers is available for Essex but not currently available for Braintree constituency.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds—Braintree parliamentary constituency. Position in January each year.

	Three-year-olds		*Four-year-olds*	
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[3]	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[4]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*[5]
2004	150	940	970	400
2005	150	n/a	890	n/a

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools1 Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up three and four-year-olds—local authority Essex. Position in January each year

	Three-year-olds			*Four-year-olds*		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total three-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[3]	*Other maintained private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total four-year-olds*
1997	1,600	n/a	1,600	n/a	n/a	[4]14,000
1998	1,900	n/a	1,900	n/a	n/a	[4]15,000
1999	2,000	n/a	2,000	n/a	n/a	[4]15,200
2000	2,000	[5]0	2,000	n/a	n/a	[4]15,100
2001	2,000	[5]220	2,200	n/a	n/a	[4]15,100
2002	2,000	[6]6,700	8,700	10,400	[4]4,700	15,100
2003	2,000	[6]9,500	11,500	10,400	[4]4,600	15,000
2004	2,000	[6]9,700	11,700	10,500	[4]4,500	15,000
2005	1,900	[7]10,000	11,900	9,900	[4]4,500	14,400

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools Census.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools Census.

[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local authority area and other factors. However, my Department does not publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Olympic Games

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the construction industry is anticipating a skills shortage due to the building requirements of the London 2012 Olympics. [24961]

Phil Hope: The construction industry estimates that it will need to grow its Olympic work force to a peak of 7,500 employees by 2010. This will equate to no more than 3 per cent. of construction related employment in greater London (in 2010).

Coordination of construction projects in London and across the UK, together with the development by CITB-ConstructionSkills of a dedicated skills academy for the Olympics site will ensure we have an effective response to the skills needs generated by the London 2012 Olympics.

Overseas Students

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will relax the three year residency requirement for overseas students in respect of publicly funded further education courses equipping people to work in the NHS and social services. [25003]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* My Department have no plans to review the policy regarding the three year residency requirement. We do recognise the needs of the NHS and social services, however, publicly funded education and training cannot be made available for non-EU nationals. All adults seeking to qualify for publicly funded education and training must satisfy the three year residency rule or other criteria specified by the Learning and Skills Council which funds post-16 learning in England. This requirement applies equally to UK citizens who have not been resident in the UK/EEU. This long standing residency requirement reflects the Government's view that it is reasonable to expect a person to have established a relevant connection with the UK before being allowed to benefit from funding provided by UK taxpayers.

Employers, public or private, who bring workers from outside the EU into this country have a clear responsibility to ensure they have the skills required for their jobs.

Personalised Learning

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of *(a)* the staff required and *(b)* the workforce development programme needed to deliver more personalised learning in schools. [23944]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Many schools have tailored the curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of pupils with great success for many years. We now want this to be common practice across all schools, particularly for children at either end of the ability spectrum whose needs can be the most challenging to meet.

It is for schools to determine their strategies and priorities for workforce deployment to deliver personalised learning. Schools are in the best position to identify their pupils' teaching and learning needs; and with the support of the Government's Primary and Secondary National Strategies, to determine how best to invest their resources and to access workforce development programmes to deliver them. Many

schools are employing staff other than teachers to support pupils and teachers as part of a professional school team.

We will support schools by allocating £335 million by 2007–08, specifically earmarked within our Dedicated Schools Grant, to provide the resources secondary schools need to deliver personalised learning in key stage 3. For those schools with the highest numbers of children who have fallen behind we will provide a further targeted £60 million in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08, shared across the primary and secondary sectors, to provide more effective one-to-one and small group tuition.

Through the National Strategies we will provide new resources and best practice guidance so that all schools will have a workforce that is well-equipped to tailor teaching and learning for those pupils who have fallen behind in English and maths. This will include material on the use of ICT and ways to engage and support parents in contributing to their children's learning. We propose to introduce a national training programme so that every school will have an expert leading professional to drive personalisation across the whole school, make best use of the new resources available and personalise learning to the needs of each pupil.

Postgraduate Certificate in Education

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many physically disabled people have gained the Postgraduate Certificate in Education in each year since 1997. [20799]

Bill Rammell: The latest information is shown in the following table.

	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Number of students obtaining PGCEs	15,870	15,590	15,300	16,925	18,530	20,415	23,325
of which, those with:							
Physical disabilities[1]	70	50	45	50	75	70	90
Other disabilities[2]	350	375	345	430	580	695	880
No known disability	14,580	14,580	14,025	15,880	17,465	19,250	21,755
Not known[3]	870	585	885	565	410	400	600

[1] Includes students who recorded their disability as blind, deaf, wheelchair users or with personal care support.
[2] Includes students who recorded their disability as mental health difficulties, dyslexia, an unseen disability, multiple disabilities, or any other disability.
[3] Not all students indicated whether or not they had a disability.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Qualifications

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* 19-year-olds and *(b)* 59 to 64-year-olds are economically inactive and do not have a Level 2 qualification. [25473]

Bill Rammell: From the summer 2005 Labour Force Survey we estimate that *(a)* 7.0 per cent. of 19 to 21-year-olds and *(b)* 11.0 per cent. of 59 to 64-year-olds in England are economically inactive and do not have a Level 2 qualification.

For comparison, 9.8 per cent. of the adult population in England are economically inactive and do not have a Level 2 qualification.

School Admissions

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research she has commissioned on the effect of current school admissions policies on house prices in the vicinity of popular schools. [25595]

Jacqui Smith: The Secretary of State has not commissioned specific research of this type. However, we are aware of research by Professor Steven Machin and Dr. Steve Gibbons in 2001 which shows that more affluent parents, who can afford to move into the catchment area of popular schools, drive up house prices. This makes it harder for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to secure places.

Our White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All—More choice for parents and pupils" outlines our proposals to extend choice and open up access to schools for more parents, underpinned by a fair admissions system.

School Sports

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary state schools in England offer pupils the chance to participate in (i) baseball, (ii) basketball, (iii) volleyball, (iv) handball and (v) softball. [25648]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not collected in the format requested. However, the 2004/05 School Sport Survey of schools in School Sport Partnerships collected data relating to the range of sports which schools provided for their pupils. No schools in the survey reported providing baseball or handball for their pupils in 2004/05. 16 per cent. of schools provided softball for their pupils; 25 per cent. provided volleyball; and 63 per cent. provided basketball. Overall, schools provided an average of 15 different sports for their pupils. The results of the survey were published in September this year and copies have been placed in the House Libraries.

Qualification Statistics

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the working age population in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire hold a qualification (i) at degree level and (ii) above degree level. [25567]

Bill Rammell: This data is not available in precisely the form requested. Table 1 shows the proportion of the working age population with a level 4/level 5 qualification[1], as their highest qualification held: so for those with both first and higher degree qualifications, only the latter is recorded (under "Level 5"). Data comes from the Local Labour Force Survey for 2004–05.

[1] Level 4 qualifications include first degree, NVQ level 4 and sub-degree higher education qualifications such as teaching and nursing certificates, HNC/HNDs, other HE diplomas and other qualifications at level 4. Level 5 qualifications include higher degrees and NVQ level 5.

Table 1: Proportion of the working age population holding a level 4/level 5 qualification, as their highest qualification held.

	Percentage	
	Level 4	*Level 5*
Hemel Hempstead	26.2	[1]6.4
Hertfordshire	25.5	6.9
England	20.6	5.3

[1] This estimate is based on a small sample size and is therefore subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. It should therefore be treated with caution.

Note:
The working age population is defined as males and females aged 16–64 and 16–59 respectively.

Source:
Local Labour Force Survey for 2004/05.

Schools White Paper

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills further to her oral statement of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 170, on the Schools White Paper, if she will set out her proposals for incentives to encourage schools to tailor educational provision to the needs of each child. [23714]

Jacqui Smith: Many schools have tailored the curriculum and teaching methods to meet the needs of pupils with great success for many years. We now want this to be common practice across all schools, particularly for children at either end of the ability spectrum whose needs can be the most challenging to meet.

We will therefore allocate £335 million by 2007–08, specifically earmarked within our Dedicated Schools Grant, to provide the resources secondary schools need to start delivering personalised learning for pupils in Key Stage 3, particularly for those who have fallen behind in literacy and numeracy and for those who are gifted or talented. For those schools with the highest numbers of children who have fallen behind we will provide a further targeted £60 million in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08, shared across the primary and secondary sectors, to provide more effective one-to-one and small group tuition. We will also provide all schools with best practice materials, guidance and access to training on the most effective teaching and learning strategies to personalise learning to the needs of each pupil.

Through School Improvement Partners and the new Ofsted inspection regime we will challenge every school to demonstrate they are planning and delivering effective tailored teaching and learning for every child, including the gift and talented. And the achievement and attainment tables for 2006 will show schools' success in ensuring pupils achieve not only five good GCSEs but also in the fundamentals of English and mathematics.

Scottish Universities

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make representations to the Scottish Executive on its proposals to treat English students in Scottish universities differently in terms of student costs and finance from other students within the European Union. [24257]

Bill Rammell: The Scottish Executive informed us of their proposed fee levels for all UK and EU students studying at Scottish universities from 2006.

However, following devolution they have full responsibility for the fees charged to all students studying at Scottish institutions, and the support arrangements for students domiciled in Scotland and EU students studying there. While we will ensure that students domiciled in England and studying in Scotland have the necessary fee support available to them, we will not be making any representation to the Scottish Executive on this issue.

Social Care Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information the Children, Young People and Families Workforce Development Council has received on the number of *(a)* domiciliary care workers, *(b)* outreach workers, *(c)* residential child workers, *(d)* social care managers and *(e)* staff responsible for recruitment and supervision of social care staff who will be covered by future requirements for registration with the General Social Care Council. [22197]

Maria Eagle: Responsibility for registering categories of social care staff lies with the General Social Care Council (GSCC). Responsibility for collecting numbers of staff is divided between Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) for those working with children and young people and Skills for Care for those working with adults. Data will be collected through the new National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC), launched on 20 October.

At present, the CWDC only has limited data collected from the local authority SSDS001 census of Social Care staff, so figures are likely to be revised as the NMDS-SC data is refreshed and the GSCC sets out its priority order for registration. Current data made available to the CWDC is as follows:

(a) Domiciliary care staff: SSDS001 gives around 2300 in England employed by local authorities. It is not known what proportion of these work with children.

(b) Outreach workers: There is no category for these workers in the SSDS001—the closest are community workers in children's services. These number 1,455 as employed by local authorities.

(c) Residential child workers: The estimated number of these staff is 26,575 across all sectors. This includes managers, social care staff and other supervisory roles.

(d) Social care managers: The number of social care managers in local authority operational children's services field teams is 3,550.

(e) Staff responsible for (i) recruitment and (ii) supervision of social care staff: (i) may be different from (ii) inasmuch as there are HR staff and planning officers at strategic levels. Those managing or supervising social care staff in non-residential settings number around 6,000 to 7,000. It is not known how many have direct supervisor roles, but many will.

Sports Hubs

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list schools designated as sports hubs in each London local authority. [24227]

Jacqui Smith: The list of School Sport Partnership hub sites in each London local education authority is as follows:

LEA	*Hub.school*
Barking and Dagenham	Barking Abbey Comprehensive School and Sports College
Barnet	Whitefield School
Barnet	East Barnet School
Barnet	Queen Elizabeth's Girls School
Bexley	Bexley LEA
Bexley	Hurstmere Foundation School for Boys
Brent	Capital City Academy
Brent	Kingsbury High School
Bromley	Kelsey Park School
Bromley	Priory School
Camden	Haverstock School
Croydon	Archbishop Lanfranc School
Croydon	Selhurst High School for Boys
Croydon	Woodcote High School
Ealing	Featherstone High School
Ealing	West London Academy
Enfield	Enfield LEA
Enfield	Lea Valley High School
Greenwich	Eltham Green Specialist Sports College
Hackney	Hackney Free and Parochial CofE School and Sports College
Hammersmith and Fulham	Hammersmith and Fulham LEA
Haringey	St. Thomas More RC School
Haringey	White Hart Lane Secondary School
Harrow	Harrow LEA
Havering	Coopers Company and Coborn School
Havering	Emerson Park School
Hillingdon	John Penrose School
Hounslow	Isleworth and Syon School for Boys
Islington	Islington LEA
Kensington and Chelsea	Kensington and Chelsea LEA
Kingston Upon Thames	Chessington Sports College
Lambeth	London Nautical School
Lewisham	Haberdashers Askes Knights Academy
Lewisham	Lewisham LEA
Merton	Tamworth Manor High School
Newham	Cumberland School
Newham	Langdon School
Redbridge	Caterham High School
Redbridge	Mayfield School and College
Richmond Upon Thames	Whitton School and Sports College
Southwark	Bacons College
Southwark	Waverley School
Tower Hamlets	Langdon Park Community School
Tower Hamlets	Tower Hamlets LEA
Waltham Forest	Leytonstone School
Waltham Forest	Norlington School for Boys
Waltham Forest	Rush Croft School
Wandsworth	Southfields Community College
Westminster	City of Westminster LEA

Sure Start

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that deprived areas of Shrewsbury have access to the Sure Start programme. [24305]

Beverley Hughes: Shrewsbury and Atcham Sure Start Local Programme has been operating in Shrewsbury since March 2003, delivering Sure Start services to children under four and their families. The designation of Shrewsbury Children's Centre in December 2004 brought integrated services to 1,156 children under 5 and their families living in the wards of Harlescott, Sundorne, Battlefield and Heathgates, Castlefields and Quarry, Monkmoor and Underdale.

For Phase 2 of the children's centre programme (2006–08) Shropshire local authority has been asked to create a further 10 children's centres and reach an additional 8,549 children. The authority has been allocated £3,339,900 in funding for this period.

Trust Schools

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what powers she proposes to give Trust schools which are not available to Foundation schools. [26300]

Jacqui Smith: The detailed arrangements for Trust schools will be set out in the Education Bill expected in the new year. Trust schools will benefit from all the freedoms available to Foundation schools. In addition the opportunity to form partnerships with external organisations will strengthen Trust schools' governing bodies, and help to invigorate school leadership by providing an external source of direction, continuity and focus for the school.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what audit arrangements she intends to put in place for the trust schools proposed in the White Paper. [26305]

Jacqui Smith: The audit arrangements for Trust schools will be the same as for all maintained schools. They will comply with the audit arrangements as set out by the local authority. All Trusts will by law be charities and will be subject to regulation by the Charities Commission.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to ensure that school trusts *(a)* build upon best practice and *(b)* tackle underachievement. [26085]

Jacqui Smith: School Trusts will build on the long tradition of voluntary schools which are backed by Trusts and on the experience of Academies of working with a private or voluntary sector sponsor.

The opportunity to form partnerships with external organisations will strengthen Trust schools' governing bodies, and help to invigorate school leadership by providing an external source of direction, continuity and focus for the school. Trust governors will help their schools to develop a distinctive ethos and approach to the curriculum and the organisation of the school, with a central focus on raising standards and creating new opportunities for children.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 9 November 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Labour Standards

7. **Dr. Iddon:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the steps his Department is taking to improve the treatment of workers in developing countries. [25991]

Hilary Benn: Implementation of proper labour standards can play an important part in reducing poverty. DFID is supporting a range of activities to improve the treatment of workers in developing countries, including the elimination of child labour and trafficking for forced labour. Our support is primarily given through the International Labour Organisation. But we also support the work of non-governmental organisations, trade unions and business, for example through the Ethical Trading Initiative.

Kashmir Earthquake

8. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the UK's relief effort following the Kashmir earthquake. [25992]

Hilary Benn: To date, we have allocated £33 million for the immediate relief effort. We are prepared to do more to help ensure the survival of the affected population through the forthcoming winter months. Our immediate assistance has included search and rescue, provision of priority relief materials, funding of air transport including helicopters and support to the United Nations, Red Cross and non-governmental organisations. In addition the European Commission has pledged €93.6 million for relief and reconstruction. The UK's share of this is £11 million.

I will continue to update the House of the details on what we are doing through our regular Situation Reports. These are also available to the public on the DFID website at: www.dfid.gov.uk.

13. **Joan Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the urgent unmet humanitarian need in Kashmir following the earthquake. [25998]

Hilary Benn: The situation remains critical. More and continuing assistance is needed. The United Nations has developed a priority plan targeting assistance to an estimated 200,000 individuals in the high valleys, as well as 150,000 people expected to settle in both spontaneous and planned camps. The focus of the plan is an emergency shelter programme, medical evacuations, pre-positioning of food assistance for 700,000 and the maintenance of mobile health units and vaccination services. Additionally, site planning and construction of 30 camps, repair of vital damaged water supply systems and installation of latrines, establishment of temporary schools, and provision of heating and cooking supplies for 150,000 in camps.

World Trade Organisation

9. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the interests of developing nations are taken into account in the current World Trade Organisation negotiations. [25993]

Mr. Thomas: Working with DTI and other Government Departments, and in line with the aims and objectives set out in the 2004 Trade and Investment White Paper, we are actively pursuing an outcome to the WTO talks which delivers real development gains. DFID works with the poorest group of developing countries to ensure their views are represented in the WTO by providing technical assistance and policy research, and through direct engagement with Least Developed Countries.

12. **Lynne Featherstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking during its presidency of the EU to encourage other EU countries to support a fair deal on trade for developing countries at the World Trade Organisation talks. [25996]

Hilary Benn: The Government have had regular contact with EU member states about securing a good development outcome to the current WTO round of trade negotiations. Most recently I held discussions with European Development Ministers at the Informal Council of Development Ministers on 24 October in Leeds, also attended by the European Commissioner for Trade. Specifically we discussed the concept of Aid for Trade, which would help developing countries adjust to new trading conditions as well as support their supply side needs so that they are better able to benefit from the increased opportunities which trade liberalisation could bring.

14. **Mark Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to promote the needs and interests of developing countries at the current round of World Trade Organisation negotiations. [25999]

Mr. Thomas: Working with the DTI and other Government Departments, and in line with the aims and objectives set out in the 2004 Trade and Investment White Paper, we are actively pursuing an outcome to the WTO talks which delivers real development gains. DFID works with the poorest group of developing countries to ensure their views are represented in the WTO by providing technical assistance and policy research and through direct engagement with least developed countries.

China

10. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions the Government plans to have with the Chinese President during his visit to the United Kingdom to encourage humanitarian reform in China. [25994]

Mr. Thomas: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be discussing a range of issues with President Hu. China's response system to humanitarian emergencies is developing fast and we welcome China's readiness to offer its expertise in responding to international humanitarian disasters such as the tsunami and earthquake in Pakistan.

Medical Staff (UK Recruitment)

11. **Anne Moffat:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact on health services in developing countries of recruitment to the UK of medical and nursing staff from the developing world. [25995]

Hilary Benn: The Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals prevents the NHS from actively recruiting health workers from developing countries.

International migration is one course contributing to the shortage of health workers in developing countries. Other causes include chronic under-investment and the affects of HIV and AIDS.

Tackling health worker shortages must include increased investment and strengthening of health services and its human resources. That is why, in addition to implementing ethical recruitment practices which help to address factors pulling health workers out of their communities, the UK is supporting developing country governments to build stronger health services which effectively recruit, train, deploy and retain health workers in the public sector.

Civil Service

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many full-time equivalent employee reductions *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06 as a result of the Gershon review in his Department; what (i) cost savings relating to IT projects and (ii) total efficiency savings (A) were achieved in 2004–05 and (B) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06 as a result of that review; and if he will make a statement. [25914]

Mr. Thomas: As a result of the Gershon review, DFID agreed to reduce the home civil service headcount to 1610 by the end of 2007–08. The programme was due to start in April 2005, at the start of which the DFID headcount was 1883. Plans are in place to reduce this to 1820 by the end of 2005–06 and 1715 by the end of 2006–07. Progress so far this year will be reported in DFID's autumn performance report 2005.

It is not possible to give an exact figure for efficiency savings from IT projects, however, forecast administration costs savings of £2 million by 2007–08 include savings from IT projects. Administration costs savings will begin in 2006–07.

Savings so far from DFID's efficiency programme will be reported in DFID's autumn performance report 2005. DFID has an efficiency target of £420 million by the end of 2007–08. The 2004 spending review did not set intermediate targets.

External Consultants

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department paid to external consultants in each year since 1997. [25478]

Hilary Benn: DFID's expenditure on consultancy services was as follows:

	£ million
1997–98	204
1998–99	199
1999–2000	192
2000–01	194
2001–02	210
2002–03	222
2003–04	215
2004–05	219

Source:
Statistics on International Development—3 November 2005

Famine (Overseas Aid)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid the Government has allocated to *(a)* Niger and *(b)* other countries in the region in relation to the current famine. [25865]

Hilary Benn: In response to the current food crisis in the Sahel, DFID has allocated £3.25 million to Niger, £550,000 to Mali and £110,00 to Burkina Faso.

Iraq

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the international aid for Iraqi reconstruction. [25339]

Hilary Benn: The international community is providing support to the Iraqi Government to help rebuild Iraq and improve the quality of life for its people. At the Madrid Conference in October 2003, 37 bilateral donors, the European Community, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) pledged a total of US$32 billion for Iraq's reconstruction. Since 2003, the amount pledged for Iraq's reconstruction has risen to over $40 billion. As of October 2005, over US$14 billion of these pledges has been spent.

The UK pledged £544 million for humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq, of which more than £350 million has been spent to date. DFID's programme of assistance this year, focuses on macro-economic reform, strengthening Iraqi institutions at the centre of government and in the south, improving power and water supplies in the south, strengthening Iraqi civil society and encouraging broad participation in the political process. Reconstruction activities in Iraq are also funded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and the Global Conflict Prevention Pool for Iraq (jointly funded by MOD, FCO, and DFID).

The following table provides details on the other major international aid programmes in Iraq.

	Major international aid programmes
United States	The US has approved more than $28 billion for Iraq's reconstruction. This is being spent on programmes in a wide range of sectors including power, water and sanitation, oil production, transport, health, education, civil society and the training and equipping of Iraqi security forces.
Japan	Japan has fully committed US$1.5 billion of grant assistance to Iraq and is currently in discussion with the Iraqi Government on the use of its US$3.5 billion concessional loan programme which will focus on medium-term infrastructure projects.
World Bank	The World Bank has pledged a minimum of US$3 billion in lending to Iraq. An interim Strategy Note on World Bank assistance to Iraq was recently approved, and outlines the bank's support over the next two years, including the implementation of a US$500 million International Development Assistance concessional loan programme. The World Bank is also implementing projects under the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (see below).
IMF	The IMF has pledged to provide over US$2.5 billion in lending to Iraq. In September 2004, the IMF Board approved US$436 million of Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance (EPCA). The main goals under the EPCA are to maintain economic stability, lay the groundwork for future economic reform, and begin the process of restoring Iraq's fiscal and external debt sustainability.
International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI)—United Nations and World Bank Trust Funds	Bilateral donors have channelled over US$1 billion into the IRFFI, which is managed jointly by the UN and World Bank. Funded through IRFFI, the UN and World Bank have delivered £69 million school textbooks, rehabilitated schools, provided vaccines, conducted extensive training programmes, provided humanitarian relief, and supported the elections. DFID contributed £70 million to the IRFFI in 2004.
European Commission	The EC has allocated over €500 million for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, and is currently focusing on improving basic education, health services, and employment opportunities. The EC has also contributed funds and expertise to the constitutional process and the elections.
Australia	Australia has allocated over US$90 million for reconstruction assistance focussing on support to the agriculture sector, trade reform, electricity and police training.
Canada	Canada has allocated over US$222 million for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, mainly channelled through multilateral programmes.
Denmark	Denmark has allocated over US$85 million focusing on human rights, rule of law and police, infrastructure, agriculture and humanitarian assistance.

The Iraqi Government are leading on the reconstruction and development of Iraq and have presented a National Development Strategy outlining its reconstruction priorities. The Iraqi Government co-ordinates their own and international reconstruction funding by means of Sector Working groups that meet regularly in Baghdad, chaired by Iraqi Ministries with support from the United Nations, the World Bank and a range of donors. Iraq has huge potential, and increasingly, oil sales, tax revenues and foreign investment will be able to finance reconstruction costs, so that Iraq will rely less on external donors.

In spite of the obvious challenges, reconstruction is continuing and progress has been made. For example, there has been continued economic growth, power generation is higher than before the conflict, more Iraqis now have access to drinking water and sewerage systems, thousands of healthcare and education facilities have been rehabilitated, transport and telecommunications systems are improving and civil society groups and the media are flourishing and finding ways of engaging in the political process.

Leprosy

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's actions to help eradicate leprosy in developing countries. [25997]

Mr. Thomas: Much of the remaining global leprosy burden is found in India where DFID provides specific targeted project support through the Leprosy Mission. DFID funds community based efforts to improve access to care, reduce stigma and rehabilitate those affected. Similar projects with other non-government organisations have recently ended in Brazil and Nepal. DFID provides substantial support to developing countries to implement their national health plans. Such plans address the major causes of illness, death and disability, including leprosy where it remains a problem.

Maldives Islands

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much development aid the Maldives islands has received in each year since 1997. [25829]

Mr. Thomas: The following table sets out how much development aid the Maldives have received each year since 1997, and how much aid they have received from the UK:

Total donor aid and UK aid to Maldives: 1997–2004

£ millions

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total all donors	15.82	15.09	18.96	12.73	17.32	18.30	12.58	[1]—
Total UK	0.25	0.27	0.31	0.32	0.24	0.26	0.21	0.2

[1] not available

The UK also provides aid through multilateral institutions, some of which will benefit the Maldives. The following table sets out the UK's equivalent contribution to the Maldives as a share of our multilateral assistance.

£ thousands

UK multilateral shares	*EC*	*Other*	*UN*	*World Bank*	*Grand total*
1998	0.0	10.0	130.0	230.0	370.0
1999	30.0	0.00	140.0	0.0	170.0
2000	30.0	40.0	190.0	140.0	400.0

£ thousands

UK multilateral shares	EC	Other	UN	World Bank	Grand total
2001	10.0	120.0	200.0	-30.0	300.0
2002	0.0	200.0	150.0	0.00	350.0
2003	0.0	230.0	150.0	340.0	720.0

Source:
DAC on-line and imputed multilateral shares—4 November 2005

Millennium Development Goals

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he expects the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people without access to clean water to be reached by 2015; and how his Department is contributing towards this goal. [25990]

Hilary Benn: While the global target to halve the proportion of people without access to safe water by 2015 should be achieved, sub-Saharan Africa is not expected to meet it. The linked target for sanitation is likely to be missed.

DFID is working with governments and development agencies including the UN to increase access to water and sanitation. This year I announced a doubling of UK aid for water to Africa by 2007–08.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking towards education of the African population on the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, with particular reference to HIV. [25868]

Hilary Benn: Across Africa, DFID supports awareness raising and education about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV through our bilateral country programmes, funding to multilateral agencies and global initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

In this way, DFID supports awareness raising and education as an integral part of broader programmes to tackle STI and HIV prevention, which include other activities such as provision of sexual and reproductive health services and commodities (such as male and female condoms). We are also targeting groups such as vulnerable women and young people with appropriate forms of information in addition to sexual and reproductive health services and commodities and we help to reduce the financial and social barriers which can limit access to these services such as tackling stigma and discrimination.

For example, as a part of the Ugandan national HIV programme, DFID funds are used to raise awareness about STIs and HIV through AIDS information centres, youth clubs and schools, radio and newspapers.

DFID has committed to spending £1.5 billion on HIV and AIDS globally over the next three years. Raising awareness of STIs and HIV will remain an important part of the comprehensive approach we support.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking in international fora to ensure greater protection of refugees in Darfur. [23985]

Hilary Benn: The primary responsibility for the protection of vulnerable people lies with their Government. This was endorsed at the 2005 Millennium Review Summit, to which the Government of Sudan was party. The UK Government continues to press the Government of Sudan on its responsibilities in Darfur, and we press all parties to abide by their commitments they have made. We have done this both directly to the Government of Sudan, and in our role as EU presidency. The UK also played a leading role in securing six recent UN Security Council Resolutions on Sudan, including resolutions 1591 and 1593, which extended the Darfur arms embargo to cover the Government of Sudan, allowed targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for the worst abuses, and referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court.

The African Union (AU) mission in Darfur is also playing an important role in protecting the people of Darfur. Despite the recent worrying upsurge in violence in Darfur, including the attack on the Aro Sharow camp on 28 September, attacks on civilians have decreased where the AU is deployed. DFID welcomes the ongoing expansion of the force to more than 7,700. The UK has provided £32 million to support the AU mission since its inception. The EU has provided €92 million (£63 million) so far, and has recently committed a further €70 million (£48 million).

The humanitarian community also supports the protection of civilians. This year the UK channelled £45 million through the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in Khartoum for humanitarian operations across Sudan, £2.4 million of this was allocated for UN and non-governmental protection work in Darfur, such as advocacy on child protection, victim counselling, work on sexual and gender-based violence, and the monitoring of agreements preventing force returns.

TB

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what UK Government expenditure on TB control in developing countries *(a)* was between 2001 and 2004 and *(b)* is proposed in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006; how much of this total is accounted for by (A) multilateral and (B) bilateral aid; and how much of the bilateral aid is accounted for by (1) project support, (2) health-sector support and (3) direct budget support. [25898]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the member for Enfield, Southgate to the response given to my hon. Friend for Cardiff North on 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 632–33w.

Water and Sanitation (Funding)

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when, on present trends, he expects the Sanitation Millennium Development target to be met in sub-Saharan Africa. [25910]

Hilary Benn: The most recent survey data (2002) from the United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF)/World Health Organisation (WHO) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), shows that 440 million people (64 per cent.) in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to basic sanitation. The JMP analysis suggests that, based on progress between 1990 and 2002, it would take 90 years to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa.

In recognition of this bleak situation, DFID is giving a particular focus to sanitation and supporting a number of bodies working to achieve the target, including the African Ministers' Council on Water, UNICEF and WaterAid. DFID has also recently committed to doubling its expenditure on water and sanitation in Africa over the next three years

Zimbabwe

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the UK Government have given to humanitarian projects in Zimbabwe since September 2001; and what types of project have been supported. [24973]

Hilary Benn: DFID has spent approximately £120 million in Zimbabwe since September 2001. Almost all of this relates to humanitarian assistance, tackling HIV/AIDS and emergency support to the health sector.

Approximately £65 million has been spent in response to the crisis of food insecurity, resulting from a combination of poor Government policies, adverse weather and the HIV/AIDS crisis. DFID has recently pledged a further £10 million to the UN World Food Programme's operations in Zimbabwe. DFID has been one of the major donors supporting the annual humanitarian appeals made through the United Nations. We also provide substantial resources through direct funding of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Activities which DFID has supported include monthly food distributions to food insecure families, food for families affected by AIDS through home based care programmes, school feeding programmes and supplementary clinic feeding for underweight children.

To date, some £25 million has been spent on health programmes, predominantly for HIV prevention and care. Other health-related support includes basic vaccinations for children, emergency obstetrics care for women, provision of water treatment chemicals, emergency response to cholera outbreaks, provision of commodities to the National Blood Transfusion Service and provision of insecticide-treated bed nets for the prevention of malaria.

Some £20 million has been allocated to agricultural support to small-scale farmers in communal areas, aimed at increasing productivity and food security at the household level. Other smaller humanitarian programmes include support for displaced people, including those made homeless and destitute by the Government of Zimbabwe's recent slum clearances, and those in danger of HIV/AIDS, exploitation and abuse through irregular migration.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abattoirs

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to prevent local abattoirs from closing; and if she will make a statement. [23921]

Jim Knight: The overall number of abattoirs has declined dramatically in Britain in the last few decades, reflecting an increase in slaughtering capacity in fewer and larger abattoirs. Much of this has been due to logistic requirements of the major supermarket chains. Regulatory impacts of measures to improve food safety have also played a part. Some businesses, particularly in older premises, may be faced with investment costs if they are to continue to comply with EU-wide standards for hygienic production.

The Government are nevertheless keen that an appropriate network of abattoirs and cutting plants continue to support sustainable livestock production in Britain. To this end we are encouraging our Regional partners (Government Offices, Regional Development Agencies, Rural Development Service) to develop Regional Red Meat Strategies which recognise the importance of an appropriate red meat infrastructure (abattoirs, cutting plants and marketing).

Agricultural/Horticultural Machinery Imports

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with HM Revenue and Customs regarding the compliance with CE markings of imported agricultural and horticultural machinery. [23801]

Alan Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

Most agricultural and horticultural machinery, whether imported or not, is regulated under the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992 as amended (SI 1992 No. 3073). My officials periodically discuss regulatory issues with HM Revenue and Customs. However the lead enforcement authority for these regulations is the Health and Safety Executive, HM Revenue and Customs has no powers under this legislation.

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will propose to ministerial colleagues that poultry auctioneers who are closed down as a result of Government measures to

prevent an outbreak of avian influenza be exempt from council tax and rates on their auction sites for the period of their closure. [25034]

Mr. Bradshaw: Government policy is not to compensate for consequential losses resulting from a disease outbreak.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government plans to introduce a standstill policy for poultry movements in the event of an avian influenza outbreak. [25053]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the event of a disease outbreak, current legislation restricts movements within the infected area.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what advice she has given to the poultry production and retail sectors on the possible effect of avian influenza on their business; and if she will make a statement; [27107]

(2) what representations she has received from the chicken and turkey retail sector on the influence of avian influenza on the market; and if she will make a statement; [27108]

(3) what discussions she has had with the chicken and turkey production industry on avian influenza. [27109]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is actively engaging with key stakeholders, including representatives of the production and retail sectors, in order to provide advice and discuss their concerns regarding both the possible effect of avian influenza on their industries and Government policies and plans. This is to keep the industry aware of the risks and potential actions required by a potential outbreak of avian influenza.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the primary mechanisms are for the spread of H5N1 avian influenza virus. [23906]

Mr. Bradshaw: The primary mechanisms for the spread of avian influenza are by movement of infected birds or by contact with their excreta either directly or through objects, clothes or vehicles contaminated with excreta.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how long the H5N1 virus retains its infectivity in the ambient atmosphere. [23907]

Mr. Bradshaw: The survival of avian influenza viruses in the environment will be influenced by the strain of the virus, whether they are held in water or faeces, the host from which the faeces came, the physical properties of the faeces and the ambient temperature. The scientific literature gives a range, with different strains of virus from 12 to 36 hours at 37° C for chicken faeces artificially infected with Low Pathogenic H7N2 to at least 105 days in wet faeces under field conditions with High Pathogenic H5N2.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research the Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on (i) whether mechanically extracted exhaust air from intensive poultry sheds can carry viable H5N1 virus and (ii) over what distance viable virus transmission may occur. [23908]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department have not commissioned any research on this topic as the evidence is that this potential means of transmission can only occur over short distances and is unlikely to be significant in transmission between flocks under conditions prevailing in Great Britain.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risks that random mutation of an existing H5N1 strain may give rise to a new pandemic virus. [23912]

Mr. Bradshaw: To date the H5N1 avian influenza assessment made by the World Health Organisation has assisted policy formation. A cross-departmental group will be commissioned to assess this risk as part of its remit.

Biomass Industry

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what courses have received Government funding to train engineers and builders in understanding, selling and installing combined heat and power boilers in each of the last three years. [22082]

Margaret Beckett: We have provided training on community heating with CHP, delivering four workshops in 2002–03 and two in 2003–04. These covered skill shortages and CHP installation. Over the past three years we also provided general training to bidders to our Community Energy programme.

We are additionally funding training for heating installers to help them sell and install high efficiency condensing boilers. During the financial year 2004–05 22,000 installers were trained. So far this financial year a further 9,000 have been trained.

Bird Trade

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many smuggled birds were seized by HM Customs and Excise entering the UK *(a)* in 2004 and *(b)* to date in 2005; and what checks were made for avian influenza among these birds; [23814]

(2) what information she has received on the number of smuggled birds seized entering the European Union *(a)* in 2004 and *(b)* to date in 2005; and whether checks were made for avian influenza among these birds. [23815]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is little hard evidence on the volume of illegal trade as by its nature only an uncertain proportion is detected. We do not have EU figures for seizures of illegally imported birds.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) seize imported live birds where import is in contravention of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES). In 2004 HMRC seized 2,922 live birds. The provisional figure so far for

2005 is 313 birds. These figures include birds that are seized as a result of regulatory breaches as well as those which are smuggled.

Rare species of birds which are seized by HMRC are normally donated to zoos or other conservation groups. These birds are quarantined and tested for disease including the avian influenza virus.

Any other live birds found would be detained by HMRC and handed over to the relevant competent authorities (the state veterinary service/local authority) at points of entry. They too would be quarantined and tested.

I can assure you that in the current heightened disease situation, all enforcement bodies are being more vigilant for signs of illegal trade or movement of birds.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many chickens have been imported from Thailand in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [24194]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* There have been no imports of live chickens into the UK from Thailand in the last three years as recorded by the overseas trade statistics.

The importation of fresh poultry meat produced on or after 1 January 2004 and cooked poultry meat which has not been heat treated to at least 70°C was banned in January 2004. Poultry meat products which have been cooked to 70°C or more are not considered to be a risk. Chicken meat imported from Thailand in the last three years is shown in the following table.

UK Imports of chicken and chicken offal from Thailand for 2002–04

Description	2002		2003		2004	
	t'000	*£ million*	*t'000*	*£ million*	*t'000*	*£ million*
Chicken, prepared or preserved	26.23	59.88	33.79	68.72	41.76	76.67
Chicken, fresh, chilled or frozen	7.12	11.14	11.29	15.59	2.56	3.35
Grand total	33.35	71.02	45.07	84.31	44.32	80.02

Source:
H M Revenue and Customs.
Data prepared by trade statistics food chain analysis 3, DEFRA

Colchester Oyster

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made in having Protected Geographical Indication status granted to the Colchester Oyster. [26130]

Mr. Bradshaw: The completed application to register Colchester Oysters as a Protected Geographical Indication was finalised earlier this year and sent to interested parties within the UK to allow them to comment or object. This is a necessary stage of the application process to ensure that all views are considered before a decision is taken by Defra on whether the application is justified and meets the requirements of the relevant regulation. Objections were received and sent to the applicant group in July for it to consider. Their reply was received in October and is being considered by officials.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to her Department's policies since 1997. [22283]

Jim Knight: Since its establishment in 2001 Defra has put in place a comprehensive programme of action on issues including sustainable development, climate change and energy, sustainable consumption and production, natural resource protection, sustainable rural communities, and a sustainable farming and food sector. A summary of some our achievements to date can be found on the Defra website (www.defra.gov.uk) I am confident that the Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency will have benefited from these.

For example, we are committed, through our national strategy for waste, to achieving a massive shift in sustainable waste management, including tough national targets to recycle or compost 25 per cent. of household waste in 2005–06. To help contribute towards this target, each local authority in England was set a statutory recycling target for household waste in 2003–04 and 2005–06. In 2002–03, the recycling rate for Gateshead and Sunderland was just 5 per cent. and 2 per cent. respectively. They are now both expected to reach or exceed their statutory targets set for them of 18 per cent. by the end of 2005–06. In total over the past three years, Defra has given Gateshead over £2.5 million and Sunderland over £2 million for waste management and recycling. Many north-east councils have recently made significant progress on recycling from historically low levels, through the support of Defra's Waste Implementation Programme and Waste and Resources Action Programme. Defra's Municipal Waste Management Survey 2003–04 records that the north-east region quadrupled the amount of household waste recycled from 3.8 per cent. in 1996–97 to 12.3 per cent. in 2003–04.

Through English Nature, we have provided £76,000 to Gateshead council for a 'Wildspace' project, including a community liaison officer, which has resulted in five new local nature reserves (LNRs) being designated in the east of the borough, and the project has involved local people in caring for and enjoying the sites. Regular litter removal and maintenance of entrances and paths has ensured they appear well managed and welcoming. Along with management plans for the sites, this is maximising biodiversity, and there is a strategy to secure long term gains for local people. Due to the success of the project, Gateshead council have continued to employ the officer to carry on the good work.

We also provide grants through our agencies to voluntary groups such as the Friends of Princess Anne Park in Washington and have provided funding for a wildlife survey to identify potential for enhancing wildlife and creating habitats. This has drawn in additional funding from Sunderland city council for a park ranger. The park runs along the Oxclose and Biddick Burns, and Environment Agency field teams are carrying out targeted pollution prevention work with relevant local businesses, advising them on managing environmental risk, so improving water quality and associated habitats to prevent pollution through run off.

In my hon. Friend's constituency, forestry grants to the Woodland Trust, the local councils and a private company have created around 10 hectares of new woodland, including screening for Springwell Quarry. Altogether over £16,000 has come through the Forestry Commission for woodland maintenance and improved public access.

We have invested £10,000 in Durham Wildlife Trust, whose area includes Gateshead and Washington. The trust use this Environment Agency money to employ a community wildlife officer to work directly with communities in Washington, encouraging residents to prevent pollution in household drains and to recycle more, and speaking to schools and community groups around pollution hot spots. The aim is to reduce or prevent fly tipping and other contamination in watercourses, and enable other habitat improvements.

Defra provides comprehensive statistical information. The following web address will take my hon. Friend directly to the service: http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/default.asp.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23472]

Jim Knight: The Department spent no money on items of art in 2004–05.

Environment Agency

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the Environment Agency telephone helpline is unable to process calls without the name and address of callers. [24840]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency operates three main contact lines. All of these are able to process calls without the name and address of the caller except in the situations set out as follows:

1. Customer Contact Centre (08708 506506)

This centre receives most of the general telephone enquiries from external customers and delivers some specific business services.

(a) General enquiry calls—The agency normally asks the customer for their name only so that it can personalise the call as a matter of courtesy and so that if it cannot resolve the customer's enquiry, the call can be transferred effectively to another member of staff.

There are some situations where the agency asks for an address:

where it is going to send a publication or application form to the customer;

where it needs to ensure it transfers the customer to the correct area team—the agency normally just ask for postcode so that they can locate the correct area;

where the customer actually needs to talk to their local authority rather than to the agency, it normally asks for the postcode so that it can provide the correct local authority contact details.

(b) Flood risk/property search enquiries—To be able to respond to these enquiries correctly, the call centre needs full address details—a postcode is not specific enough.

(c) Hazardous waste producer registrations

The Agency needs full address details to be to deliver this business service.

2. Floodline

This service provides flood warning information and flood risk awareness services.

Full address information is required in order to inform customers about flood risk related to their property, but not for general advice on flood awareness/protection.

3. Incident hotline

This service is used for recording pollution/flooding incidents. Although the name and address of the customer is requested so that the agency can update how the incident is being managed and resolved, it is however entirely acceptable for customers to report incidents anonymously.

Farm Plastic Collections

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what farm plastic collections are made in *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [26379]

Mr. Bradshaw: At present I am aware of at least one specialist farm plastics collection service that can arrange collection from anywhere in the UK, and I know that there are other collection schemes being established.

The Environment Agency is currently completing an on-line Waste Recycling Directory that will allow businesses to identify recyclers, disposal sites and waste management companies that deal with specific wastes in their areas using a simple postcode search. The website www.wasterecycling.org.uk will be available late November 2005.

Farming Co-operatives

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to encourage the creation of farming co-operatives; and if she will make a statement. [23923]

Jim Knight: Support and encouragement for collaboration and co-operation among farmers is one of the elements of the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food. As part of the Strategy we actively supported the establishment of English Farming and Food Partnerships (EFFP) which was set up to promote and encourage co-operation and collaboration between farmers and between farmers and the rest of the food chain. We have also undertaken to provide EFFP with funding of £0.5 million per annum for five years from 2004–05.

In addition, co-operation and collaboration benefiting primary producers is one of the Government's stated priorities for the award of grants under the Agricultural Development Scheme. EFFP is one of the beneficiaries of this scheme having been awarded five grants totalling approximately £1.2 million for projects to support its mission. A number of other projects concerned with collaborative activity have also been awarded grant.

Grants for collaborative projects are also available under the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme and the Rural Enterprise Scheme.

In 2004 Defra commissioned and funded research into possible legislative and fiscal barriers to the development of co-operatives. The report of this research was published earlier this year.

Fly-tipping

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents of fly-tipping have been recorded in each of the last five years. [25297]

Mr. Bradshaw: No national data were previously available before Flycapture, the national database for fly-tipping incidents, was launched in April 2004.

Initial data from the first year's Flycapture reports have indicated that local authorities and the Environment Agency dealt with 923,977 incidents of fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost to local authorities of clearing up fly-tipping in each of the last five years. [25298]

Mr. Bradshaw: No national data were previously available before Flycapture, the national database for fly-tipping incidents, was launched in April 2004.

Initial data from the first year's Flycapture reports have indicated that local authorities and the Environment Agency spent an average of £44 million on clearing and disposing of fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was imposed in fines for fly-tipping in each of the last five years. [25299]

Mr. Bradshaw: No national data were previously available before Flycapture, the national database for fly-tipping incidents, was launched in April 2004. Flycapture gathers summary data on the numbers of fly-tipping incidents dealt with by local authorities and the Environment Agency as well as data on the actions taken to deal with fly-tipping.

However, the 'Actions Taken' section of Flycapture only became compulsory in April 2005 so reliable national data from the first year is not yet available.

The Environment Agency, which deals primarily with the larger, more serious fly-tipping incidents, has been recording information on the total fines per year resulting from agency prosecution of persons depositing waste without authorisation since 1 January 2000.

	£
2000	582,055
2001	350,907
2002	445,824
2003	393,050
2004	368,988
2005	[1]488,240

[1] To date.

In addition, the following data illustrates the average fines issued at all courts in England and Wales between 1999 and 2003 for various 'fly-tipping' offences under section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts found guilty and sentenced at all courts for certain offences under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, sections 33 and 34, England and Wales, 1999–2003[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*Year*
Contravening conditions of a waste management licence	Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 33 (6)	1999
		2000[2]
		2001
		2002
		2003
Depositing, causing the deposition or permitting the deposition, treating, keeping or disposing of controlled waste(but not special waste) in or on land without a licence	Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 33 (8)	1999
		2000[2]
		2001
		2002
		2003
Depositing, causing the deposition or permitting the deposition of controlled special waste in or on land without a licence	Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 33 (9)	1999
		2000[2]
		2001
		2002
		2003

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Staffordshire police force were only able to submit sample data for persons proceeded against and convicted in the magistrates' courts for the year 2000. Although sufficient to estimate higher orders of data, these data are not robust enough at a detailed level and have been excluded from the table.

Source:

Criminal Justice Systems analysis, RDS-OCJR.

IOS: 366-05

Foodstuffs (Price Changes)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on recent price changes for *(a)* beef, *(b)* lamb, *(c)* milk and *(d)* cereals. [23167]

Jim Knight: The following tables show trends in the UK producer (i.e. farmgate) prices of beef lamb, milk and cereals. The price trends are in index form based on 2000 = 100.

United Kingdom index of producer prices of agricultural products (2000 = 100)

			Annual average	
	Beef	*Lamb*	*Milk*	*Cereals*
2001	101	101	114	108
2002	104	119	101	95
2003	107	133	106	105
2004	113	132	109	115

Monthly index

	Beef	*Lamb*	*Milk*	*Cereals*
2004				
August	118	124	109	97
September	112	119	115	93
October	108	117	115	99
November	107	121	115	97
December	109	124	112	100
2005				
January	117	127	109	98
February	117	125	108	99
March	117	126	108	102
April	119	138	104	102
May	118	156	101	102
June	118	138	102	101
July	112	123	107	100
August	109	112	109	97

Source:
Defra: API, Food Statistics Branch

(a) Beef prices have risen over the last few years. Prices were stable in first half of 2005, but have fallen slightly over the last few months due to increasing domestic supplies and imports coinciding with weaker consumer demand.

(b) Lamb prices rose by more than 30 per cent. between 2000 and 2004. Lamb prices are seasonal. In the early part of 2005 prices were lower than in 2004 as increased supplies met with static demand. Prices rallied as new season lambs started to reach the market. However, since June prices have fallen again due to the increased supplies and the poor value of sheepskins.

(c) Farmgate milk prices in 2005 have been broadly similar to last year, despite the price support cuts for butter and skimmed milk powder agreed as part of the CAP reform package, for which dairy farmers have been partially compensated.

(d) Cereal prices are affected by a range of factors, including conditions on domestic and international markets and changes in exchange rates. The high prices of 2004 reflected the substantially lower EU harvest in 2003, but have subsequently fallen back to more normal levels.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many full-time equivalent employee reductions have been made as a result of the Gershon review; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* total value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23991]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* Data on headcount and financial efficiencies delivered to the end of financial year 2004–05 are reported in the departmental report 2005 published at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/deprep/default.htm.

None of the programmes and projects contributing to DEFRA's efficiency targets is an exclusively IT related programme. A number of programmes have elements of IT-enabled change but also involve organisational and culture change elements.

Information about yearly targets for financial and headcount efficiencies are set in the Efficiency Technical Note (which can be viewed on the DEFRA website at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/efficienynote-0410.pdf). This is being updated at present and will be published on the DEFRA website.

Illegal Timber

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has made *(a)* directly and *(b)* through the EU to the Government of (i) Brazil and (ii) Argentina regarding illegal logging; and what steps she has taken to ensure that illegal timber is not imported into the UK. [24693]

Mr. Morley: Although the my right hon. Friend, Secretary of State, has not made any recent representations to Brazil or Argentina on illegal logging, the UK Government are involved with a number of initiatives in Latin America.

The UK has contributed £14 million to the multi-donor Pilot Programme for the Preservation of Brazilian Rain Forests and is a major contributor to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which is creating and maintaining protected areas in the region through the Amazon Region Protected Areas Programme. The managers of the GEF have approved or endorsed funding for 29 projects in Brazil, with a value of approximately £150 million. The UK also continues to support projects in the Amazon through multilateral organisations, including the European Commission and the World Bank.

On steps taken to ensure illegal timber will not be imported into the UK, under the UK's Presidency of the EU, unanimous Political Agreement was achieved on the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) dossier. This will allow the EU to enter into agreements with developing countries and provide them with assistance to tackle illegal logging. This assistance will include a licensing system designed to identify products and license them for export to the EU. It will be reinforced by powers for Customs to take a

range of actions relating to unlicensed products from partner countries. This will allow illegal timber to be prevented from importation to the EU for the first time.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Environment Agency takes *(a)* to inspect, *(b)* to regulate and *(c)* to set targets for local authorities. [24596]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency does not generally inspect, regulate or set targets for local authorities. However, civic amenity sites (waste) run by local authorities are permitted and inspected by the Environment Agency. Local authorities may require licences for other operations that need their consent, for example, abstraction or discharge, and the Environment Agency would inspect and regulate these consents.

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people in her Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 following the Lyons review; where they have been relocated; and if she will make a statement. [23710]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* 124 posts were relocated from London and the South East in response to the Lyons review in 2004–05. A further 86 are expected to move in 2005–06; of these seven have already relocated.

The following table below the breakdown of these posts:

Location	*Number of posts*
Moves in 2004–05	
York	22
Worcester	29
Various local offices outside London and the South East	10
Newcastle	13
Workington	50
Total	124
Moves in 2005–06	
Alnwick	7
Stafford	26
York	53
Total	86

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that the Government's response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report on the impact of pesticide use on human beings is coordinated with the Department of Health. [26073]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The Department has already put in place arrangements to ensure that all relevant Government Departments, including the Department of Health, are fully involved in formulating the Government's response to the RCEP report.

PG5/2(04)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate the Government has made of the cost to local authorities of the implementation of Environmental Protection guidance note PG5/2(04); [24589]

(2) what estimate the Government has made of the cost to local authorities of implementing Environmental Protection guidance note PG5/2(04) setting higher emissions standards for municipal crematoria. [26928]

Mr. Bradshaw: In accordance with the two consultation papers issued by the Department in May 2003 and September 2004 http://www.defra.gov.uk/CQrporate/consult/crematoria/index.htm and http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/crematoria-two/consultation.pdf the estimated total cost of fitting mercury abatement to cover 50 per cent. of all cremations is between £90 million and £100 million. About 90 per cent. of crematoria are currently owned and operated by local authorities.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish a regulatory impact assessment for Environmental Protection guidance note PG5/2(04). [24594]

Mr. Bradshaw: The two consultation papers referred to in my reply to UIN 24595 contained an assessment of costs and benefits.

Process guidance notes, such as PG5/2(04), are produced to provide advice to local authority regulators on what constitutes the Best Available Techniques under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999. The Act was subject to a regulatory impact assessment. The statutory Best Available Techniques concept enshrines a balance between costs and benefits. It is not practice for my Department or the Environment Agency to produce a separate regulatory impact assessment for each sector or process guidance note.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government has made of the effect of Environmental Protection guidance note PG5/02(04) on fees charged to the public for municipal services. [24595]

Mr. Bradshaw: The consultation paper issued by the Department in May 2003 http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/crematoria/index.htm contained an estimate that new requirements to abate mercury from all crematoria would increase costs by £55 per cremation. This compared with the average cost of a funeral assessed by the Office of Fair Trading in 2001 of £1,215 (for cremation) and £2,048 (for burial).

The second consultation paper issued by the Department in September 2004 http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/crematoria-two/consultation.pdf proposed that only 50 per cent. of cremations should be subject to mercury abatement. This was adopted in the form of PG5/2(04), as amended. If the system of burden sharing enabled by the guidance is taken up by the cremation sector, this should mean an increase of between £25 and £30 per cremation. I understand that the Federation of British Cremation Authorities, which represents the majority of all crematoria operators, has arrived at a figure of £25.

Recycling (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of household waste in Milton Keynes was recycled in 2004–05. [27183]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information on recycling from individual local authorities for 2004–05 is not yet available.

Local authority Best Value Performance Indicators for 2004–05, which include information on household waste recycling rates will be available on 15 December from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.bvpi.gov.uk

Refrigerators

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what quantity of CFCs has been recovered from refrigerators and freezers since the implementation of EU Regulation 2037/2000; and what percentage this represents of the total amount contained in those refrigerators and freezers. [25022]

Mr. Morley: The information is not available in the form requested, as the data on the recovery of CFCs does not identify the equipment from which they were recovered. The total amount of CFCs recovered from all equipment, including commercial equipment, was:

387 tonnes in 2002

494 tonnes in 2003

427 tonnes in 2004

It is not possible to calculate the percentage of CFCs recovered from the total amount contained in the equipment. This is because it is not known how much refrigerant fluid is in the equipment on arrival at licensed waste management sites, as many units are damaged in use or transit, and some fluid will have escaped before the equipment is received for disposal.

Single Payment Scheme

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the conditions for cross-compliance for the single farm payment which are imposed by EU other member states. [23802]

Jim Knight: Cross-compliance conditions involve two main elements: specific requirements in relation to 19 EU directives and regulations that apply in all member states, with many of these having been law for a number of years; and keeping agricultural land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) as defined at member state, or as the case may be, regional level within an EU framework. Given the requirement in the EC regulations to define GAEC to reflect the specific character of the areas concerned including the condition of the land, environmental conditions and agricultural activity, it is to be expected that a variety of standards will have been set within the EU. Whether those standards fulfil member states' EU regulatory obligations will be considered by the European Commission, which has already begun a programme of audits covering cross-compliance. In the meantime, DEFRA officials continue to liaise closely with the European Commission and other member states, both to ensure a common understanding of the EU regulatory obligations and to share practical experience of implementation.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Single Payment Scheme will be implemented; and whether her Department plans to propose further reform of the common agricultural policy. [22733]

Jim Knight: Ministers regularly assess the likely timing of Single Payment Scheme awards with officials at the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), which is responsible for the administration of the scheme in England. RPA remains on course to commence payments in February 2006 and complete 96 per cent. of payments by the end of March, in line with announcements made at the start of the year.

The UK Government has called for a fundamental review of the whole EU budget, including the common agricultural policy (CAP), to report during the next EU financial perspective (2007–13). We have held detailed discussions with every member state about the budget and remain committed to working for a deal in December.

As part of that process, we have called for a proper debate about the budget and stressed that we must begin making the necessary changes, including to CAP expenditure, before the next budget period begins in 2014. We have also been clear that any change to the CAP must take account of the legitimate business planning needs of farmers and happen over time.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements she has made for releasing data on individual recipients of farm support payments under the Single Payment Scheme. [23552]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will be releasing details of payments made under the Single Payments Scheme (SPS).

We will publish an annual aggregate figure for payments to each recipient under the SPS drawn from our financial records. The regional analysis will be produced using the Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS). NUTS was established by Eurostat more than 25 years ago in order to provide a single uniform breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics for the European Union. We will use NUTS levels one and two to provide the regional analysis. The information will be extracted, calculated and published on the RPA website after the closure of the payment window on 30 June 2006, probably by end September 2006.

Statutory Instruments

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of statutory instruments laid before the House by her Department arose as a direct consequence of European legislation in each of the last three years. [23001]

Jim Knight: It is possible to extrapolate from existing data sources a broad estimate of the percentage of SIs which came into force for each of the last three years that arose as a direct consequence of European legislation. The figures are:

	Measures arising from EU affecting the private sector as percentage of total SIs coming into force
2004	53
2003	51
2002	61

Archived data is stored depending on the date of entry into force of specific measures and not the date on which the implementing statutory instrument was laid before Parliament. Therefore, information in the precise form requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Furthermore, the data provided relates only to measures which have a relatively significant or wide-ranging impact on business. Minor technical or updating amendments to existing regulations, which may have arisen as a consequence either of EU or domestic policies, are not included in the data source.

The total number of SIs covered on this basis for EU and domestic policies, and which came into force in each of the three years, is: 2004 70 SIs; 2003 92 SIs; and 2002 57 SIs. The total number of SIs in any given year will be higher once minor, technical and amending measures are included.

Stewardship Scheme

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received about online applications to the entry level stewardship scheme; and if she will make a statement. [26256]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* No representations have been received recently at a national level concerning the introduction of the ELS On-Line facility. However, we are aware that local RDS offices continue to receive informal enquiries from farmers and their agents on this subject.

The ELS On-Line system remains under development and our aim is to thoroughly test it before release to ensure that it is robust and fit for purpose. It is our intention to make it available early in the new year.

Sugar

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received on EU proposals for reform of the sugar regime. [20426]

Jim Knight: Defra has conducted a full public consultation exercise on the Commission's proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime. Thirty-seven written responses were received and copies of these are available for inspection in the Defra library. A summary of views expressed will be published shortly. In addition, Ministers have received a large number of letters on this subject outside the formal consultation exercise reflecting a similar range of concerns.

Meetings with stakeholders have been conducted at both ministerial and official level on a regular basis and will continue to take place as the negotiations progress.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on UK manufacturing industry of production quotas for sugar *(a)* over the last five years and *(b)* over the next five years. [23764]

Jim Knight: By sustaining high sugar prices and inefficient sugar production, national sugar quotas have restricted competition and choice for UK and EU based food manufacturers for whom sugar is a crucial ingredient. The European Commission's proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime are expected to increase competition and trade across Europe. Further analysis of these impacts is provided in the Government's detailed Regulatory Impact Assessment of options for reform of the EU Sugar Regime.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will accept the recommendation of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee in its Twelfth Report of Session 2003–04, paragraph 52, that, if the reformed Common Market Organisation for sugar maintains the quota system, the competition authorities should conduct an investigation into the UK sugar processing industry. [23849]

Jim Knight: This is a matter for the competition authorities themselves to consider. But the Government does believe that the European Commission's present proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime do represent a considerable step forward in the operation of the quota system, with the merger of A and B quotas, the abolition of C sugar and the possibility of some expansion for the most efficient producers.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the base price would be on which payments of export refunds would be calculated under the European Commission's proposals for reform of the Common Market Organisation in sugar. [23850]

Jim Knight: Export refunds for sugar are currently calculated as a function of the difference between the EU intervention price and world market levels. Under the European Commission's reform proposals the intervention system would be abolished and replaced with a number of different market management instruments, the need for which will be assessed in relation to representative prices on the EU market expressed as a reference level.

The question of how export refunds will be set in relation to this will be a matter for the Sugar Management Committee after the Agriculture Council has reached agreement on the main reform proposals.

Warm Front Scheme

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in Cleethorpes constituency have received assistance under the Warm Front scheme in each year since its introduction. [26573]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the numbers of households assisted in each year in Cleethorpes constituency are as follows:

	Number of households assisted
2000–01	199
2001–02	898
2002–03	617
2003–04	790
2004–05	714
Total	3,218

Waste Disposal

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many landfill sites are operational in *(a)* England, *(b)* Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency. [26497]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are 561 operational landfill sites in England. This number is not constant given that the Environment Agency is currently undertaking the re-permitting of the landfill sector under the requirements of both the PPC and Landfill Regulations.

There are currently 13 operational landfill sites in Tees Valley and one in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland area.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of the current capacity of landfill sites is filled. [26498]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is not available in the form requested at present. However, it is an area being addressed during development of the Waste Data Strategy.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incinerators are used in England to burn *(a)* household, *(b)* industrial and *(c)* other waste. [26499]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment Agency regulates 64 incinerators in England under the Integrated Pollution Control Regime (Environmental Protection Act 1990, part 1) and the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000 SI 1972. The breakdown is as follows:

	Number
Burning household waste	16
Burning industrial waste	[1]23
Burning other waste	[2]25

[1] Two merchant waste incinerators and the remaining 21 are in-house waste incinerators.

[2] Clinical waste, sewage sludge and animal carcase incinerators

As regards smaller incinerators regulated by local authorities, data from our 2003–04 statistical survey for England and Wales (http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lapc/survey0304/index.htm) shows 65 incinerators were regulated and a further 36 combustion plant. We do not have a breakdown of how many of the 36 combustion plant burnt waste.

Separate data collected for 2001–02 for England and Wales (http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lapc/aqnotes/pdf/aq03(02).pdf) show that 19 installations were subject to guidance for waste combustion plant, 22 used clinical waste incineration guidance, 26 used animal carcase incineration guidance and seven used general waste incineration guidance.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans there are to build additional incinerators to deal with refuse. [26500]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are exploring options to support the delivery of additional energy generation from residual, post-recycling, waste as part of their current review of waste strategy.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Housing

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely cost of the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed house building programme in the parliamentary constituency of Gravesham; and what percentage of this cost will be met from central funding. [24175]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is aware that for such an ambitious programme as the Thames Gateway, infrastructure is needed that will support the new homes and jobs envisaged for these areas.

ODPM is working closely with local partners in better defining and prioritising these costs. A proportion of these will be met by public sector as a means to enabling regeneration of the area, but it is also crucial that private sector contribute the necessary investment to make these areas sustainable.

There has been significant investment in Gravesham to date, some £40 million worth of projects in the area, as part of ODPM's Thames Gateway programme and some £210 million allocated to North Kent. These projects will help support new infrastructure and housing, for example through land remediation of brownfield sites, new greenspace and education provision.

Around £19 million are currently committed to Fastrack public transport system £4 million coming from ODPM and £15 million from DfT, which will run services connecting Gravesend, Dartford Bluewater and Ebbsfleet International Station.

In addition, significant investment has been made from across Government, and examples of this are the Gravesend and North Kent Hospital, and the road widening of the A2 between Bean and Cobham where the DfT has contributed with over £115 million.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* road and *(b)* rail infrastructure of the new housing proposed for the Eastern Region. [26342]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

The draft Spatial Strategy for the East of England contains a regional transport strategy. This was developed by the region in consultation with its local authorities. The Examination in Public (EiP) for the draft strategy started on 1 November. It is the work of the EiP panel to hear the evidence and representations before it in order to make recommendations to the Government on the appropriate long-term strategy in the East of England. Once the scale and broad location of developments are known, transport requirements will be subject to refinement.

DfT Rail are finalising a Regional Planning Assessment for rail. This will help identify some of the medium to long-term requirements for the region. This work is in addition to the Route Utilisation Strategy for the region which will be implemented in December. This particular strategy seeks to maximise capacity on the rail network through measures linked with known and anticipated demand.

Local Authority Housing Stock

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the system of writing off debt for local authorities which agree to large scale voluntary transfers of their housing stock has been approved by the European Union. [22256]

Yvette Cooper: It is the view of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that the system of writing off debt for local authorities which agree to large scale voluntary transfers of their housing stock is not a notifiable aid under article 87(1) of the EC Treaty, as it does not distort or threaten to distort competition.

Local Government Elections

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the proposals to introduce whole council local elections every four years will be taken forward. [23208]

Mr. Woolas: As part of our ongoing local:vision debate on the future of local government we will, over the coming months, be seeking views of the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders on how best to implement the Electoral Commission's recommendations that all local authorities should hold whole council elections every four years.

Town Councils

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether there is a backlog of cases for proposed town councils for his consideration; what timescale he would expect for consideration of the establishment of a Brixham town council following a formal submission from the Torbay Unitary Authority; and if he will make a statement. [26265]

Mr. Woolas: Local authorities submit to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) cases for the establishment, alteration and abolition of parish and town councils in accordance with the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 following parish reviews they undertake to their own time scale. These authorities are also required to forward to ODPM within three months valid local petitions from electors calling for the creation of a new parish and parish council. ODPM deals with its programme of such cases as they are received. It presently takes between six and nine months between ODPM receiving proposals and our making Orders to implement them in time for the first elections of new parish councils. Any proposal to establish a town council for Brixham would need to be submitted by Torbay council in line with these arrangements.

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which organisations and individuals have been consulted during preparation of the Phase 2 Revision Draft of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. [26077]

Yvette Cooper: The Phase 2 revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy was launched on Monday 7 November, when the West Midlands Regional Planning Body published a draft Project Plan for consultation. The Regional Planning Body has formally notified around 2,000 organisations and individuals of this consultation, which seeks views on the scope of the revision and the future participation arrangements. The full range of private and public bodies suggested in Annex D of PPS11 is being consulted and the consultation period ends on 31 December 2005. Further consultation is expected to take place on the options developed next summer and on the preferred option in 2007.

TREASURY

Alcohol and Tobacco

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the limits on the importation of *(a)* alcohol and *(b)* tobacco products into Britain by individuals who have bought them within the European Union and have paid the duty levied in the country of purchase have been in each year since 1992. [26358]

John Healey: Since the introduction of the Single Market in 1993, travellers making journeys within the EU have been able to bring back as much duty and tax paid alcohol and tobacco products as they like, provided the products are for their own use and are transported by them.

EC law allows member states to set guidelines which, alongside a number of other factors, officials may take into account to determine whether goods are imported for own use or commercial purposes.

From 1 January 1993 the UK introduced the following guide levels-10 litres of spirits, 20 litres of fortified wine such as port or sherry, 90 litres of wine (of which not more than 60 litres of sparkling wine), 110 litres of beer, 800 cigarettes, 200 cigars, 400 cigarillos, and one kilogram of smoking tobacco.

With effect from 29 October 2002, the UK introduced increased guide levels for cigarettes and some other tobacco products, 3,200 cigarettes and three kilograms of hand-rolling tobacco.

Biodiesel Duty

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research he has commissioned on the effects on take-up of biodiesel of a reduction in duty; and if he will reduce the duty on biodiesel. [26146]

John Healey: We have monitored the take-up of biodiesel since the introduction of a duty incentive in July 2002. Over the last three years, the duty incentive has led to increased use of the fuel in the UK and biodiesel alone now accounts for more than 2.5 million litres of fuel released for consumption each month in the UK.

Duty rates for alternative fuels, including biodiesel, are set according to the principles of the Alternative Fuels Framework, published in the 2003 pre-Budget report. In line with the commitment to provide rolling three-year certainty set out in the framework, the current differential of 20 pence per litre is guaranteed until 2008.

Birth Rates

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many babies have been born in Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. [26156]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Brian Jenkins, dated 9 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question for the number of babies born in Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. (26156)

The table below relates to babies born anywhere in England and Wales to women usually resident in Tamworth constituency area at the time of the birth. Counts are provided up to 2004, the latest year for which figures are available.

Live births to residents of Tamworth constituency, 1997 to 2004

	Number
1997	1,174
1998	1,184
1999	1,115
2000	1,087
2001	1,084
2002	979
2003	1,149
2004	1,124

Construction Industry Scheme

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many representations he has received from the construction industry on the timing of the introduction of the new Construction Industry Scheme. [26230]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers receive representations on a wide range of issues, including the Construction Industry Scheme.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in Tamworth constituency. [26154]

John Healey: The Treasury owns no land or property in the Tamworth constituency.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23767]

John Healey: HM Treasury uses competency-based recruitment and as such focuses on skills rather than qualifications. Therefore no records are kept on the specific qualifications which new recruits have achieved.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23800]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 308W.

Duty Free Allowance

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the duty free allowance per person was for *(a)* visitors to the United Kingdom and *(b)* British citizens in (i) 1975, (ii) 1977, (iii) 1979, (iv) 1983, (v) 1987, (vi) 1992, (vii) 1997 and (viii) each year since 2001; [26359]

(2) what recent discussions he has held with the European Commission about the current UK duty free allowance; and if he will make a statement. [26360]

John Healey: European Council Directive 69/169/EEC sets a tax and duty free allowance for all travellers bringing goods for personal use (excluding wine, spirits, tobacco and perfume) from outside the EU into the UK. This allowance applies equally to visitors to the United Kingdom and to British citizens.

When the directive was first agreed in 1969, the allowance was set at 45 Euros (£36). In 1994 it was increased to 175 Euros (£136), and the UK conversion was revalorised from £136 to £145 in 1995 to reflect exchange rate fluctuations. Since then the allowance has not been revised.

In order to change the tax and duty free allowance, the European Commission would have to make a proposal and unanimous agreement among member states would have to be reached. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to the Commission at Budget 2005 proposing that the allowance be increased to £1,000. The Commission has expressed support in principle for the Government's proposal that the allowance should be raised, and it is hoped they will soon come forward with draft legislation to increase the allowance and thereby reduce unnecessary restrictions on travellers bringing goods into the EU for their own use.

Separate quantitative limits apply for wine, spirits, tobacco and perfume. These have not been revised since the directive was first agreed and are listed as follows:

Quantitative limits for exemptions from tax and duty for travellers bringing goods for personal use from outside the EU into the UK:

200 cigarettes; or 100 cigarillos; or 50 cigars; or 250g of tobacco

60cc of perfume

Two litres of still table wine

250cc of eau de toilette

One litre of spirits or strong liqueurs over 22 per cent. volume; or two litres of fortified wine, sparkling wine or other liqueurs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many vehicles were confiscated by customs officers as a result of the driver carrying goods above the duty free allowance in each of the last 10 years. [26362]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs records of the number of vehicles seized do not differentiate between the nature of the offences in each case. Details of the total number of vehicles seized across the UK in the years 1994–95 to 1999–2000 are as follows:

	Number
1994–95	600
1995–96	1,446
1996–97	2,002
1997–98	2,929
1998–99	3,193
1999–2000	5,200
2000–01	10,219
2001–02	11,064
2002–03	8,616
2003–04	6,848

The number ofvehicles seized in 2004–05 will be published in the Customs Annual Report, published later this year.

Economic Indicators

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what methodology he uses to assess the UK's economic performance compared with other EU countries. [26237]

John Healey: The Treasury paper on "Long-term global economic challenges and opportunities for Europe" provides information on the economic performances of EU member states.

Employment Statistics

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed in each electoral ward in Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. [26161]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Brian Jenkins, dated 9 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment and unemployment. (26161)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of employment and unemployment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. Estimates of employment and unemployment are not available for wards as the survey sample size for such areas is too small.

Table 1, attached, shows the 2001 Census figures for numbers persons aged 16 to 74 in employment who were resident in the electoral wards of the Tamworth constituency.

ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Table 2, attached, shows annual averages, for 1996 to 2004, for wards within the Tamworth constituency.

Table 1: Number of persons aged 16 to 74 in employment resident in electoral wards of the Tamworth parliamentary constituency

Electoral wards[1]	*Number*
Bourne Vale	1,079
Fazeley	2,018
Little Aston	1,164
Mease Valley	885
Shenstone	1,557
Stonnall	767
Tame	842
Amington	4,497
Belgrave	3,633
Bolehall	3,369
Castle	4,209
Glascote	3,356
Mercian	3,109
Spital	2,449
Stonydelph	4,125
Trinity	3,933
Wilnecote	4,332
Total	45,324

[1] Electoral wards are defined on the basis of the boundaries as they were in 1991.

Source:
2001 Census

Table 2: Jobseeker's allowance claimants resident in electoral wards of the Tamworth parliamentary constituency

							Annual averages	
Electoral wards[1]	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Bourne Vale	31	30	34	29	28	25	23	16
Fazeley	76	68	74	70	64	54	60	50
Little Aston	21	12	12	12	14	11	11	13
Mease Valley	13	11	8	8	9	10	11	9
Shenstone	36	33	27	24	19	18	23	19
Stonnall	23	18	15	13	18	15	14	11
Tame	15	15	17	12	14	10	11	11
Amington	222	175	202	182	171	143	139	127
Belgrave	208	173	183	163	141	123	119	94
Bolehall	136	121	146	126	108	99	89	76
Castle	144	122	122	107	90	92	89	96
Glascote	279	248	250	239	211	174	153	132
Mercian	135	114	117	96	91	77	69	68

Table 2: Jobseeker's allowance claimants resident in electoral wards of the Tamworth parliamentary constituency

Electoral wards[1]	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*Annual averages 2003*	*2004*
Spital	95	93	102	80	69	69	58	46
Stonydelph	149	127	137	133	111	94	95	105
Trinity	82	69	78	66	75	59	57	50
Wilnecote	110	88	100	98	97	86	80	67
Total	1,775	1,517	1,624	1,458	1,330	1,159	1,101	990

[1] Electoral wards are defined on the basis of the boundaries as they were in 1991.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative systems.

External Contractors

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the research commissioned externally by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies in each year since 1997; which external contractor was commissioned in each case; what the cost was of each research project; how long it took to complete each project; and if he will make a statement. [25764]

John Healey: This information is not held centrally in Treasury or its agencies.

This information could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Fatality Statistics

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many fatalities in Hertfordshire have been attributed to *(a)* fires and *(b)* road traffic accidents in each year since 1997. [25573]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Michael Penning, dated 9 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many fatalities in Hertfordshire have been attributed to *(a)* fires and *(b)* road traffic accidents in each year since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (25573)

The most recent available information is for deaths in 2004. Figures for deaths due to land transport accidents and exposure to smoke, fire or flames, are shown in the attached table for each year from 1997 to 2004.

Deaths due to land transport accidents and exposure to smoke, fire, or flames,[1] for normal residents of Hertfordshire, registered 1997 to 2004

	Land transport accidents	*Smoke, fire or flames*
1997	68	11
1998	62	9
1999	59	4
2000	63	8
2001	36	5
2002	53	8
2003	60	1
2004	56	1

[1] Cause of death was defined using the codes below from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for the years 1997 and 2000, and Tenth Revision (ICD-10) from 2001 onwards.
Land transport accidents:
ICD-9-E800-E829
ICD-10-V01-V89
Smoke, fire or flames:
ICD-9-E890-E899, E958.1, E968.0, E988.1
ICD-10-X00-X09, X76, X97, Y26.
Includes deaths given a verdict of accident, assault, suicide or undetermined intent. Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.

Good Hope Hospital

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many babies have been delivered at Good Hope hospital in Sutton Coldfield in each year since 1997. [26155]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Brian Jenkins, dated 9 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the number of babies delivered at Good Hope Hospital, Sutton Coldfield in each year since 1997. (26155)

The table below shows the information requested up to 2004, the latest year for which birth counts are available.

Live births delivered at Good Hope hospital, Sutton Coldfield, 1997 to 2004

	Number
1997	2,989
1998	2,939
1999	2,961
2000	3,060
2001	2,930
2002	2,859
2003	3,063
2004	3,197

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what comparative studies the Government have undertaken of the performance of the public and private sectors in the management of large technology projects; and if he will publish the findings. [26589]

John Healey: This information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Kettering General Hospital

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many babies have been delivered at Kettering general hospital in each year since 1997. [24749]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Philip Hollobone, dated 9 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the number of babies delivered at Kettering General Hospital in each year since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (24749)

The table below shows the information requested up to 2004, which is the latest year for which birth counts are available.

Number of live births delivered at Kettering general hospital 1997–2004

	Number
1997	3,245
1998	3,171
1999	3,211
2000	3,341
2001	3,224
2002	3,167
2003	3,400
2004	3,513

Lorry Road User Charging Scheme

Tom Brake: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been paid to *(a)* Serco Ltd. *(b)* Siemens plc. *(c)* T-Systems International, *(d)* Autostrade S.p.A, *(e)* TraCS Consortium, *(f)* Capita Group plc. and *(g)* IBM (UK) Ltd. in compensation for costs incurred in the procurement process for the lorry road-user charging scheme before the scheme was suspended. [25880]

John Healey: Specific payments to individual bidders are a matter of commercial confidentiality, but the total of the Proof of Solution payments and any payments made for other costs will be reported in the annual accounts of HMRC.

PFI

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the private finance initiative. [26065]

John Healey: The Treasury has received many representations on PFI from a wide number of parties.

Sustainable Development

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much is due to be spent in *(a)* the 2005–06 financial year and *(b)* each of the next four financial years on the carbon offset scheme by (i) his Department and (ii) each agency of his Department; and what estimate he has made of the number and distance of flights and related carbon dioxide emissions which require offsetting. [21999]

John Healey: The Departments and agencies responsible to Treasury Ministers are currently looking at the feasibility of implementing the carbon offsetting scheme and committing 1 per cent. of the annual cost of air travel to carbon offsetting from April 2006.

The data available concerning the number of flights and their cost are as follows:

HM Treasury: approximately 3,000 flights per annum—£2.4 million

HM Revenue and Customs: 30,640 flights in 2004–05—£6 million

Office for National Statistics: approximately 800 flights in 2005–06—£275,000.

Office of Government Commerce: 552 flights in 2004–05—£160,000.

Government Actuary's Department: 63 flights in 2005–06—£33,000.

Debt Management Office: approximately 10 flights in 2004–05—£6,000

Workless Households

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many workless households there are in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [26234]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Andrew Rosindell, dated 9 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about workless households in the UK. (26234)

In the three months ending May 2005, there were 10.8 million households in which at least one person was of working age (a man aged 16–64 or a woman aged 16 to 59). Among these, there were 3.07 million workless households in which no one was in employment.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

TRANSPORT

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the economic impact of the proposed A21 upgrade on the local community; and if he will make a statement. [25101]

Dr. Ladyman: An economic appraisal of the scheme has been carried out in accordance with Department for Transport guidance. The views of local businesses, the public and interested parties were taken into account as a result of the Public Consultation undertaken in 2002–03, which led to the Preferred Route Announcement in February 2005.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what surveys his Department has conducted on the effect of the proposed A21 upgrade on local businesses; and whether these surveys have been made available to residents in the areas affected by the route. [25102]

Dr. Ladyman: Specific surveys have not been carried out on the effect of the proposed A21 on local businesses. However, the views of local businesses, the public and interested parties were taken into account as a result of the Public Consultation undertaken in 2002–03, which led to the Preferred Route Announcement in February 2005.

A41

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of congestion on the A41 in Hertfordshire. [25576]

Dr. Ladyman: No assessment has been made since the A41 was de-trunked and became the responsibility of Hertfordshire county council as local highway authority.

Air Carrier Insolvencies

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his plans in respect of airlines which have not taken voluntary measures in relation to airline insolvency insurance. [25158]

Ms Buck: Following initial meetings on 24 October, airlines representing half of UK international passengers carried on scheduled services have agreed to implement voluntary measures in relation to insolvency insurance. I plan to contact further airlines and continue this process.

Aircraft Emissions

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of low emissions passenger aircraft. [25471]

Ms Buck: It is for the industry to work towards improved emissions performance of passenger aircraft within a policy framework set by the international community and by increasing Government and market expectations of environmental responsibility.

Antisocial Behaviour

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many instances of antisocial behaviour have been recorded on buses in *(a)* Surrey and *(b)* England in each of the last 10 years. [25693]

Ms Buck: The Department does not collect statistics on the number of antisocial behaviour incidents on buses.

Bald Tyres

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the penalty is for a driver of a car with a bald tyre. [26454]

Dr. Ladyman: If a driver accepts a fixed penalty notice, the fine is £60. If convicted in court, the maximum fine is £2,500. The offence also attracts three penalty points on the driver's licence and could also result in disqualification at the discretion of the courts, or if the total number of penalty points on the driver's licence required it.

Bathside Bay

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce a decision on Bathside Bay. [26524]

Dr. Ladyman: The report of the public inquiry into the proposed Bathside Bay Container Terminal Development is under careful consideration, and an announcement will be made as soon as possible.

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the Government to make an announcement regarding the proposed Bathside Bay port development. [25481]

Dr. Ladyman: The report of the public inquiry into the proposed Bathside Bay Container Terminal Development is under careful consideration, and an announcement will be made as soon as possible.

Coach Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to introduce legislation to require passengers to wear seat belts in the passenger seats of coaches; and if he will make a statement. [25735]

Dr. Ladyman: Drivers and front seat passengers are required to use seat belts in all vehicles where they are installed. Passengers in the rear (that is all other) seats of buses and coaches are required to use seat belts where they are available in vehicles up to 2,540 kgs unladen weight (roughly 16 seats).

Regulations are presently in preparation to come into force in 2006 (subject to parliamentary approval) to require seated passengers aged three years and above in the rear seats of larger buses/coaches to use seat belts where they are available. This follows a departmental consultation in 2004 about the changes needed in seat belt wearing regulations in order to transpose the requirements of European Directive 20/2003/EC into domestic legislation. The consultation document and the subsequent decision letter are available on-line at: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/divisionhomepage/039143.hcsp

Coastguard

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many emergency calls were made to the Coastguard Service in each of the last five years; and how many such calls were found to be hoaxes. [26132]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is as follows.

	Total number of calls	*Hoax calls*
2000	12,016	221
2001	12,541	206
2002	13,395	260
2003	13,849	232
2004	14,240	301

Concessionary Travel

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will estimate *(a)* the cost of extending to the rest of England the London scheme of free bus travel for under-16s, and *(b)* the cost of extending free travel to under-18s in full-time education; [25936]

(2) what estimate he has made of *(a)* extending the travel concession on buses for under-16s in London to all of England and *(b)* extending that concession to include under-18s in full-time education. [26000]

Ms Buck: Analysis for the Department for Transport estimated the costs of providing free bus travel, at all times and for all purposes, for five to 16-year-olds at around £365 million. Extending free bus travel to 17 and 18-year-olds, for education trips only, would cost about another £65 million. The costings are in 2002–03 prices.

Crossrail

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many existing stopping services from Oxford, Reading and Slough to Paddington will cease to operate once Crossrail is constructed. [23122]

Derek Twigg: Crossrail services will subsume many of the suburban services, but project planning assumes that a twice hourly diesel operated service will run throughout the day between Reading and London Paddington on the Relief (slow) Lines. These trains could be a continuation of the existing twice hourly stopping service between Oxford and Reading.

Departmental Staff

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people worked in his Department in each year since 1998, broken down by sex, grade and race. [25633]

Ms Buck: The information is published in civil service statistics which is available in the Library of the House.

Electric Cars

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ensure that electric cars are included in the low carbon grant scheme. [24432]

Dr. Ladyman: The proposed low carbon car grant programme is technology neutral. Any car meeting the necessary emissions standards would be eligible for a grant irrespective of the technology used. As electric cars have no tailpipe emissions they are generally treated as ultra low carbon emitting vehicles (i.e. <100g/km CO_2).

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that incentives to encourage the take up of emission-free cars include electric cars. [24433]

Dr. Ladyman: Fully electric vehicles are exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED). New electric hybrid vehicles (i.e. those that are powered by a combination of electricity and another fuel) registered since March 2001 enjoy a VED discount over conventionally fuelled vehicles.

The company car tax system includes an incentive to encourage take up of low and zero emission technology. Cars that are capable of running solely on electricity and other alternative fuels benefit from a discount from the equivalent petrol company car tax percentage charge.

Electric vehicles also enjoy a number of other local benefits, including free parking in some areas and an exemption from the central London congestion charge.

All current and proposed grant programmes to encourage the take up of low emission vehicles are technology neutral. The eligibility criteria for the programmes focus on reducing emissions, irrespective of the technology used. Applications for electric cars and technology will be assessed against technology-neutral criteria and considered equally alongside other technologies.

Felixstowe

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce a decision on the Port of Felixstowe. [26538]

Dr. Ladyman: The report of the public inquiry into the proposed Felixstowe South re-configuration is under careful consideration and an announcement will be made as soon as possible.

Departmental Funding

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding was allocated by his Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25734]

Ms Buck: The Hemel Hempstead constituency is covered by the Hertfordshire county council local transport plan. The funding provided to Hertfordshire county council for local transport capital expenditure for each of the last eight years is shown in the following table.

Hertfordshire county council nature of funding

£ million

	Capital maintenance	*Integrated block*	*Major schemes*	*Total*
1998–99	2.179	1.809	.565	4.553
1999–2000	2.438	4.200	.220	6.858
2000–01	4.467	5.000	0	9.467
2001–02	10.083	12.500	0	22.583
2002–03	10.586	12.950	1.900	25.436
2003–04	7.939	14.170	1.409	23.518
2004–05	9.262	12.350	18.650	40.262
2005–06	8.596	12.600	14.200	35.396

Capital maintenance funding is allocated to local highways authorities for investment in their highway network, including their structures and street lighting. The integrated transport block is Government funding support for transport improvements schemes each costing less than £5 million and can be used for local highways or public transport capital projects. It has been for Hertfordshire county council to determine how these allocations were spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

Funding paid by the Department to Hertfordshire county council in the form of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant, and Rural Bus challenge funding since 1998 is shown in the following table.

Hertfordshire county council nature of funding

	£ million Bus grants
1998–99	.64
1999–2000	.73
2000–01	.65
2001–02	1.26
2002–03	.92
2003–04	.62
2004–05	.68
2005–06	.71

The revenue support grant (RSG) from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides further revenue funding for highway maintenance, concessionary fares and subsidising bus services. However, RSG is unhypothecated and may be applied by local authorities to any services.

The Department's spend on railways can not be disaggregated by constituency.

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue funding was allocated by his Department to (i) North East Lincolnshire and (ii) North Lincolnshire in each of the last five years. [25443]

Ms Buck: The funding provided to North Lincolnshire council and North East Lincolnshire council for local transport capital expenditure since 2001 is shown in the following tables:

North Lincolnshire county council

£ million

	Nature of funding		
	Capital maintenance	Integrated block	Total
2001-02	2.468	1.200	3.668
2002-03	2.598	2.200	4.798
2003-04	2.109	2.900	5.009
2004-05	2.447	3.156	5.603
2005-06	2.554	2.700	5.254

North East Lincolnshire county council

£ million

	Nature of funding			
	Capital maintenance	Integrated block	Major schemes	Total
2001-02	0.965	2.100	0.359	3.424
2002-03	0.970	4.700	0.158	5.828
2003-04	1.128	3.600	0.0	4.728
2004-05	2.067	3.220	0.0	5.287

Capital maintenance funding is allocated to local highways authorities for investment in their highway network, including their structures and street lighting. The integrated transport block is Government funding support for transport improvements schemes each costing less than £5 million and can be used for local highways or public transport capital projects. It has been for North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire councils to determine how these allocations were spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

Funding allocated by my Department to both North Lincolnshire council and North East Lincolnshire council in the form of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus Challenge funding since 2001 is shown in the following table.

Bus grants

£ million

	North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire
2001-02	.33	.05
2002-03	.38	.78
2003-04	.87	.06
2004-05	.39	.07
2005-06	.41	.08

The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides further revenue funding for highway maintenance, concessionary fares and subsidising bus services. However, RSG is unhypothecated and may be applied by local authorities to any services.

Humber Bridge

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the toll for the Humber Bridge was in each year since its opening. [24772]

Dr. Ladyman: The following are the maximum tolls chargeable at the Humber Bridge since the confirmation of the initial toll order in 1980, with reference to the statutory instrument authorising the toll charges:

The Humber Bridge Tolls Order 1979 Confirmation Instrument 1980

Class of traffic	Maximum toll (£)
Motor cycles with or without side-cars	70p
Cars, including three wheeled cars, and Light Vans up to 30 cwt capacity	1.50
Light commercial vehicles (30 cwt to 3 tons). Cars and Light Vans with trailers	2.90
Heavy commercial vehicles (over 3 tons):	
Class A (2 axle)	5.20
Class B (3 axle)	6.60
Class C (4 or more axles)	8.00
Mini-buses with a seating capacity of more than eight but not more than 16 passengers	2.90
Buses and coaches with a seating capacity of 17 and over.	5.20

The Humber Bridge (Revision of Tolls and Vehicle Classification) Order 1989

		Toll charges (£)
1	Motor cycle with or without sidecar	70p
2	Car, Goods vehicle having a maximum weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes.	1.60
3	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 3.5 tonnes but not exceeding 7.5 tonnes; vehicle within class 2 above with trailer; small bus; and Motor caravan.	2.90
4	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes with 2 axles, Large bus.	6.50
5	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes with 3 axles.	8.70
6	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes with 4 or more axles.	10.90

The Humber Bridge (Revision of Tolls and Vehicle Classification) Order 1997

		Toll charges (£)
1	Motor cycle with or without sidecar	1
2	Car, Goods vehicle having a maximum weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes.	2.30
3	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 3.5 tonnes but not exceeding 7.5 tonnes; vehicle in class 2 above with trailer; small bus (up to 16 passengers excluding driver); and Motor Caravan.	4.10
4	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 2 axles.	9.20
5	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 3 axles.	12.30
6	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 4 or more axles.	15.40

The Humber Bridge (Revision of Tolls and Vehicle Classification) Order 2000

		Toll charges (£)
1	Motor cycle with or without sidecar	1
2	Car, Goods vehicle having a maximum weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes and Motor Caravan	2.40
3	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 3.5 tonnes but not exceeding 7.5 tonnes; vehicle in class 2 above with trailer; and small bus (up to 16 passengers excluding driver).	4.30
4	Goods Vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 2 axles.	9.60
5	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 3 axles.	12.90
6	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 4 or more axles.	16.10

The Humber Bridge (Revision of Tolls) Order 2002

		Toll charges (£)
1	Motor cycle with or without sidecar	1.10
2	Motor Car, Goods vehicle having a maximum weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes and Motor Caravan	2.50
3	Goods vehicle having a maximum weight exceeding 3.5 tonnes but not exceeding 7.5 tonnes; vehicle in class 2 above with trailer; and small bus (up to 16 passengers excluding driver).	4.50
4	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 2 axles.	10.00
5	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 3 axles.	13.40
6	Goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum weight with 4 or more axles.	16.70

Left-hand Drive HGVs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce regulations to ensure that left-hand drive heavy goods vehicles have sufficient side mirrors to alleviate blind spots in relation to vehicles passing on the right. [25673]

Dr. Ladyman: International obligations do not allow us to require, unilaterally, levels of equipment that exceed the requirements of agreed international standards. However, we have agreed, with European partners, a directive that will require large goods vehicles to be fitted with additional mirrors that provide a wider angle of vision along both sides of the vehicle and also a better downward view of the traffic adjacent to the side of the vehicle. This directive will apply to newly registered vehicles within the European Community and will start to take effect from January 2007.

Light Rail and Trams

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on light rail and tram schemes. [25616]

Derek Twigg: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport said in his written statement to the House on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 59–62WS, we recognise that trams can be very effective in heavily trafficked areas. We will continue to be prepared to support trams, where they are the right solution but we will not do so at any cost, and in many cases a well designed and promoted bus based system is likely to provide a more cost effective solution.

Where trams are promoted, they will need to be developed as part of an integrated approach to tackling an area's problems, and they will need to be supported by commitments to complementary measures to deliver the benefits of increased public transport usage and reduced congestion. We will continue to work closely with promoters and the industry to seek to ensure that these benefits can be realised, and that the costs of tram systems are minimised and properly controlled.

LPG

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government is taking to encourage the use of liquid petroleum gas fuel in cars. [26451]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government recognises the environmental benefits of LPG and has provided support to the LPG industry through fuel duty incentives, grants for vehicle conversion and reduced rates of vehicle excise duty and company car tax.

The rationale for decisions on the level of Government support for different fuels is set out in the Alternative Fuels Framework published in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2003 pre-Budget report. In Budget 2005 the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out the level of fuel duty incentives that LPG would enjoy until 2008.

Merseytram

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what informal advice was *(a)* sought and *(b)* received by Ministers of his Department in relation to Merseytram Line 1. [25645]

Derek Twigg: Ministers in this Department have had information and advice from a number of interested parties on aspects of the Merseytram Line 1 scheme. It is not possible to record every bit of advice that may be sought or received.

Motorways

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the level of congestion on the M1 in Hertfordshire; [25570]

(2) what assessment he has made of the level of congestion on the M25 in Hertfordshire. [25575]

Dr. Ladyman: Congestion on the M25 and the M1 in Hertfordshire is monitored using a number of methods, such as traffic counts, individual surveys and cameras.

Recent assessments have been carried out as part of two multi-modal studies 'Orbit: Transport Solutions Around London' and the London and South Midlands Multi-Modal Study, and the route management strategies for the M1 and M25.

Following these assessments a number of recommendations have been made. These include widening of the M25 from dual three lanes to four between junctions 16 to 27, and widening the M1 between junctions 6 to 13 to a consistent dual four lane carriageway.

The first phase of widening on the M25 will begin in autumn 2007 between junctions 16 and 19. The widening on the M1 between junctions 6 to 10 will start next spring. Both these schemes will greatly reduce existing congestion on the M1 and M25 in Hertfordshire.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans he has to introduce a quieter road surface on the M4 and its slip roads in the vicinity of junctions 8 and 9; [26088]

(2) what surface materials will be used in the forthcoming work to introduce a third lane in the slip roads on and off the M4 at junctions 8 and 9. [26089]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans at present to resurface the main carriageway of the M4 in the vicinity of junction 8 and 9. However, when resurfacing for safety and operational reasons becomes necessary a low noise surfacing material will be used.

The resurfacing material to be used as part of the widening scheme to introduce a third lane on the slip roads of the M4 at junction 8 and 9 will be a thin surface course material, which has noise reducing properties.

Some short sections of the slip roads on the approaches to the traffic signals at the junction will then be overlaid with high skid resistance surfacing to enhance road safety. This material has little or no noticeable effect of mitigating traffic noise but is essential to road safety.

Multi-modal Studies

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which recommendations of the multi-modal studies have been accepted; and what progress has been made with implementing these. [25607]

Dr. Ladyman: 21 multi-modal studies have been completed and we have issued detailed responses to the recommendations from 19 of these studies. In view of the number of studies and recommendations involved, it would be possible to answer this question only at a disproportionate cost. Copies of our responses to each study were placed in the House Library at the time they were made.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which recommendations of the multi-modal studies have been rejected; and for what reasons in each case. [25608]

Dr. Ladyman: We have provided detailed responses to the recommendations from 19 multi-modal studies. Each response was placed in the House Library at the time that it was made and provides the reasons for rejected recommendations.

October Clock Adjustment

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effects on numbers of road casualties of turning back the clocks in October each year. [26482]

Dr. Ladyman: A Government commissioned report by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) published in October 1998 concluded that, if the UK adopted single/double summertime (ie GMT plus one hour in the winter, from October to March, and GMT plus two hours in the summer, from March to October) thereby making the evenings lighter, there could be a reduction in road casualties of over 400 people killed or seriously injured per year in Great Britain, including 100 deaths. However, a wide variety of issues would have to be considered very carefully if such a change was to be implemented of which casualty changes would be just one.

Pedestrian Crossing Deaths

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have died after being hit by a vehicle on a pedestrian crossing in each year since 1998. [26461]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of pedestrians killed on a pedestrian crossing after being involved in a personal injury road accident between 1998 and 2004 are shown in the table.

Pedestrian fatalities on pedestrian crossings[1]: 1998–2004

	Number of fatalities
1998	68
1999	72
2000	62
2001	63
2002	74
2003	78
2004	59

[1] Includes footbridges, subways and uncontrolled central refuges.

Port Capacity

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether port capacity in England and Wales is being exceeded [26546]

Dr. Ladyman: Not at present. Locally, from time to time and for particular kinds of traffic, demand might exceed existing port capacity. In the short to medium-term the port sector will adjust contracts and prices to balance supply with demand. In the longer term, current and proposed investments in new facilities—for example, new dry bulk quays at Immingham and new container cranes at Tilbury—are an indication of the commodity sectors where the ports industry expects demand to grow in excess of current capacity.

Consultants working for the Department, MDS Transmodal, are currently developing demand forecasts to support the forthcoming ports policy review.

Public Sector Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation; to which places they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [24332]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Department and its agencies are implementing the Lyons Review recommendations to relocate 60+ posts out of London and the South East by 2010.

During 2004–05, the Department relocated 12 posts from London to Hastings and 25 posts from London to Derby. The work of a further 10 posts was dispersed from London to VOSA staff located outside the South East, making a 2004–05 total of 47 posts. No relocations under the Lyons Review are currently planned for 2005–06, but further relocations are planned for future years.

Public Transport

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government is taking to ensure people have access to effective public transport, with particular reference to rural communities. [25903]

Ms Buck: We are working with the bus industry and local authorities to ensure that all communities have the effective bus services they need. The Bus Partnership Forum brings together senior representatives of the industry, central and local government to find practical ways of improving local bus services. The forum has, for example, published guidance on improving the punctuality of bus services and has encouraged bus operators and local authorities to form local punctuality improvement partnerships to help bring about improvements in performance.

Local and central Government provides funding of over £1.6 billion annually to support bus services. This includes £53 million this year provided by the Department in the form of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant to assist local authorities to support bus services in rural areas. Since 1998 we have also allocated a total of £110 million to 300 rural transport projects under the Rural Bus Challenge scheme.

On 1 November we announced "Kickstart" support, totalling £20 million, for 43 projects involving new and improved bus services which will become viable through growth in passenger numbers after an initial period of pump-priming from Government funds. 11 of these schemes will serve areas which are mainly rural in character.

Finally, we are expecting all local transport authorities to include accessibility strategies in their next Local Transport Plans, due in March next year. These strategies should be based on evidence and analysis of the problems people face in accessing jobs and essential services and facilities. They should include consideration of the accessibility and availability of local public transport. Our guidance to authorities makes clear that the strategies should take account of the particular needs of rural communities.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve public transport *(a)* in Leeds and *(b)* in West Yorkshire. [26171]

Ms Buck: This Government has invested in long term public transport improvements in Leeds and West Yorkshire as a whole. Funding provided to local authorities for local highways and public transport capital projects in West Yorkshire has increased by 46 per cent. in real terms over the last five years, from £34 million in 2000–01 to £54 million in 2005–06.

West Yorkshire has also benefited from significant investment in major bus schemes, with £39 million committed since 2001 to schemes that are realising major improvements in bus services. These include East Leeds Quality Bus Corridor, A641 Manchester Road, Bradford Quality Bus Scheme and West Yorkshire Education Transport (My Bus).

With regard to rail, 16 new four-coach Class 333 electric trains have been introduced on the Airedale and Wharfedale lines, which have seen a significant increase in patronage. This success story has helped rail patronage in West Yorkshire to rise from 16.3 million passengers in 1999–2000 to 21.1 million in 2004–05, an increase of 30 per cent. The new TransPennine franchise began in February 2004. It will deliver more than £250 million worth of investment, with a brand new fleet of 50 trains due to be introduced in 2006. Also benefiting Leeds and West Yorkshire is a 44 per cent. increase in East Coast main line services since 1996—currently 53 services per day, rising to 66 services per day in December 2007.

Railways

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in the development of the rail accident investigation branch since its establishment; how many times its officials have met representatives of the light rail sector; and what protocols have been established with the light rail sector. [26529]

Derek Twigg: The rail accident investigation branch (RAIB) was established in 2003 and consultation took place with 165 organisations in drawing up the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005. These regulations, which in addition to the Railway Transport and Safety Act 2003, give the RAIB its powers and duties came into force on 17 October 2005.

The RAIB has worked closely with the rail industry, including the light rail sector, during its development.

No protocols have been established for light rail as this has not been seen to be necessary by either the RAIB or the light rail sector. It is industry's responsibility to ensure their operational procedures are revised to reflect the changes necessary to comply with the rail accident investigation and reporting regulations and to reflect RAIB's work. However RAIB has had discussions with the light rail sector to facilitate this and has issued guidance. The light rail sector has indicated this has provided all the information necessary.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times officials from the Rail Accident and Investigation Branch have met representatives of *(a)* the police and *(b)* the Health and Safety Executive. [26531]

Derek Twigg: Since the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) was formed in 2003, officials from the RAIB have had frequent meetings with both the police and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* passengers in excess capacity and *(b)* total number of passengers was (i) for each London commuting service train operator and (ii) in total, broken down into (A) am peak and (B) pm peak figures measured in the most recent survey; and how many peak passengers into London there were for (1) am peak periods, (2) pm peak periods and (3) in total for each London commuting service train operator in that period. [24439]

Derek Twigg: The figures requested are in the following table:

Passenger counts : Services to and from London Terminals

	2004								
TOCs	*AM peak number of trains*	*Number of passengers*	*PIXC*	*PIXC (%)*	*PM peak number of trains*	*Number of passengers*	*PIXC*	*PIXC (%)*	*Overall*
Chiltern	36	9,518	157	1.6	34	8,451	0	0.0	0.9
Southern	140	75,228	5,833	7.8	134	58,174	1,040	1.8	5.2
SET	175	117,661	2,830	2.4	169	92,578	383	0.4	1.5
One	137	74,842	1,690	2.3	136	69,263	1,629	2.4	2.3
LTS/c2c	46	27,175	610	2.2	43	22,649	249	1.1	1.7
Silverlink	84	22,828	1,080	4.7	58	20,724	265	1.3	3.1
South West Trains	133	82,139	5,607	6.8	138	62,815	710	1.1	4.4
FGWL	41	10,874	275	2.5	39	9,627	147	1.5	2.1
Thameslink	50	26,995	651	2.4	55	23,736	650	2.7	2.6
WAGN	56	24,569	537	2.2	54	21,062	685	3.3	2.7
Total	898	471,829	19,270	4.1	860	389,079	5,758	1.5	2.9

Note:
Capacity measured at the point on the journey where the highest number of passengers is carried.

Road Accidents/Safety

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* road traffic accidents and *(b)* road fatalities there have been on the A14 in Suffolk in each of the last 10 years. [25181]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of personal injury road accidents and the number of resultant fatalities on the A14 in the county of Suffolk for the years 1995 to 2004 are shown in the table.

Year of accident	*Personal injury accidents*	*Fatalities*
1995	91	7
1996	101	5
1997	128	7
1998	123	2
1999	122	8
2000	138	8
2001	138	10
2002	157	5
2003	128	3
2004	143	5

The Department for Transport does not collect statistics on damage-only accidents.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the road safety implications of variable or rolling advertising billboards at road junctions; and if he will make a statement. [25002]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not undertaken such an assessment. Local planning authorities are responsible for the control of outdoor advertisements. They are required by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to consider public safety before giving consent to display an advertisement. Advice to them is to consider the effect of the advertisement on the safe use and operation of any form of traffic when considering an application for consent to display any advertising billboards at road junctions.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road safety violations by *(a)* domestic and *(b)* non-domestic heavy goods vehicles in England and Wales were recorded by the British Transport Police in England and Wales in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004; and if he will make a statement. [25135]

Derek Twigg: The numbers of crimes recorded in England and Wales by the British Transport Police (BTP) for the offence of failing to obey road traffic signs are shown as follows:

	Number of crimes
2002	1,866
2003	2,414
2004	1,863

The separate figures for *(a)* domestic and *(b)* non-domestic heavy goods vehicles can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to record the nationality of all drivers involved in road traffic accidents in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire. [25743]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1289W.

Road Schemes

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received opposing the Bexhill to Hastings link road; and if he will make a statement. [25237]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 668W. Since then there have been around 10 further written representations, all of which have been against the scheme.

Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females travelling in coaches were (i) killed, (ii) seriously injured and (iii) injured in road accidents in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and of these how many were wearing a seat belt. [25736]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table gives number of fatal, seriously injured and injured bus and coach users that were seated by gender .for 2000–04. Figures for coach users cannot be identified separately. Bus and coach casualties in the table are not necessarily those from vehicles used for public service. Routine statistics on accidents do not include information on seat belt usage.

Casualties: bus and coach users: 2000–04

	Fatal (seated)	*Seriously injured (seated)*	*Slightly injured (seated)*	*All seated casualties*	*All bus/coach casualties*
Male					
2000	5	60	1,527	1,592	3,486
2001	0	55	1,605	1,660	3,543
2002	4	53	1,391	1,448	3,179
2003	0	43	1,365	1,408	3,140
2004	5	50	1,450	1,505	3,144
Female					
2000	2	173	3,722	3,897	6,571
2001	1	142	3,575	3,718	6,328
2002	4	152	3,222	3,378	5,797
2003	0	129	3,447	3,576	5,908
2004	2	129	3,153	3,284	5,663
Total[1]					
2000	7	233	5,262	5,502	10,088
2001	1	197	5,188	5,386	9,884
2002	8	207	4,635	4,850	9,005
2003	0	172	4,826	4,998	9,068
2004	7	179	4,607	4,793	8,820

[1] Includes cases where gender was not reported.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the current seat belt wearing rate in coaches by *(a)* males and *(b)* females; and what the estimated rates were in each of the last two years for which figures are available. [25737]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not collected to make such estimates. Roadside observers undertake regular surveys for the Department of the seat belt wearing of drivers and passengers in cars and goods vehicles but cannot collect such information in respect of passengers in buses or coaches.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government plans to introduce the use of seat belts on buses. [26452]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer to the answer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southend West (Mr. Amess) today (UIN 25735) about seat belt wearing in coaches. There are no plans to require seat belts to be installed in vehicles that are not presently required to have them fitted.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the penalty is if a driver is found not to be wearing a seat belt while driving. [26459]

Dr. Ladyman: If a driver accepts a fixed penalty notice, the fine is £30. If convicted in court, the maximum fine is £500.

Transport Security and Contingencies Directorate

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial support the Transport Security Directorate has offered to International Maritime Organisation regional missions in each of the past three years. [24196]

Dr. Ladyman: The Transport Security and Contingencies Directorate has won support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Global Opportunities Fund (Counter Terrorism) funds in respect of:

Financial year	*Purpose*	*Sum (£)*
2005–06	IMO sub-regional seminar held in the Yemen	27,000
	Will be provided for a further six IMO projects	102,000
2004–05	Contribution to the International Maritime Security Trust Fund	180,000
	IMO security training courses in Africa	26,000
2003–04	n/a	None

Transport for London

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek to amend the relevant legislation to strengthen the requirements for consultation by Transport for London. [26024]

Ms Buck: We have no plans at present to amend the legislation.

Transport Investment (Eastern Region)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 384W, on what date a committee was appointed to advise on priorities for investment in transport for the Eastern region; and who the members of the committee are. [24984]

Dr. Ladyman: No committee has been specifically appointed to advise on priorities for investment in transport in the East of England. The advice will be

delivered through the East of England Regional Assembly following consideration by the Regional Planning Panel of that body. Details of the membership of the Regional Planning Panel can be obtained from the Regional Assembly's website.

Transport Projects

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what transport projects his Department is planning for *(a)* Houghton and Washington East constituency, *(b)* the Wearside area and *(c)* the North East Region. [25512]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State for Transport plans and funds through his Department and its agencies a variety of capital and revenue projects. He also funds projects which are planned by others, particularly local authorities, through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process and Revenue Support Grant allocations.

The LTP system provides capital funding to local authorities to cover expenditure on major schemes (those costing more than £5 million) and minor improvement works and maintenance by way of block allocations.

In terms of the block allocations, the guideline figures for the five years from 2006–07 are in the order of:

(a) The Houghton and Washington East Constituency

£25 million[1] for Sunderland city council. It is not possible to provide this information for the constituency.

(b) The Wearside area

As above.

(c) The North East Region

£410 million[1].

[1] Exact figures are confirmed annually and relate to the assessments of progress in delivering the LTPs.

In terms of Local Authority and Highways Agency capital transport infrastructure improvement projects costing more than £5 million, it should be noted that, in July 2005, regions were provided with indicative annual capital allocations to 2015–16 for transport (excluding rail funding) in order that they could prioritise schemes and provide advice to the Secretary of State in January 2006. Highways Agency trunk road projects in the North East included in this process are all bar those on the A1 in the region to its junction with the A19 from the south.

There are a number of major schemes in the region which have recently been completed or are currently under construction:

A167 Chilian Bypass, Durham

South Stockton Link Road

Stephenson Link, North Tyneside

Scotswood Road Dualling, Newcastle

Eldon Square Bus Station

Sunderland Southern radial Route

Durham Park and Ride

There are currently two major schemes in the region which are planned to commence construction in early 2006:

A66 Long Newton Junction Improvement, Stockton

Pegswood Bypass, Northumberland

In addition, the Department is involved with its regional partners in the planning or funding of the following major projects. Progress and timing for these schemes will be subject to regional advice, the future availability of finance and individual projects representing value for money:

(a) The Houghton and Washington East Constituency

Sunderland Central Route.

(b) The Wearside area

As above.

(c) The North East Region

North Middlesbrough Accessibility Improvement Scheme

Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor

Wheatley Hill to Bowburn, Durham

Northern Gateway, North Tyneside

A1 Adderstone to Belford Dualling, Northumberland

A1 Morpeth to Felton Dualling, Northumberland

A19 Seaton Burn Junction Improvement, North Tyneside

A19 Testos Junction Improvement, South Tyneside

A69 Haydon Bridge Bypass

A1 West Mains to Bridge Mill Dualling, Northumberland

A1 Gateshead/Newcastle Western Bypass Widening

A19 Moor Farm Junction Improvement, Northumberland

A19 Coast Road Junction Improvement, North Tyneside

A66 Bowes Bypass Dualling, Durham

A66 Cross Lanes to Greta Bridge Dualling, Durham

In addition to the above, there are further schemes which are identified in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy recently submitted to Ministers and which are emerging through Local Transport Plans and the on-going development of the trunk road and rail networks, which will be considered in due course but which have no degree of funding commitment at this stage.

Transport Security Directorate

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time staff are assigned to the Transport Security Directorate. [24198]

Dr. Ladyman: The Transport Security and Contingencies Directorate (TRANSEC) currently comprises 200 posts. As at 1 November 2005 TRANSEC had eight staff working on a part-time basis (less than normal full-time hours).

Vehicle Licensing

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what procedures are in place for local authorities to be able to cross-check details with *(a)* the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and *(b)* the police when neither the recipient of a penalty notice, nor their vehicle, has been in the vicinity of the relevant local authority area. [24854]

Dr. Ladyman: Regulations provide for the release of vehicle keeper details to the police and to local authorities for purposes connected with the investigation of an offence or decriminalised parking contravention. Local authorities can apply without

charge for the keeper at the date of event in writing or by completing a DVLA form. A number of local authorities have access to the DVLA data electronically either directly or through service providers. The police can also apply on a case-by-case basis and receive daily up-dates from DVLA for the Police National Computer.

The recipient of the penalty notice would be required to satisfy the local authority by providing evidence that he or she was not responsible for the offence. This would be a matter for the local authority concerned. It would always be open to the local authority to contact the police on a case by case basis if it was established that there were two vehicles carrying the same registration mark. In these circumstances the recipient of the penalty notice should also notify the police and DVLA of the issue.

Violence against Transport Personnel

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Hertsmere of 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1421–2W, on violence against transport personnel, how many bus drivers and conductors were the victims of offences of violence while on duty in Surrey in each of the last 10 years. [25692]

Ms Buck: The following table shows the number of incidents, of work-related violence to bus drivers which caused a physical injury (defined as absence from work lasting more than over three days) reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authorities under the Reporting of Injuries, Dangerous Diseases and Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995.

No fatal injuries to bus drivers, or fatal and non-fatal injuries to bus conductors, were reported to HSE in Surrey during the period.

	Local authority[1]		
Severity of injury	*Guildford*	*Mole Valley*	*Reigate and Banstead*
1996–97			
Non-fatal major injury	1	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	1	2
All reported injuries	1	1	2
1997–98			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	—	—
All reported injuries	—	—	—
1998–99			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	—	—
All reported injuries	—	—	—
1999–2000			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	—	—
All reported injuries	—	—	—
2000–01			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	—	—
All reported injuries	—	—	—
2001–02			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	—	—
All reported injuries	—	—	—
2002–03			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	—	—	—
All reported injuries	—	—	—
2003–04			
Non-fatal major injury	—	—	—
Over-3-day injury	1	—	2
All reported injuries	1	—	2
Total	2	1	4

[1] Other local authorities in Surrey reported no incidents.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Age Discrimination

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure there is no discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the grounds of age. [26141]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are currently considering the case for outlawing discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the grounds of age as part of its Discrimination Law Review, which was announced earlier this year. The Review's findings will inform the Single Equality Bill, which it intends to introduce during the lifetime of the Parliament, in line with manifesto commitments.

Alternative Energy Provision

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research and development funding has been made available by his Department to *(a)* wind energy, *(b)* tidal stream, *(c)* tidal lagoon, *(d)* biomass, *(e)* wave power, *(f)* photovoltaics, *(g)* solar and *(h)* solar hot water systems in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [22896]

Malcolm Wicks: Funding made available for research and development by the Department into renewable technologies is not pre-allocated on a technology type basis. The primary mechanism for applying for research and development funding is through the technology call process whereby each application is treated on its individual merits along with the others that have responded to that particular technology call.

In addition the Research Councils have supported further research relating to energy in the work of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, which has some £10 million funding from Research Councils over 2000–05, and in the work of the UK Energy Research Centre, which commenced operation in 2004, with a budget of £13 million for 2004–09.

The DTI spend on research and development for new and renewable technologies can be found in the following table.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1999–2000

Rounded to nearest £000

	Spend					
Programme area	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Solar	1,278,000	1,264,000	1,522,000	4,485,000	3,131,000	1,970,340
Tidal	0	27,000	305,000	1,996,000	2,914,000	1,268,530
Wave	11,000	331,000	662,000	748,000	2,104,000	—
Wind	801,000	913,000	1,248,000	1,428,000	1,395,000	1,459,600

Notes:
1. From 2000–01, figures do not include spend on contracts placed direct by DTI
2. For 2004–05, the figure for tidal is a combined spend for the wave and tidal.

Research Council spend

Research area	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Wind	178,000	261,000	330,000	490,000	482,000	256,000
Wave and tidal	175,000	301,000	606,000	617,000	830,000	1,050,000
Biomass	736,000	601,000	701,000	783,000	1,043,000	1,186,000
Biofuel	0	22,000	52,000	144,000	135,000	92,000
Photovoltaic	2,760,000	2,992,000	3,536,000	2,770,000	2,381,000	2,762,000
Solar	1,076,000	1,134,000	1,130,000	1,157,000	1,453,000	1,753,000

BREEAM98

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of *(a)* new building work and *(b)* refurbishment of buildings of (i) his Department and (ii) agencies of his Department has been subject to environment assessment using BREEAM and BREEAM98 since May 1997. [21510]

Alan Johnson: Since May 1997, my Department has not carried out any new building work. Any refurbishments works carried out in this period have not involved changes to building structures and services for which a BREEAM assessment would be appropriate.

In 1996 a BREEAM assessment was undertaken as part of the major refurbishment of 1 Victoria Street when it achieved a very good rating.

Letter from Ron Marchant to Mr. Alan Reid, dated 9 November 2005:

I am responding to this parliamentary question, tabled on 20 October 2005. No refurbishment or new building work undertaken at the Patent Office since May 1997 has been subject to environmental assessment using BREEAM andBREEAM98.

Letter from Iain MacGregor to Mr. Alan Reid, dated 9 November 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply on behalf of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) to your question regarding what percentage of *(a)* new building work, and *(b)* refurbishment of buildings of DTI agencies has been subject to environment assessment using BREEAM and BREEAM98 since May 1997.

NWML rents the building at Teddington from DTI. The answer already given to you by DTI Headquarters will have covered any building works completed here at NWML.

Letter from Jeanne Spinks to Mr. Alan Reid, dated 9 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what percentage of *(a)* new building work and *(b)* refurbishment of buildings of (i) his Department and (ii) agencies of his Department has been subject to environment assessment using BREEAM and BREEAM98 since May 1997.

Since May 1997 this Agency has not carried out any new building work. Any refurbishment works carried out in this period have not involved changes to building structures and services for which a BREEAM assessment would be appropriate.

Letter from Desmond Flynn to Mr. Alan Reid, dated 9 November 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply to you directly on behalf of The Insolvency Service in respect of your question (1344/2005) asking about our use of BREEAM and BREEAM98 assessments of our new building work and refurbishments since 1997.

We have undertaken no new building work since 1997. Our refurbishment work in the period has only been concerned with redecoration and partitions removals and has therefore has not been considered appropriate for BREEAM assessment.

Letter from Claire Clancy to Mr. Alan Reid, dated 9 November 2005:

I am responding to your recently tabled Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on behalf of Companies House, which is an Executive Agency of the DTI.

Companies House has not carried out any new building work or refurbishment of buildings using BREEAM or BREEAM98.

British Summer Time

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if Her Majesty's Government will accept the recommendation of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents for a three year pilot of single/double summer time to establish whether lighter evenings all year round will reduce road casualties. [26480]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The last experiment with lighter evenings between 1968 and 1971 proved to be unpopular and was abandoned following a vote in Parliament. The Government have no plans to introduce another pilot of single/double summertime.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effects on accidents at work of turning back the clocks each October. [26481]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I am not aware of any recent specific research on the effects on accidents at work of turning back the clocks each October.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent estimate the Government have made of the carbon dioxide emissions produced by the building, maintenance and decommissioning of a tidal power station over *(a)* 10, *(b)* 20 and *(c)* 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [25667]

Malcolm Wicks: The carbon dioxide emissions produced by the building, maintenance and decommissioning of a tidal power station will vary on a case-by-case basis.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23735]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI HQ estate engaged with the Carbon Trust framework on Carbon Management in 2004 at which time the Carbon Trust undertook a survey of the estate to:

(a) promote energy saving efficiency awareness with DTI building occupants, and,

(b) to conduct a survey of DTI HQ buildings and plant to identify where, with investment, energy efficiencies could be made.

As a result of this the Department has reviewed the findings and has developed proposals for the estate infrastructure to improve energy efficiency.

The Department will be including the Carbon Trust carbon management 'five stage' approach within its estate strategy to meet its commitment to achieving the energy targets and Part L of the building regulations .

Clear Skies Programme

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many community projects receiving funding under his Department's Clear Skies programme. [27207]

Malcolm Wicks: 333 Community projects are receiving grant support under the Clear Skies Programme.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has for ensuring continuity of support for school and other community projects under his Department's Clear Skies programme. [27208]

Malcolm Wicks: A new low carbon buildings programme will continue to offer grant support to school and community projects once the current Clear Skies Programme comes to an end. The new programme will begin in April 2006, subject to EU State Aids approval. My Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding will be available for school *(a)* hot water, *(b)* wind, *(c)* biomass and *(d)* ground-source heat pump projects after the final deadline for applications to his Department's Clear Skies programme. [27209]

Malcolm Wicks: Further funding for schools will be available through a low carbon buildings programme, which will allow developers to chose the most appropriate technology for each project, including all those mentioned above. The new programme will begin in April 2006, subject to EU State Aids approval. The Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and

Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [22281]

Alun Michael: The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has, since 1997, introduced a range of policies which:

Foster science and innovation,

Champion business in Government, Europe and across the world,

Raise UK productivity and promote high performance workplaces,

Build flexible labour markets,

Ensure that citizens' and employees rights are protected,

Increase consumer choice by opening up markets to fair competition,

Ensure that all our regions and nations contribute fully to the UK's economic performance,

Deliver, and plan for the future delivery of, secure and sustainable energy.

Since 1997 the Department has applied policies which have resulted in there being some 300,000 more businesses than in 1997. We have made life easier for business by cutting corporation tax, simplifying VAT registration and setting the highest VAT threshold in Europe. We have simplified company law and introduced reforms removing the preferential creditor status of the Crown, freeing up £70 million more each year for business. The Company Law Reform Bill will generate deregulatory benefits of some £250 million a year (including £100 million for small companies), and we are pursuing a £1 billion deregulatory target over the lifetime of our five year programme.

In 2001 we undertook a review of our direct business support measures and subsequently introduced a range of streamlined and simplified products, which include grants and loans for capital investment and research and development, knowledge transfer, and support for the implementation of best practice. The annual business support measures budget is some £400 million, and many of the DTI services have been delivered through strong and effective regional development agencies since their creation in 1999.

Recognising the importance of manufacturing to the UK economy, the DTI launched its Manufacturing Strategy in 2002. The strategy sets out the actions needed to create a high value, high skill manufacturing sector capable of introducing new products and processes into our economy, creating new markets, and delivering a huge boost to our prosperity. The Manufacturing Advisory Service, which provides expert advice to manufacturers, has to date generated over £155 million of added value for UK firms.

The DTI is working to significantly strengthen the links between higher education and industry, and will continue to build on the UK's outstanding science base. Between 1997 and 2007, the science budget will have more than doubled, rising to £[illegible] billion.

The Department seeks to work closely with all our stakeholders. We have introduced independent members to the DTI board enabling us to function better with input from business people, trade unionists, academics and others.

Although the policies and initiatives mentioned above have benefited individuals, businesses and communities in every part of the United Kingdom, it is not possible to quantify precisely all of the benefits accruing directly to individual constituencies.

Energy Shortages/Supplies

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contingency plans he has in place to respond to possible energy shortages in *(a)* industry and *(b)* domestic homes this winter; and what forecast he has for energy usage in the next 20 years. [26129]

Malcolm Wicks: National Grid's Winter Outlook report shows that under normal weather conditions there are sufficient gas supplies and electricity generation to meet demand.

Under much worse than normal winter weather, or if unexpected major problems are experienced on the supply side, it may be necessary for large industrial users to restrain demand for gas. Much of this can be done through the electricity generating industry switching to coal or other fuels. In a competitive market such as that in the UK we would expect this to take place on a commercial basis in response to price signals indicating tightness in the gas market.

Ministers are liaising with both Ofgem and National Grid to ensure that all possible measures are taken to anticipate problems with power supply in the highly unlikely event of the market being unable to balance supply and demand in this way.

Under all credible scenarios, however, the market will be able to deliver energy supplies to domestic consumers.

Projections of future energy usage up to 2020 can be found in annex 4 of: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_addendum.pdf

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with EU partners on the security of energy supplies. [24352]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have had extensive discussions with EU partners, including member states, the European Commission and European Parliament, on a range of energy issues, including security of energy supplies.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had *(a)* with Ministerial colleagues and *(b)* others about the security of the UK's energy supply. [24170]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State gave on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 949.

Gas Suppliers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contingency plans the Department has to ensure the continued supply of gas in the event of a domestic gas supplier ceasing to trade. [23917]

Malcolm Wicks: Since the implementation of the Utilities Act 2000 licensing schemes and standard licence conditions in October 2001, Ofgem has had the power to appoint a Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) for all customers, domestic and non-domestic, in both the gas and electricity markets. This power is essential to ensure that all of a failed supplier's customers have continuity of supply.

Under the current licence conditions Ofgem can require any licensed gas supplier to become a SoLR and take the responsibility for supplying gas to customers of another supplier whose licence has been revoked. For customers whose annual consumption is reasonably expected to be less than 73,200 kWh the authority can direct a supplier to be a SoLR. For customers whose annual consumption is reasonably expected to be between 73,200 kWh and 2,196,000 kWh the authority can only direct a supplier to be a SoLR with that supplier's consent. There is no provision for appointing a SoLR (by consent or otherwise) for customers whose annual consumption is reasonably expected to be more than 2,196,000 kWh.

Once appointed, a SoLR will initially be supplying the customer on a deemed contract. This deemed contract will cover the period from appointment until customers have agreed a replacement contract with the SoLR or another supplier of their choice. There are licence obligations to ensure that the prices charged under a deemed contract are not excessive. A SoLR's deemed contract must also allow for its termination when the customer chooses to take a supply from another supplier.

Fuel Poverty

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people he estimates were living in fuel poverty in each of the last five years; what estimate he has made of the numbers in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [26205]

Malcolm Wicks: Figures for the number of households in fuel poverty in England are produced from analysis of the English House Condition Survey. From 2003, the survey is being carried out on a continuous rolling basis. Prior to 2001, however, this survey was conducted on a five-yearly basis. Hence, the number of households in fuel poverty is not available for all of the last five years. The figures for 2001 and 2003 are available, with an estimate being available for 2002. These statistics are detailed in the following table:

Million

	Total number of households in fuel poverty	*Total number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty*
2001	1.7	1.4
2002 (estimate)	1.4	1.2
2003	1.2	1.0

Fuel poverty statistics for the United Kingdom are published in the UK Fuel Poverty Annual Progress Report.

Analysis of the overall effects of changes in fuel prices and incomes, excluding consideration of energy efficiency improvements, suggests that the total number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty is likely to rise by between 200,000 and 800,000 households in England between 2003 and 2006. This is based on a range of price and income assumptions published by the DTI in July 2005.

Internet

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his policy is on the governing and administration of the internet. [25631]

Alun Michael: DTI is actively engaged with key players in the provision of internet services in the UK. Our approach to the administration of the internet has been to rely on self-regulation informed by a continuing dialogue on public policy issues—such as spam and child pornography—where Government and business can and do effectively work in partnership prevent or end abuse. The take-up and innovative use of broadband in the UK compares favourably with other leading industrial countries and reinforces the value of this approach.

The international aspects of governing and administering the internet is a key issue currently under discussion for the World Summit on the Information Society, due to take place in Tunis from 16–18 November

The EU position, which I shall present on behalf of the UK as presidency of the Council of the European Union, is defined by the Council conclusions of 27 June. We recognise that the United States Government carry out their key role fairly and effectively, but that a number of countries would want a more multilateral involvement in what they see as key internet infrastructure. We recognise the need to show the international accountability of the system. This is why the EU is advocating a new cooperation model, building on existing structures to assure all countries that the system continues to be managed in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

Mine Reserves Services Ltd.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with the local authority about further financial support to Mines Reserve Services Ltd., in its role as a provider of the statutory Mines Reserve Scheme, for *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08. [25482]

Malcolm Wicks: The Coal Authority has provided £5 million of support to Mines Rescue Services Ltd. over the last two years using unexpected gains from the sale of property assets inherited from British Coal. It appears unlikely at this stage, however, that further gains will emerge to enable such funding this year or in the future.

Powergen

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on recent mistakes made by Powergen in billing customers; and what discussions he plans to have with the company to consider the implications of the billing problems. [26026]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* I understand that Powergen's recent errors in billing some of its customers arose from its introduction of a single billing system across its operations. The migration of former customers of TXU Energi, which has now been completed, was the cause of particular difficulties affecting customers in Eastern England. Energywatch, which is responsible for investigating complaints against gas and electricity suppliers, is currently exploring with Powergen both any further action required to address billing errors and the company's proposals for dealing with customers who have been distressed or inconvenienced by those errors.

Smart Meters

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 796–97W on smart meters, what is involved in the work being undertaken by officials from his Department, Ofgem and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on a market framework and cost/benefit analysis; and when he expects the group will report. [25934]

Malcolm Wicks: My officials, working closely with Ofgem and Defra, are currently assessing the market framework for metering in the UK. Ofgem are currently undertaking an analysis of the costs/benefits of different kinds of innovative metering options, focusing on what evidence there is to support possible benefits and looking at what lessons can be learned from international experience in markets such as Italy and California. Their analysis will be completed by the end of the year.

St. George's Day

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will take steps to introduce an official national holiday on St. George's Day. [25938]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The present pattern of bank holidays in the United Kingdom is well established and accepted, and the Government have no plans to change the arrangements.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effects on UK business of the EU's Working Time Directive; and if he will make a statement. [25438]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government published a Compliance Cost Assessment (CCA) of the predicted effect of the EU Working Time Directive on UK business with Explanatory Memorandum 13526/98 on 11 January 1999.

The Department has also commissioned and published five research reports on the effects of the Working Time Directive, in its Employment Relations Research Series. A summary of Departmental monitoring and evaluation of the Working Time Regulations can be found in "Employment relations monitoring and evaluation plan 2005" (No. 44, July 2005).

The European Parliament and Council of Ministers are currently debating proposals from the Commission to amend the Working Time Directive. The Government has published two initial Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) of the predicted effect of the proposed Directive on UK business. The most recent was submitted on 12 July 2005, following Explanatory Memorandum 9554/05.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Petrol Allowance

Tom Brake: To ask the Leader of the House how many hon. Members claimed the petrol allowance in the last year for which figures are available; and how much each of the 10 highest claimers claimed: [24613]

Mr. Hoon: 591 Members claimed a total of £3.73 million in motor mileage allowance in the 2004–05 financial year. The amounts claimed by each of the top 10 highest claimers were as follows:

£22,845.01
£22,034.80
£17,876.48
£17,822.65
£17,581.58
£17,317.35
£16,185.36
£14,703.52
£14,247.12
£14,016.46

In 2004–05 the motor mileage allowance was paid as follows:

up to 20,000 miles per year at the rate of 57.7p per mile;
over 20,000 at 26.6p per mile.

For 2005–06 this rate has been reduced to a rate of 40p for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter.

SCOTLAND

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23723]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office subscribes to the environmental policies adopted by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Constitutional Affairs, on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 162W.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23523]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office's IT systems and support are provided by the Scottish Executive. There have been only two IT projects specific to the Scotland Office since 2001, both of which centred on the redevelopment of websites. As both projects were relatively small, neither was subject to a Gateway review.

CABINET OFFICE

Better Regulation Taskforce

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the Better Regulation Task Force's analysis of the extent of regulation faced by voluntary and community organisations. [26347]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Better Regulation Task Force is an independent body, set up to advise Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement comply with the five principles of good regulation.

My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office (Paul Goggins), has agreed to act as sponsor Minister for this report and will prepare a formal reply from the Government within the specified 60 days.

The Government welcomes the report which contains a number of helpful recommendations on ways to improve the regulatory climate in which the voluntary and community sector operates.

Senior Civil Service

John Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the representation in the senior civil service of *(a)* women, *(b)* people with disabilities and *(c)* ethnic minorities in 2004–05. [26679]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The civil service has already made good progress in increasing diversity at senior levels—meeting its targets to double the proportion of women in top management posts, from 12.7 per cent. in 1998 to 25.5 per cent. in 2005, and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds in the senior civil service (SCS), from 1.6 per cent. (1998) to 3.2 per cent. (2005). The civil service did not achieve the 2005 targets of 35 per cent. of women in the SCS and 3 per cent. for disabled staff in the SCS but still made significant progress, from 17.8 per cent. (1998) to 29.1 per cent. (2005) and from 1.5 per cent. (1998) to 2.3 per cent. (2005) respectively. Delivering A Diverse Civil Service—A 10-Point Plan, launched on 1 November 2005, commits to 10 key areas of change to lead broader change across the service in the way we manage and value equality and diversity at all levels, in all aspects of our business.

WALES

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22579]

Mr. Hain: None at present.

Poultry Cull (Avian Influenza)

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government on the likely economic consequences of a large-scale cull of poultry in Wales following an avian influenza outbreak. [24504]

Mr. Hain: I have regular meetings with the Assembly's First Minister to discuss a variety of issues of which a possible outbreak of avian influenza in Wales is one.

The Assembly Government have worked closely with the poultry industry in Wales to develop its contingency plan. This plan will enable Wales to play its part in delivering a swift and seamless response to any 'bird flu' outbreak and ensure that the Assembly Government are taking the necessary measures to achieve this aim.

Government's present assessment is that the likelihood of further geographical spread across the world is high. This in turn increases the risk to the UK as it increases the opportunities for the introduction of the virus via migrating birds, trade in live birds and movement of people. Government are continuing to monitor developments closely and is also working with the poultry industry to minimise the risk of the disease entering the UK and address the impact on the industry if an outbreak does occur.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. Mudie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time was between the receipt of an appeal by his Department's appeal processing centre and the despatch of that appeal to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal in the last period for which figures are available. [24873]

Andy Burnham: Since 4 April 2005 appeals have been lodged direct with the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT). They are then forwarded to the Appeals Processing Centre to prepare the appeal bundle.

Data are unavailable for appeals lodged prior to 4 April 2005 and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

For appeals lodged after 4 April 2005 the average processing times are as follows:

Asylum appeals: 4.3 days

In-country immigration appeals: 17.8 days.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which regions of Somalia are deemed by his Department to be safe for returned failed asylum seekers. [18108]

Mr. McNulty: The safety or otherwise of a particular part of Somalia for a particular claimant will depend on the individual circumstances of that claimant. We do not make a generalised assessment of safety irrespective of the individual circumstances.

All Somali asylum and human rights applications are considered by the Home Office on their individual merits, in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Each application is considered against the background of the latest available information about the situation in the country of origin. These sources include intergovernmental organisations, governmental sources and human rights organisations. Full account is taken of the ability of the individual concerned to safely reside in other parts of Somalia. caseworkers have access to the Somalia Country report produced by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND) Country of Origin Information Service as well as the Somalia Operational Guidance Note which assesses the most common types of asylum claims received and the circumstances in which they are likely to prove well founded or unfounded. Both documents are published on the IND website.

The Government firmly believe that the right approach is to continue to carefully assess the protection needs of individuals on an individual basis. Returns are similarly taken forward on a case by case basis and we only enforce the return of an individual where we are satisfied that the person concerned will not be at risk and has been unsuccessful in any appeals against the decision in their particular case.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* pregnant women, *(b)* single mothers with young babies, *(c)* single adults with young children and *(d)* families are in receipt of National Asylum Support Service section 4 support. [20495]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is not recorded centrally and could be obtained only by an examination of individual case records. Families with children represent only a small fraction of the total on section 4 support. Failed asylum seekers who have children in their household generally retain access to regular NASS support provided under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and have no need to seek section 4 support. Access to section 95 support is only usually lost if they fail to comply with removal directions or fail to take steps to leave the United Kingdom voluntarily and therefore fall to be considered under the provisions of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what support is available for failed asylum seekers with mental health problems. [23876]

Mr. McNulty: The general position is that failed asylum seekers are no longer entitled to access free NHS healthcare. This does not prevent failed asylum seekers being sectioned under Mental Health legislation or receiving after-sectioning care. Failed asylum seekers who have been discharged from compulsory detention under the Mental Health Act 1983 are entitled to receive continuing residential support in the community. Failed asylum seekers with mental health problems, identified as in need of care and attention as a result of being destitute, may be supported by the local authority under the National Assistance Act 1948.

Colombia (Drug Traffickers)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to stop drug traffickers from Colombia selling drugs in the UK. [22954]

Paul Goggins: UK law enforcement authorities work closely with their international colleagues in Colombia, and in other countries along the supply route, in order to reduce the amount of cocaine trafficked into the UK. From 1 April next year this task will become the responsibility of the newly formed Serious Organised Crime Agency.

In 2003–04 23 tonnes of cocaine which was destined for consumption in the UK was taken out of the supply chain and 175 organised crime groups responsible for supplying class A drugs to the UK were disrupted or dismantled.

Correspondence

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will respond to the letter of 19 September from the hon. Member for Banbury regarding Miranda Alia, Ref No A1034158. [18135]

Mr. McNulty: My hon. Friend, the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, (Andy Burnham) wrote to the hon. Member on 12 October.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many investigating officers were appointed by the Criminal Cases Review Commission during the period from 31 March 2003 to 31 March 2004; and how many cases were investigated during this period. [21727]

Fiona Mactaggart: As at 31 March 2004 the Criminal Cases Review Commission had 47 case review managers (CRMs) in post. Two CRMs were appointed between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004 and there were five departures. During the period, 901 cases were completed and 885 new cases were received. The Commission also appointed five investigating officers under section 19 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995 between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 to investigate six cases. There was also one ongoing investigation in the same period which involved one investigating officer investigating three cases.

Diplomatic Immunity

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list offences committed in the UK in 2004 by persons holding diplomatic immunity, broken down by nationality. [16702]

Mr. Straw: I have been asked to reply.

I shall issue a written statement within this parliamentary Session, which will contain a list of offences allegedly committed by persons holding diplomatic immunity in the UK in 2004. The list will not be broken down by nationality because disclosure of this information could damage our relations with the countries concerned and affect their willingness to cooperate with us in future when dealing with alleged offenders.

Forensic Science Service

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress towards the Forensic Science Service becoming a public-private partnership. [26677]

Andy Burnham: The Government's intention is that the Forensic Science Service will become a Government-owned company in December 2005. A public-private partnership remains an option for the future, and no irrevocable decision about the future status of the organisation will be taken before December 2006.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress with the transformation of the Forensic Science Service from a trading fund to a wholly owned Government company. [26678]

Andy Burnham: The target date for vesting as a government-owned company remains December 2005.

Identity Cards

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he expects the cost of the registration and issuing of a biometric passport and biometric identity card to be. [19169]

Mr. McNulty: The current best estimate for the unit cost of an adult passport/ID card package for UK citizens valid for 10 years is £93. The actual amount charged to a person will depend on future policy decisions on charging within the scope allowed by the Identity Cards Bill.

Illegal Immigrants

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his most recent estimate is of the number of people living illegally in the United Kingdom *(a)* through overstaying visas, *(b)* as illegal immigrants and *(c)* as failed asylum seekers; and if he will make a statement. [22843]

Mr. McNulty: No government has ever been able to produce an accurate figure for the number of people who are in the country illegally. By its very nature it is impossible to quantify accurately, and that remains the case.

Although it is impossible to determine accurately how many people are in the UK illegally the Home Office published a report which included an estimate of the size of the illegal migrant population in the UK in 2001. A copy of the RDS On-line report 29/05—"Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001" can be found at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/june_summaries.html

It's Your Call Campaign

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many police forces have introduced an It's Your Call Campaign; and if he will make a statement; [21932]

(2) what assessment has been made of the It's Your Call Campaign; and if he will make a statement. [21934]

Hazel Blears: "It's Your Call" campaigns have been introduced in 47 areas around the country. It has been for the individual area to decide on how the It's the Call service should be implemented and which of the services might take the lead for responding to the initial call. This initiative is part of the commitment made by Action Areas to raise levels of action and to make services more accessible to the public. The campaign seeks to encourage the community to play their part in reporting antisocial behaviour and for feedback to be communicated on the actions taken.

An early evaluation of the campaign focused on callers from eight of the first 25 areas showed that the campaign had been a success. Four out of five callers (82 per cent.) would recommend it to a friend or neighbour and two thirds (66 per cent.) had their problem resolved after just one call. Nearly three in five (57 per cent.) said they were satisfied with this new service.

The 'It's Your Call Antisocial Behaviour Hotline Evaluation Survey' can be found by visiting the TOGETHER website at www.together.gov.uk.

Knife Crime

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent knife crimes were recorded in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* England; and how many led to convictions. [23696]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally. Violent crimes involving the use of a knife cannot be separately identified in the recorded crime statistics.

Police

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Ogmore of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 168W, on police force structures, what guidance he has given to chief officers and police authorities on the criteria they should adhere to in drawing up proposals for the restructuring of police forces. [18665]

Hazel Blears: The Home Secretary wrote to all Chief Officers and Chairs of Police Authorities on 22 September to set out his views on the development of options for force restructuring. The letter outlined the key design criteria which forces and authorities should consider when developing options for force restructuring. The criteria is outlined in the table.

To complement these criteria and to support the development of proposals for change, a toolkit and guidance to help forces with evaluating options for change has been sent to all forces and authorities.

The Home Secretary's letter, the criteria and the toolkit and guidance are available on the Home Office website.

Criteria	*Description*
Size	To what extent do the proposals for restructuring create units of sufficient size (the HMIC report gave an indicative figure of a minimum of 4,000 officers, 6,000 total staff) to provide the necessary capacity and resilience in the provision of protective services to meet both current and future demands for such services?
Mix of capability	Mix of capability—and reduction in risks- to what extent do the prospective partnerships bring together forces with complementary strengths in addressing volume crime and the provision of protective services? To what extent will they enable performance in relation to both to be improved?
Criminal markets	To what extent do the proposals take cognisance of the underlying criminal markets and patterns of cross-boarder criminality in the areas concerned?
Geography	To what extent do the proposals recognise and take account of particular challenges posed by the geography of the proposed force area and the transport links and worrying patterns within it?
Co-terminosity	To what extent do the proposals respect established political and partners boundaries or, alternatively, support the case for the realignment of the boundaries of other partner agencies so that the benefits of co-terminosity can be preserved? The very strong starting presumption will be that any new force areas should not subdivide an existing force area between two or more new forces and that the new forces areas should not cross Government office regional boundaries (it follows that very compelling arguments would need to be submitted in support of any merger proposals which went contrary to these presumptions).
Identity	To what extent do the proposals build on strong historical or regional identities?
Clarity of command and control and accountability	To what extent are the proposed governance arrangements for any new entity clear and unambiguous.
Performance	To what extent do the proposals for restructuring minimise any risks to current performance during the transitional period and support further improvements in performance over the medium-term? (assessments under this heading should be made against the statutory performance indicators).
Costs and efficiency	To what extent will the proposals minimise the cost of change and maximise efficiency savings?

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the grant to West Mercia police authority on a per head of population basis differs from the neighbouring police authority areas. [25337]

Hazel Blears: Government general funding for police authorities is based on the relative need of each police authority area for police services, calculated by the police funding formula. To identify the pressures satisfactorily, the formula uses a range of socio-economic indicators. Funding is not, and never has been, distributed on a simple per capita basis.

Seatbelts (Fixed Penalties)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued for *(a)* carrying a child under 14 years without a seatbelt (i) in the front and (ii) in the rear seat, *(b)* driving a car with an unrestrained child under 12 years and *(c)* failure to wear a seatbelt in the Humberside police area in each of the past five years. [24759]

Paul Goggins: Available information held centrally on police action taken for motoring seat belt offences, does not distinguish between the offence of driving/riding in a motor vehicle not wearing a seat belt and that of driving a motor vehicle with a child not wearing seat belt. Nor does it distinguish between individual circumstances that may have existed at the time each offence was committed.

Primates

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many primates have been used for biomedical tests in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years. [10194]

Andy Burnham: The number of primates used in procedures for which the primary purpose was applied studies in human medicine or dentistry is given in Table 1a of the annual publication Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, a copy of which is in the Library.

Only the number of procedures starting in a particular year is recorded against that particular year; the figures exclude procedures which started in a previous year and are ongoing.

A brief extract from this table, showing also total figures, is shown in the table.

Number

	Non-human primates which started regulated procedures under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986	*Applied studies in human medicine or dentistry*
1999	3,191	2,740
2000	2,951	2,473
2001	3,342	2,511
2002	3,173	2,649
2003	3,073	2,191

Road Accidents

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people involved in road traffic accidents in the Humberside police area were *(a)* uninsured, *(b)* banned from driving and *(c)* had not passed a driving test in each of the past five years. [24761]

Paul Goggins: The information is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action the Government are taking to reduce the number of road accidents. [26450]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

In March 2000, the Government launched the road safety strategy, "Tomorrow's roads—safer for everyone", establishing new long-term 10 year casualty reduction targets to be achieved by the end of 2010. These are:

a 40 per cent. reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI)

a 50 per cent. reduction in the number of child (under 16) KSIs

a 10 per cent. reduction in the rate of slight casualties, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres

(compared with the average for 1994–98).

The Department for Transport has a road safety public service agreement (PSA) target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured and children killed or seriously injured as outlined above. In 2002 the PSA target was strengthened to include a commitment to

"tackling the higher incidence of casualties among disadvantaged communities".

The first review of the road safety strategy was published in April 2004 and concluded that good progress was being made. It highlighted issues of particular concern, such as the levelling out of road deaths and the potential under reporting of slight casualties. The Department for Transport has commissioned research to investigate both of these issues. The second review of the strategy will commence in spring 2006.

A comprehensive Road Safety Bill is currently progressing through the House of Lords, to give effect to several elements of the road safety strategy and support the casualty reduction targets.

There is continued good progress towards our targets. Full 2004 data (published 29 September 2005) show KSI casualties 28 per cent. down on the 1994–98 baseline, and child KSIs down 43 per cent. 2004 saw the biggest annual drop (8 per cent.) in both deaths and serious injuries since the road safety strategy was launched. Provisional data for Q2 2005 show a continuing decline in KSIs, down 33 per cent. on baseline.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deaths of children aged seven to 16 years there were on 30 miles per hour limit roads in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [26453]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

The number of children aged seven to 16 years killed in personal injury road accidents between 1997 and 2004 on roads where the speed limit was 30 miles per hour are shown in the table.

	Number of fatalities
1997	111
1998	82
1999	89
2000	98
2001	110
2002	78
2003	81
2004	75

We remain committed to achieving our PSA targets of a 40 per cent. reduction in the overall number of people killed or seriously injured compared with the 1994–98 baseline by 2010; and our target of reducing the number of children aged 0–15 killed or seriously injured to 50 per cent. of the 1994–98 baseline by 2010. In 2004 all killed and seriously injured casualties were 28 per cent. below the baseline and such child casualties were 43 per cent. below the baseline.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of the location of the Tetra mast in Haverfordwest; and if he will make a statement. [657]

Hazel Blears: None. The provision of the infrastructure needed by the airwave radio system is the responsibility of O_2 Airwave, the network provider. Radio masts are subject to ODPM planning regulations.

Vehicle Excise Duty Evasion

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were convicted of vehicle excise duty evasion in each of the last six years. [24629]

Paul Goggins: *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database from 1998 to 2003 (latest available) is given in the following table. 2004 data will be available early in 2006.

Total findings of guilt at all courts for the vehicle offence of failing to pay appropriate duty[1] England and Wales, 1998–2003

	Number of offence England and Wales
1998	143,600
1999	126,657
2000	132,776
2001	129,183
2002	134,598
2003	176,581

[1] Offence under the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 s. 29 (1)—(3)

Note:

The statistics of court proceedings are based on returns made by the police to the Home Office's Data Collection Group. Although these include offences where there have been no police involvement such as those prosecutions instigated by Government Departments (in this case DVLA) and private organisations and individuals, the reporting of these types of offences is known to be incomplete. Moreover, it is thought that for some police force areas, the reporting of court proceedings, in particular those relating to motoring offences and to TV licence evasion may also be less than complete; the extent of under-reporting may vary from year to year and this could be responsible in part for the annual variations.

Vehicle Offences

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded theft and unauthorised taking of vehicle offences there were in the Humberside police area in each of the past five years. [24758]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is given in the following tables.

Table 1: Offences of theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle recorded by the police in Humberside—2000–01 and 2001–02

	Number of offences
2000–01	6,033
2001–02	6,469

Note:

The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences of theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle recorded by the police in Humberside—2002–03 to 2004–05

	Number of offences
2002–03	7,607
2003–04	7,619
2004–05	6,096

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Amicus v. The Government

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects a decision by the European Court of Justice in the case being brought by Amicus against the Government. [25177]

Mr. Timms: It is difficult to predict with any certainty when judgment in this case may be given. However, from our experience of other cases, we would expect a decision in 2007. The timing is, of course, dependent on the court's handling of the case, and the timing of each case can vary.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects the Financial Assistance Scheme to become fully operational; and if he will make a statement. [24667]

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects payments to be made for those eligible for support under the Financial Assistance Scheme. [24697]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Assistance Scheme Operational Unit opened for business on 1 September. The Unit is currently receiving scheme information during the notification period which concludes on 28 February 2006. As my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) said in a written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 610, we hope to make the first payments before Christmas.

Hemel Hempstead

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency, *(b)* Dacorum and *(c)* Lancashire who have lost their pensions due to firm insolvency since 1997. [25747]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 461W to the hon. Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham).

Incapacity Benefit

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants of working age receive *(a)* income support with a disability premium, *(b)* incapacity benefit and *(c)* severe disablement allowance; and how many did so in May 1997. [22190]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the table.

Numbers of working age claimants of incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, and income support with a disability premium, by benefit combination at dates shown

	May 1997	2005
Incapacity benefit only	1,730,800	1,614,500
Incapacity benefit and income support	550,300	867,200
Income support only	106,400	116,200
Severe disability allowance only	144,200	76,200
Severe disability allowance and income support	199,200	183,400

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. 5 per cent. IB/SDA figures have been rated up to match 100 per cent. WPLS totals for working age IB/SDA.
3. "Income support" includes only those income support claims that include a disability premium.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, combination of Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and 5 per cent. data.

Jobcentre Contracts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the effect of the reduction in the number of referrals in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire on job centre contracts for re-training for those seeking work. [22493]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. David Drew, dated 9 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the effect of the reduction in the number of referrals in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire on Jobcentre contracts for re-training and those still seeking work. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The reduction in referrals reflects lower numbers of customers on Jobseeker's Allowance (down 11.3% since April 2001) and the increased focus on programmes for our most disadvantaged customers.

We have sought to improve the effectiveness of our contracting processes to ensure we deliver improved results. As a result contracts were only extended where performance was satisfactory and there was a clear business need or mandatory requirement for the provision. In the Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon district all but one contract was extended beyond April 2005. All New Deal customers who wish to access Jobcentre Plus funded training are able to do so.

I hope this is helpful.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what was the average time taken in England to process a claim for jobseeker's allowance in the last period for which figures are available; and what the target is. [23070]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Annette Brooke, dated 9 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the average time taken to process a claim to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The latest available data is to the end of September 2005. This shows that on average, a claim to JSA takes 15.4 days to process in England against a target of 12 days.

The time taken to process a claim is calculated from the date of first contact with the customer; or the first day of the customer's unemployment, to the date when a decision or payment notification is issued to the customer. It also includes a period where the claim might be awaiting further supporting evidence form the customer.

Link-Age Pilots

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which of the Link-Age pilots offer information on care options. [22269]

Mr. Timms: The first phase of Link-Age has concentrated on increasing benefit take-up by older people, including pension credit, housing benefit, council tax benefit and attendance allowance. The second phase will include Link-Age Plus pilots, based on Sure Start principles. These pilots will provide a comprehensive information service which will include care options. The pilots will commence next year. In addition, the initial pilot of Individual Budgets for care will commence by the end of 2005, with further pilots beginning next year.

Pension Commission

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with the Pension Commission; and if he will make a statement. [24670]

Mr. Timms: Ministers have discussions from time to time with the Pensions Commissioners on issues within their remit.

The Commission is due to publish its final report on 30 November. This will provide an independent view of the long term pensions challenges posed by increasing longevity and an ageing society.

We will wish to analyse the evidence and consider any options and recommendations put forward by the Commission before making our response. We expect that response to set out proposals for reform and set an ambitious pace for any timetable for consultation and legislative change.

Pension Credit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the number of pensioners *(a)* entitled to and *(b)* receiving pension credit; and if he will make a statement. [21956]

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the number of pensioners who are entitled to pension credit but who are not claiming it. [22926]

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the take-up of pension credit since it was introduced. [24665]

Mr. Timms: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 20 October. A copy of the report is available in the Library.

It is becoming clear that the number of people who are eligible for pension credit is less than the initial estimate. National statistics showing the number of pensioners entitled to pension credit in the first six months after its introduction and the subsequent take-up rate are expected to be available in December. The precise date of release of these statistics and the publication plans for the following set, covering 2004–05, will be pre-announced in "National Statistics Updates"; the diary of statistical releases.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he expects pension credit to be up-rated in line with earnings after 2008; and if he will make a statement. [24666]

Mr. Timms: The Government have given an undertaking to increase the guarantee credit in line with earnings up to March 2008 ensuring that pensioners are sharing in the nation's rising prosperity. Ministers have not yet announced a policy on up-rating of pension credit after this date.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received pension credit in *(a)* March and *(b)* June. [25176]

Mr. Timms: The information available is in the following table.

Pension credit recipients in Great Britain

	Individuals	*Households*
March 2005	3,288,600	2,704,800
June 2005	3,291,300	2,705,900

Notes:
1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Pension credit (PC) replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003. Existing MIG recipients were automatically converted onto pension credit on that date (assuming they still met the eligibility criteria).
3. Data from the generalised matching service (GMS) 100 per cent. scans taken on 18 March 2005 and 10 June 2005. All figures have been rated up to give month-end estimates.
4. These figures are early estimates. Operational processing times mean that a number of claim commencements and terminations are not reflected in the figures. The final figures incorporated within the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) will take account of such cases.
5. Beneficiaries figures include a small number of partners under the age of 60.

Source:
Information Directorate 100 per cent. data

Pensions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire who have lost their pensions due to firm insolvency since 1997. [24128]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Coventry, South (Jim Cunningham) on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 461W.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will re-open negotiations on reciprocal agreements with those countries where they are not already in place to provide for the annual up-rating in line with inflation of pensions paid to UK pensioners living in such countries. [24167]

Mr. Timms: The UK state pension is payable in all countries abroad to those who are entitled to it. It is up-rated in the normal way for UK pensioners living overseas where there is a legal requirement or a reciprocal social security agreement to do so. To bring everyone up to the current rate they would receive if they had remained in the UK, but not to pay arrears, would cost around £400 million in 2005–06.

The Government focus resources on helping the least well off pensioners in the UK. We have no plans to negotiate further agreements.

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each constituency in the Yorkshire and Humber region received a state pension in each of the past three years. [24752]

Mr. Timms: The number of State Pension recipients in each constituency within the Yorkshire and Humber Government Office Region as at 31 May for the years shown is in the table.

Thousand

	2003	*2004*	*2005*
Barnsley, Central	13.8	14.0	14.1
Barnsley, East and Mexborough	16.0	16.0	16.2
Barnsley, West and Penistone	16.1	16.3	16.6
Batley and Spen	13.8	14.0	14.1
Beverley and Holderness	19.8	20.3	20.8
Bradford, North	13.8	13.7	13.7
Bradford, South	14.7	14.7	14.7
Bradford, West	12.5	12.5	12.3
Brigg and Goole	16.8	17.1	17.5
Calder Valley	17.3	17.5	17.6
City of York	18.4	18.3	18.2
Cleethorpes	18.3	18.7	19.1
Colne Valley	16.8	17.1	17.4
Dewsbury	13.7	13.8	13.8
Doncaster, Central	16.6	16.6	16.5
Doncaster, North	14.9	15.1	15.1
Don Valley	16.5	16.8	17.0
East Yorkshire	22.0	22.6	23.2
Elmet	18.1	18.5	18.8
Great Grimsby	15.0	15.1	15.1
Halifax	16.1	16.4	16.4
Haltemprice and Howden	18.5	18.9	19.4
Harrogate and Knaresborough	17.8	17.8	17.9
Hemsworth	15.9	16.3	16.6
Huddersfield	15.0	15.0	15.0
Keighley	17.6	17.8	17.8
Kingston upon Hull, East	15.7	15.7	15.6
Kingston upon Hull, North	12.5	12.6	12.6
Kingston upon Hull, West and Hessle	15.2	15.0	15.0
Leeds, Central	13.1	12.7	12.4
Leeds, East	13.3	13.4	13.2
Leeds, North East	15.8	15.7	15.7
Leeds, North West	14.7	14.7	14.6
Leeds, West	13.2	13.2	13.0
Morley and Rothwell	15.8	16.0	16.2
Normanton	14.4	14.7	14.8
Pontefract and Castleford	15.0	15.0	15.1
Pudsey	17.2	17.2	17.5
Richmond (Yorkshire)	17.7	18.2	18.7

Thousand

	2003	2004	2005
Rother Valley	16.0	16.2	16.7
Rotherham	13.5	13.7	13.7
Ryedale	20.8	21.1	21.5
Scarborough and Whitby	22.4	22.7	22.9
Scunthorpe	14.9	15.2	15.3
Selby	17.7	18.1	18.4
Sheffield, Attercliffe	17.4	17.5	17.6
Sheffield, Brightside	13.2	13.1	13.0
Sheffield, Central	12.2	12.0	11.8
Sheffield, Hallam	14.4	14.5	14.6
Sheffield, Heeley	16.8	16.8	16.9
Sheffield, Hillsborough	18.2	18.7	19.0
Shipley	17.5	17.7	17.8
Skipton and Ripon	21.1	21.4	21.8
Vale of York	19.3	19.7	20.2
Wakefield	16.1	16.4	16.7
Wentworth	15.6	15.8	16.1
Yorkshire and the Humber Government Office Region	907.0	915.5	923.3

Notes:
1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and are shown in thousands.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate—Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (100 per cent. data)

DEFENCE

Afloat Craft

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the construction of the military afloat reach and sustainability craft overseas; and if he will make a statement. [23051]

Mr. Ingram: The military afloat reach and sustainability project has recently entered the assessment phase and it is therefore too early to say what the final designs and specifications for these vessels might be and where the work will be carried out. We will use the assessment phase to look into the potential options, taking into account best value for money and wider industrial factors, before any decisions are made at the main gate investment point.

Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the in-service dates for the two future aircraft carriers remain 2012 and 2015 respectively. [23738]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* As for all projects, in-service dates (ISDs) are not set until the main investment decision. The time scale parameters for the Future Aircraft Carrier (CVF) will continue to be refined and will be confirmed following the project's main investment decision, which will be taken when we have a proper understanding of the risks, costs and contractual framework.

Angola

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the suitability of Angola for overseas military training. [24371]

Mr. Ingram: HQ Land has made a general appreciation of a number of African countries for overseas training, including Angola. A further detailed assessment is not required at present.

Armed Forces

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* people from Northern Ireland and *(b)* citizens of the Republic of Ireland are serving in the UK armed forces. [25220]

Mr. Touhig: The number of 'British' and 'Republic of Ireland' nationals in the Armed Forces are shown as follows. Nationality figures are unavailable below United Kingdom level for the Naval Service and RAF. For Army personnel, figures for personnel declaring nationality of 'British/N. Ireland' are also shown. However, this only includes NI personnel who are recorded as such and excludes those that may be from NI, but recorded as 'British'.

Service	British	Of which recorded as British/N. Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Naval Service	39,010	—	60
Army[2]	100,860	2,005	210
Royal Air Force[3]	50,520	—	60

[1] Naval Service data are provided by AFPAA as data are not centrally held by DASA. Data are for personnel serving at 3 October 2005. Data are for UK Regular Forces (trained and untrained) including Nursing Services, FTRS and activated reservists.

[2] Army data are provided by DASA for personnel serving at 1 September 2005. Data are for UK Regular Forces (trained and untrained), including Nursing Services and excluding Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.

[3] RAF data are provided by AFPAA as data are not centrally held by DASA. Data are for personnel serving as at 16 September 2005. Data are for UK Regular Forces (trained and untrained) including Nursing Services, FTRS and activated reservists.

Source:
DASA (Tri-Service)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what number of army recruits successfully completed Phase II training in each of the past four years; and what percentage that represents of their cohort recruited at Phase I entry level. [26284]

Mr. Touhig: Records do not exist in the format requested due to the variety in the length, type and location of Phase II training to which members of the same Phase I cohort group may be assigned.

The following table covers the last four financial years and shows the numbers entering training and the numbers leaving training as trained soldiers. They do not necessarily relate to the same cohort group and therefore direct comparison of the two figures could be misleading.

Regular army soldiers

Financial year	Untrained intake	Outflow from untrained to trained strength
2001–02	13,510	8,870
2002–03	15,070	10,150
2003–04	13,820	10,390
2004–05	10,620	8,950

Notes:
1. UK Regular Forces includes nursing services but excludes full-time reserve service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised Reservists.
2. Figures include those that have just completed their training and are therefore transferring to the trained strength.
3. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Bowman

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the bandwidth is of Bowman at each of its levels of deployment. [25291]

Mr. Ingram: The bandwidth of the Bowman tactical communications and information system depends on the type of equipment deployed. The very high frequency radio works in the 30–87.975 MHz frequency band; its theoretical bandwidth is 16 kbps. The high frequency radio works in the 1.8–30 MHz frequency band; its maximum bandwidth is 9.6 kbps, and depends on the quality of the communications link. The high-capacity data radio works in the 225–400 MHz frequency band; its data bandwidth is up to 500 kbps, but it automatically adapts this to suit the quality of the communications link and the distances between radios. Voice and data communications within vehicles, and between vehicles grouped in headquarters, is provided by using standard 10/100 mbps Ethernet interfaces.

Buffalo Armoured Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department is evaluating the USA Buffalo armoured vehicle; and whether his Department plans to introduce this vehicle for work against roadside explosive devices. [25290]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has carried out a broad assessment of the Buffalo Mine Protected Clearance Vehicle but has no current plans to procure it for use by United Kingdom forces.

Civilian Staff (Redundancies)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civilian staff employed by his Department in Northern Ireland have been made redundant in each year since 1998. [25046]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The following table gives details of Ministry of Defence civilian redundancies, both voluntary and compulsory, for the financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05. Comparable information for financial year 1998–99 is not available.

Civilian staff redundancy Northern Ireland: Financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05

Financial year	*Headcount*
1999–2000	10
2000–01	20
2001–02	10
2002–03	—
2003–04	30
2004–05	10

'—'denotes 5 or less.

Notes:
1. This table uses the revised definition of civilian personnel (www.dasa.mod.uk) and includes trading funds.
2. No redundancy information is available for Royal Fleet Auxiliary or locally engaged civilian staff.
3. Due to the rounding methods used, figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Complaints Mechanisms

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his target is for completion of his review of monitoring of the formal and informal complaints mechanisms employed by the Army. [26293]

Mr. Touhig: The Redress of Complaints trial officially began in October 2004 and it is expected that the results will be reported to the Army Board in January 2006. Informal complaints mechanisms are not included in this trial and are not currently subject to specific review.

Defence Export Service Organisation

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total administrative cost was of the Defence Export Service Organisation in 2004–05; and what the projected equivalent figure is for 2005–06. [24590]

Mr. Ingram: Net operating costs for the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) for the last and current financial years are as follows:

Financial year	*Net operating costs (£ million)*
2004–05 Outturn	16.922
2005–06 Forecast	14.365

The costs of DESO are more than offset by benefits to the Defence budget arising from defence exports.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of staff of the Defence Export Services Organisation are seconded from industry; and what functions such staff perform. [24606]

Mr. Ingram: The Head of Defence Export Services was recruited by open competition from the defence industry, and is working on contract to the Ministry of Defence.

In addition, on 1 November one member of the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) was on secondment from a defence company, of which he remains an employee. The secondee performs duties as required in one of the DESO Regional Directorates.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to note 20 of his Department's Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05, if he will list the capital commitments that have been contracted for but not yet provided. [24578]

Mr. Ingram: The capital commitments figure in Note 20 of the Departmental Resource Accounts represents the aggregate estimated value of contracts, across the Department, for work that has not yet been undertaken and, therefore, has not been provided for in the accounts. The following list, of all commitments over £100 million each, represents £18,571 million (90.8 per cent. of the total of £20,446 million quoted in Note 20).

	£000
Typhoon Production	5,171,069
A400M (heavy lift aircraft)	2,048,300
Support Vehicles	1,065,635
T45 Destroyer	1,044,179
Typhoon Development	1,042,728
Joint Combat Aircraft	900,000
Bowman (communications system)	774,323
Investment at AWE	724,657
Nimrod MRA4 (multi-role aircraft)	717,953
BVRAAM (air to air missile)	644,000
PAAMS (missile system)	605,686
Astute (submarine)	457,153
Stingray (torpedo)	288,654
Infantry Anti-Tank guided weapon	259,573
NLAW (light anti-armour weapon)	259,067
Swiftsure and Trafalgar (update) Final Phase (submarine)	251,771
HMS Victorious	232,803
Terrier (earth moving vehicle)	231,230
Sea Wolf Block 2	228,369
Brimstone (anti-armour weapon)	203,245
HVM Missiles	188,574
ASTOR (radar system)	177,847
Building to house laser system	159,500
Wheeled Tanker	154,449
Future Command and Liaison Vehicle	144,838
Sea Wolf midlife update	132,395
Trojan and Titan (armoured vehicles)	130,590
Precision Guided Bomb	124,467
Soothsayer (communications)	108,083
Single Living Accommodation	100,000

There are a further 302 smaller commitments, some as little as £1,000, details of which are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Employee Reductions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many full-time equivalent employee reductions have been made in his Department as a result of the Gershon review; what cost savings relating to IT projects have been achieved; what value of efficiency savings *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [24636]

Mr. Touhig [holding answer 7 November 2005]: In 2004–05 there was a reduction of 2,460 full-time equivalent military personnel and 1,230 full-time equivalent civilian personnel as a consequence of the Department's efficiency programme. The latter excludes operational locally employed civilians, whose numbers increased by 650.

Further progress on both manpower reductions and wider efficiency savings will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report. However, while the department has an efficiency target for 2007–08, there is no intermediate target for 2005–06.

The Defence Communications Services Agency delivered £84 million of IT/IS related efficiencies in 2004–05. Other savings in the departmental efficiency programme will also have been enabled by IT, but information is not held on the amounts involved.

Equality and Diversity Centre (Shrivenham)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the courses organised since October 2004 at the Joint Equality and Diversity Centre at Shrivenham; and what the attendance was on each course. [26294]

Mr. Touhig: Between 1 November 2004 and 4 November 2005 Joint Equality and Diversity Training Centre delivered 36 x five-day Equal Opportunities Advisers Courses to 843 middle-ranking personnel from the three Armed Services and the Ministry of Defence Civil Service. In addition, 149 Senior Civil Servants and Military Officers at Brigadier (and equivalent) level and above attended one of 11 one-day Equality and Diversity Seminars held at Shrivenham.

Fraud Investigations

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at how many *(a)* barracks and *(b)* other army sites personnel have been (i) investigated and (ii) suspended in relation to investigations into fraud by the Special Investigations Branch in the last 12 months. [21526]

Mr. Ingram: In the last 12 months to 31 October 2005 the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch has carried out a total of 238 investigations into alleged offences which involve some element of fraud. The geographical breakdown of the investigations could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information about the suspension of soldiers is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. No officers have been suspended in the period.

FRES

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the likely in-service date is of the FRES; and what the cost of the system has been to date. [24853]

Mr. Ingram: The in-service date will not be formally endorsed until the main investment decision, but our current planning assumption is that the early variants of FRES will be introduced into service early in the next decade, with a phased approach to achieving full operational capability thereafter.

FRES is currently in its initial assessment phase; the total expenditure to date is approximately £25 million.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Future Rapid Effect System. [24880]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Rapid Effect System is in the initial assessment phase. The broad aims of this phase are to further define the FRES capability and develop a series of affordable options for meeting the requirement; to develop optimum procurement and support strategies for future phases and to manage technology and supplier risk to acceptable levels.

Hemel Hempstead (Funding)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much funding was allocated by his Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25732]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence's funding for capital projects in 2005–06 is £795,000. There were no capital projects during the years 1998–99 to 2004–05. Revenue costs for the eight years are estimated to be in the range of £75,000 to £100,000 per annum.

More precise figures are not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Illegal Drugs (RN Seizures)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what quantity of illegal drugs has been seized by the Royal Navy in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* type of drug and *(b)* location of seizure. [24783]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Detailed historical information concerning quantities and types of drugs seized in the Caribbean by Royal Navy units is temporarily unavailable due to hurricane damage at the Joint Inter Agency Task Force South (JIATFS) in Key West, Florida. Available details on major seizures are outlined as follows.

	Royal Navy unit	*Location*	*Amount*	*Drug*
July 2001	HMS Coventry	Caribbean	(£80 million)	Cocaine
July 2002	HMS Newcastle	Caribbean	(£1.5 million)	Marijuana
	HMS Newcastle	Caribbean	(£42 million)	Cocaine
September 2002	HMS Grafton	Caribbean	(£1 million)	Marijuana
October 2002	HMS Grafton	Caribbean	(£65 million)	Cocaine
May 2003	HMS Cumberland	SW Approaches	3.5 tonnes	Cocaine
June 2003	HMS Iron Duke	Caribbean	3.7 tonnes	Cocaine
Caribbean seizures since March 2005:				
May 2005	RFA Wave Knight	Eastern Caribbean	163 kg	Cocaine
	HMS Liverpool	Near St. Lucia (E Caribbean)	170 kg	Marijuana
June 2005	HMS Liverpool	Near Barbados (E Caribbean)	68 kg	Marijuana
October 2005	HMS Cumberland	Western Caribbean	1.9 tonnes	Cocaine

I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible with the full details.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to what extent the Royal Navy co-ordinates its work on seizing illegal drugs with other navies. [24784]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* HM Revenue and Customs are the lead United Kingdom agency for counter-drug operations. Co-operation with other navies and other nations customs services is co-ordinated through HMR and C.

Iraq

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the role and function of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [23015]

John Reid: Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq is a US military organisation based in Baghdad that oversees security sector reform across Iraq. It comprises three main components: the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT), which helps recruit, train, and equip the Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) and provides ongoing mentoring; the Joint Headquarters Advisory Support Team (JHAST), which assists the Joint Headquarters of the IAF; and the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team (CPATT), which organises, trains, equips and mentors the Iraqi Civilian Police Forces, border enforcement forces and monitors, advises and certifies the Facilities Protection Service Forces. Its mission is to assist the Iraqi Government in the development, organisation, training, equipping, and sustainment of Iraqi Security Forces.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average absent without leave rate is among NATO-trained Iraqi forces; and if he will make a statement. [23149]

John Reid: There are no NATO-trained Iraqi forces.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many requests for provision of armoured Land Rovers from commanders on the ground in Multi National Division (South East) in Iraq have been received by his Department in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [23313]

(2) how many armoured Land Rovers have been donated to Iraqi security forces by the UK Government since January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [23314]

Mr. Ingram: Requests for the provision of military vehicles are submitted through the chain of command. There are no records of requests for any uplift in establishment figures, but 13 requests have been received for the replacement of armoured Land Rovers damaged or destroyed in Multi National Division (South East) over the past year.

As at 31 October 2005, the Iraqi Police Service in MND(SE) had taken receipt of 59 refurbished Land Rovers donated under the auspices of Project OSIRIS, the security sector reform project which aims to re-equip the Iraqi security forces with the vehicles, infrastructure and equipment they require to undertake security themselves. These Land Rovers are of a type not operated by UK forces. The Iraqi Army and Department for Border Enforcement are not receiving Land Rovers, but they are receiving other vehicles.

Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Programme

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the likely value of the contract awarded to Swan Hunter to convert the final ship in the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) programme into a hospital ship. [24820]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has not placed any contract with Swan Hunter to convert a Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) into a hospital ship.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has paid compensation to BAE Systems in settlement of claims made by BAE Systems from Swan Hunter for delays in the delivery of design information as part of the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) programme. [24828]

Mr. Ingram: No claims have been made by BAE Systems against Swan Hunter. The Ministry of Defence has made payments to BAE Systems for delay and dislocation costs associated with the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) project. This is as a result of the delays to their build programme as a consequence of the late delivery of design information and equipment.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to transfer design authority for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels from Swan Hunter to BAE Systems following his decision to award lead ship status to the BAE-built vessel, Mounts Bay. [24832]

Mr. Ingram: Swan Hunter remains the design authority for the LSD(A) vessels.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to award a through-life support contract for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels to Swan Hunter. [24833]

Mr. Ingram: The future support strategy for Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels is under consideration. We are currently engaging with industry to develop proposals for contracting on a through-life support basis, but the process is in its early stages.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact the Defence Estate's rationalisation programme will have on the married quarters estate in terms of *(a)* disposals and *(b)* a requirement for new stock. [23322]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence's rationalisation programme is coordinated by the Defence Estates agency whose responsibilities include the management of the Service Families Accommodation stock. Numbers of personnel and location will determine the timing and location of disposals, new build and acquisitions.

Nuclear Deterrent

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursaunt to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1217W, on Trident, whether he expects to take the decision on the replacement of Trident within the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [22249]

John Reid: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1262–63W, to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis).

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the defence budget has been spent on the nuclear deterrent in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [24570]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The annual proportion of the defence budget spent on capital and running costs of the United Kingdom independent nuclear deterrent in each year since 1997 has ranged between 2 and 4 per cent.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the practicability of air-launched Cruise missiles as an alternative to a submarine-launched nuclear deterrent system. [25056]

John Reid: No decisions on any replacement for Trident have yet been taken. Initial preparatory work is being undertaken by officials on possible options for the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent beyond the current planned life of the Trident system. However, Ministers have not yet begun to consider the position on this issue in any detail. It is therefore premature to speculate on the merits of any particular option.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to discuss the future of the British nuclear deterrent with his United States counterpart. [25057]

John Reid: Discussions with my United States counterpart cover a wide range of issues. Nuclear deterrence is of course one element of our continuing dialogue.

Nuron Programme

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department is in negotiation with the French Government in order to participate in the Nuron programme. [25292]

Mr. Ingram: No.

Reverse Auction

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what spending programmes he intends to complete by reverse auction in financial year 2006–07. [22712]

Mr. Ingram: Decisions on which spending programmes the Ministry of Defence will complete by reverse auction are not taken centrally and there is no central programme of reverse auctions for financial year 2006–07.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what level of authorisation is required to complete a spending programme by reverse auction; by what criteria reverse auction is determined to be appropriate; whether any projects have been completed by reverse auction which did not meet these criteria; and if he will make a statement. [22713]

Mr. Ingram: Reverse auctions are considered as a routine competitive procurement process by the Ministry of Defence and internal departments, such as Integrated Project Teams, are encouraged to utilise them wherever they are appropriate. Authorisation to use a reverse auction is provided in accordance with the MOD's delegated investment approvals processes.

Reverse auctions are normally appropriate where there is an effective field of competition and a robust specification. The likely return on the investment of the cost of the auction is also taken into account. The use of, or type of, reverse auction employed may also be determined by the likely impact on long-term value for money.

No reverse auctions have been committed to where these criteria were known to be invalid. However, there have been a small number of cases where effective competition was later demonstrated not to be present; but in all these cases the projects have remained affordable and produced acceptable outcomes for the Department.

Royal Ordnance

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with Royal Ordnance on the closure of the Chorley site; and if he will place in the Library the minutes of the meetings held. [25372]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* A number of meetings were held between BAES Land Systems and Ministry of Defence on their proposed closure of the Chorley site. The aim of these meetings was to ensure continued security of supply and value for money for the MOD. The documental records are of a commercial nature and as such their release would be contrary to the commercial interests of the MOD and BAES Land Systems.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the implications of the proposed closure of the Chorley Royal Ordnance on security of supply. [25373]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I am aware that BAE Systems Land Systems have made an announcement regarding the closure of manufacturing operations at their Chorley site. We are confident in the BAE Systems Land Systems continuing ability to maintain security of supply in light of the closure of manufacturing operations at their Chorley site.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is stored at Heapey Magazine facility owned by Royal Ordnance. [25374]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The Heapey magazine facility is part of BAE Systems Land Systems. Storage at the facility is a matter for the company.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the security arrangements are for the Royal Ordnance Heapey storage facility in relation to *(a)* armed response, *(b)* CCTV and *(c)* movement of explosives. [25418]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The Heapey magazine facility is part of BAE Systems Land Systems. The security of the facility is a matter for the company.

Scottish Constituencies' Statistics

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy to provide statistics relating to Scottish constituencies in terms of *(a)* Westminster and *(b)* Scottish parliamentary boundaries. [15644]

Mr. Touhig: Statistics are provided on both Westminster and Scottish parliamentary boundaries wherever underlying data is available at a sufficiently detailed level.

Statistics are currently published at local authority level and can be found in Tri Service Publication 10, UK Regular Forces Distribution Across the UK, published quarterly. This publication is available in the House of Commons Library and on http://www.dasa.mod.uk/

Spectrum Review

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution the Department has made to the Cave Review of Public Sector Spectrum Holdings; what assessment he has made of the potential for *(a)* increasing efficiency in the Department's use of the radio spectrum and *(b)* sharing spectrum with other organisations; and if he will make a statement. [24823]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has been fully engaged in the Independent Audit of Major Public Sector Spectrum Holdings led by Professor Martin Cave.

The MOD is striving to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in the use of the radio spectrum it manages. The potential for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department's use of the radio spectrum and the potential for MOD to share more of its spectrum bands with other organisations is continuously reviewed.

Tomahawk Missile

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Royal Navy vessels which *(a)* are fitted and *(b)* are scheduled to be fitted with Tomahawk cruise missiles. [26027]

Mr. Ingram: *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* HMS Spartan, HMS Trafalgar, HMS Turbulent, HMS Trenchant and HMS Triumph are capable of launching Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM).

HMS Sceptre, HMS Tireless, HMS Talent, HMS Torbay and the submarines of the Astute class are also programmed to receive the capability.

Type-23 Frigates

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 37W, on the D530 Mark 2 naval gun, what defence Type 23 frigates have against fast-attack craft until the gun is fitted; and if he will make a statement. [25172]

Mr. Ingram: As a defence against fast attack craft, Type 23 Frigates are currently equipped with two permanently mounted DS30B manually operated 30mm Gun Systems, an outfit of pedestal mounted General Purpose Machine Guns and, dependant on whether the ship is deployed to a high threat area, two M323 7.62mm Gatling Miniguns. These arrangements will be further enhanced by the fitting of the DS30M Mark 2 Automated Small Calibre Gun.

Typhoon Fighter Plane

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost was of his trip in July to discuss the sale of BAE Systems' Typhoon fighter planes to the Saudi Arabian defence forces; and if he will make a statement. [25286]

John Reid: I visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shortly after my appointment as Defence Secretary to discuss a wide range of bilateral and multilateral defence and security issues, including Counter-Terrorism and Developments in the Middle East. En route I met with and was briefed by Commander British Forces (Cyprus). The total cost of this visit (including the operational visit to Cyprus) is estimated to have been around £45,000.

Urban Warfare Training

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much time was spent on urban warfare training for infantry units in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* the last 12 months; [23315]

(2) how many infantry battalions have received urban warfare training in the last 12 months. [23316]

Mr. Ingram: I can confirm that elements of 38 of the 40 Army Infantry battalions have received urban warfare training since October 2004. Two battalions did not undertake such training owing to operational commitments but will do so in the forthcoming months.

A certain amount of urban warfare training is organised on an individual unit basis by each of the Infantry battalions and records are not held centrally. Details of the time spent on such training during *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* the last 12 months could, therefore, be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Athletics

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to encourage children in *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Greater London to participate in athletics; and what funds have been allocated for such purposes. [25888]

Mr. Caborn: The Government's National School Sport Strategy aims to increase participation in physical education and sport in schools, which includes athletics. The national strategy is being delivered through the national network of school sport partnerships. The overall aim is that by 2006, 75 per cent. of pupils in partnerships spend a minimum of least two hours each week on high quality PE and sport.

Schools in the constituency of Romford are linked to three school sport partnerships. These are Coopers Company and Coborn school sport partnership, Davenant Foundation school sport partnership, and Emerson Park school sport partnership.

Coopers Company and Coborn school sport partnership has to date received a total of £853,627, with a further £618,280 pending. Davenant Foundation school sport partnership has to date received a total of £446,156, with a further £89,518 pending. Emerson Park school sport partnership has to date received £324,403, with a further £413,250 pending.

Essex county sports partnership has a target to make 11 links between school partnerships in their area and athletics clubs, and has been provided £18,000 to support the development of these links.

Information from the latest national survey of school sport partnerships shows that 91 per cent. of all schools provided athletics during the 2004–05 academic year. 33 per cent. of schools had links with athletics clubs.

Information for Greater London is not held in the format requested.

The results of the survey were published in September and copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Houghton and Washington, East constituency, the effects on Houghton and Washington, East of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [25515]

Mr. Lammy: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Houghton and Washington, East since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A further £519 million was announced by the Prime Minister for the strategy in December 2004. In addition, the Government have provided funding for 3,000 Community Sports Coaches to be in place across England and Wales by the end of 2006. As a result of this investment the following initiatives have been implemented in Houghton and Washington, East.

There are two School Sports Partnerships in Houghton and Washington, East—Biddick and Houghton Kepier. The 2004–05 school sport survey showed that 78 per cent. of pupils in Biddick and 76 per cent. of pupils from Houghton Kepier received two hours of high quality PE and out of hours school sport during the academic year. In addition, 14 per cent. of pupils from Biddick and 7 per cent. from Houghton Kepier have been actively involved in sports volunteering in the same period and 27 per cent. from

Houghton Kepier and 17 per cent. from Biddick have participated in community sports activities through school club links.

Through the Community Sports Coach scheme a full time health and fitness coach will start at the beginning of December to deliver after school sessions to partnerships with Sunderland (including Biddick and Houghton Kepier) and five part time multi skill coaches are currently being recruited to start in the new year to assist with the development of basic Moves clubs and academies. Biddick partnership currently has access to three part time Community Sports Coaches and Houghton partnership to one.

The Government's investment in the Biddick School Sport Partnership has resulted in the partnership piloting the multi skill club programme (a multi skill club was implemented in every primary school). The success of this pilot has enabled multi skill clubs to be rolled out across the country and the aim is to provide 1,600 clubs by 2008. Multi skill clubs provide children with the opportunity to develop basic physical skills in order to lead to sporting success.

To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in over 4,000 new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in the Gateshead and Sunderland area have benefited from 42 awards from Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund to the total of £19.7 million.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2005–06 funding to Arts Council England, North East increased from £5.7 million to £14.4 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in the North East, including grant in aid and lottery expenditure, will be £17.7 million. Houghton and Washington, East has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals in the area, ranging from the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art to the Gatehead NHS Trust which received £30,000 for public art commissions for the new NHS treatment centre in Gateshead.

Houghton and Washington, East is part of the Durham and Sunderland Creative Partnership area, which was set up in phase 1 of the programme in 2002. Creative Partnerships aims to give school children and their teachers the opportunity to explore their creativity by working on sustained projects with creative organisations and individuals, including artists, theatre companies, dance studios, museums, orchestras, film-makers and historic buildings. Funding of £65 million was allocated for the period 2002–05 to develop Creative Partnerships, and the programme will receive at least a further £86 million in 2005–08.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Houghton and Washington, East will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

In 2002 the Department, working through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, began investing in regional museums for the first time with the Renaissance funding programme. Since 2003, the North East Regional Museums Hub, led by Tyne and Wear Museums, working in partnership with the North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (NEMLAC) has invested £4.7 million in museums in the North East. As a result, 88 per cent. of schools in Gateshead LEA, and 68 per cent. in Sunderland LEA have participated in museum based learning at Tyne and Wear Museums. And since April 2005, museum hub outreach officers in Gateshead and Sunderland have worked with 2,073 people.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Houghton and Washington, East with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2004–05 was 4,490.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Act 2005 will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licences and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licences for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Houghton and Washington, East, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Houghton and Washington, East has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new

domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the regional development agencies, including One North East. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Houghton and Washington, East.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Houghton are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Houghton and Washington, East has benefited from over 230 awards totalling over £9.8 million. Of these, 27 awards worth over £5.2 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Hemel Hempstead (Revenue)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding was allocated by her Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25738]

Mr. Lammy: Apart from the National Museums and Galleries, The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not allocate funding directly to any of our sectors. Instead money allocated to us by Parliament is channelled through our various non-departmental public bodies who are responsible for deciding how and where it is spent. For instance Arts Council England, East has allocated £184,339 to the Old Town Hall in Hemel Hempstead over the last eight years. Similarly between 1995 and 1999 English Heritage allocated £92,108 to the constituency and a proportion of its £170,618 in strategic grants to Hertfordshire would also have benefited the town. According to the Department's Lottery Award database (using information supplied by the Lottery distributors) a total of just over £8 million in lottery has been awarded to Hemel Hempstead since 1997.

Library Lending

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* videos, *(b)* DVDs and *(c)* CDs were lent by public libraries in (i) Dacorum and (ii) Hertfordshire in each year since 1997. [25819]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally. However, the table shows the number of loans of sound recordings (encompassing music and talking books) and Videos and DVDs for Hertfordshire for the period 1997–98 to 2003–04. This information is drawn from the Public Library Statistics, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. These are collected at library authority level and do not contain comparable details for the Dacorum borough area.

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	Sound recordings	*Videos/DVDs*
1997–98	922,117	436,906
1998–99	688,364	393,930
1999–2000	655,303	387,661
2000–01	633,440	427,593
2001–02	604,923	346,789
2002–03	459,593	364,796
2003–04	452,102	324,899

Olympic Games

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* public and *(b)* Lottery funding allocations are planned for young athletes preparing for the 2012 Olympics for each year between 2006–07 and 2010–11. [25909]

Mr. Caborn: UK Sport's World Class Performance Programme (WCPP) will provide £22.5 million of lottery money for high performance athletes from 2005 to 2009, in the run up to the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic games. The annual figure of £5.625 million may rise to £6.952 million in April 2006 following a comprehensive review of its athlete personal awards scheme.

Over the same period, UK Sport intends to provide £75.3 million (£32.3 million exchequer and £43 million lottery money) to the National Governing Bodies for Olympic and Paralympic sports as part of their one stop plans, which will directly benefit athletes.

UK Sport will review its funding for each sport at the end of this four year cycle, after the Beijing games. Government have not yet determined the level of funding for the London games cycle (2008–12).

UK Sport will take responsibility from Sport England for the performance pathway in April 2006. Currently, individual sports decide how much to allocate to athletes with the greatest potential through the whole sport plan process. UK Sport will make a decision about how much to allocate to sports for this part of the pathway early next year.

In addition, UK Sport will take responsibility for the talented athlete scholarship scheme (TASS) in April 2006. Funding is currently in place for TASS until 2008. It is currently expected that UK Sport will allocate £5 million to TASS a year between April 2006 and April 2008, £1 million of which will be lottery money.

Private Art Projects

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Government funding has been directed towards private art projects in each year since 1997. [25883]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not fund the arts directly, but through Arts Council England, who are responsible for distributing

public money from Government. Arts Council England allocates grant-in-aid funding to their portfolio of regularly funded organisations.

The following figures supplied by Arts Council England provide a breakdown of the information requested.

£

	Arts Council England, London regularly funded organisation budget	*Havering regularly funded organisations allocation*
1998–99	13,604,000	—
1999–2000	14,612,000	—
2000–01	25,780,000	—
2001–02	28,456,000	82,000
2002–03	33,845,000	179,560
2003–04[1]	133,780,000	258,605
2004–05	145,798,000	285,000
2005–06	152,343,000	325,000
Total	548,218,000	1,130,165

[1] Due to restructuring, with effect from 1 April 2003, Arts Council England transferred most national office clients to their regional offices.

There are no Arts Council England regularly funded organisations in Romford.

School Sports

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to encourage the participation of pupils in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary state schools in England in (i) baseball, (ii) basketball, (iii) volleyball, (iv) handball and (v) softball. [25647]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills share a joint Public Service Agreement target to increase participation in physical education and sport in school as part of the national PE and school sport strategy.

Club Links, one of the national strategy work strands, aims to increase the number of 5–16 year olds from School Sport Partnerships (primary and secondary schools) taking part in high quality club sport. This programme is delivered in partnership with the governing bodies of 22 sports and with dance and fitness organisations.

The PESSCL 2004–05 school sport survey showed that 22 per cent. of pupils in school sport partnerships had links with clubs, which is an increase of 15 per cent. since the last survey. 25 per cent. of schools provided links with basketball clubs, 2 per cent. of schools with volleyball clubs and 1 per cent. of schools to softball clubs. No schools in the survey reported providing club links for baseball or handball for their pupils in 2004–05.

The survey also showed the range of sports which schools provided for their pupils. 63 per cent. provided basketball for their pupils; 25 per cent. provided volleyball and 16 per cent. of schools provided softball. No schools in the survey reported providing baseball or handball for their pupils in 20040–05. Overall, schools provided an average of 15 different sports for their pupils.

The results of the survey were published In September this year and copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Swimming Pools

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which applications are being considered for new public and competition swimming pools in each county in England; and what steps the Government are taking to ensure that the location of the proposed new Olympic swimming pools is a deciding factor when current applications are considered. [25649]

Mr. Caborn: Funding applications for new public sector swimming pools currently at the pre-award stage of consideration by Sport England are listed in the table:

County	*Facility*
Avon	Bristol—50m pool
Cleveland and Tees Valley	Redcar—25m pool
Devon	Plymouth—50m pool; Torrington—25m pool
Durham	Consett—25m pool
Hampshire	Portsmouth—50m pool
Northumberland	Blyth Valley—25m pool
	Glendale Sports and Leisure Association—community pool
Warwickshire	Coventry—25m pool

Sport England is also working with the Amateur Swimming Association to consider swimming pool provision in London, including the impact of the Olympic Games pool provision.

There will be a permanent Aquatics facility in Stratford which will serve as the main competition pool for the Olympic Games and provide post-Olympic legacy facilities of two 50m pools and diving facilities. A further five temporary pools are planned for the Games which will be redistributed against an agreed legacy strategy.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24460]

Dr. Howells: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice was available on an 0870 number when it was first introduced in February 2003. The telephone number has been discontinued and was replaced by an 0845 number on 9 September 2005.

The revenue received from this number to date is £76,887.86. This is set against the cost of running the call centre, which is around £120,000 a year.

The revenue is broken down as follows:

	£
2003	4,817.43
2004	22,974.49
2005	49,095.94

Over 203,000 calls were made to the call centre before 2 September 2005.

Algeria

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to help Algeria to tackle terrorism. [25117]

Dr. Howells: Algeria is a priority partner for the Government's counter terrorism effort. The Government are committed to the development of closer co-operation with the Algerian authorities and Algerian officials have recently visited the UK to study UK counter-terrorism structures. Discussions of an agreement on deportation with assurances continue with the Algerian Government.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government are taking to support the development of democracy in Algeria. [25274]

Dr. Howells: The UK is committed to working with the Algerian Government to support their development of democracy. The EuroMed Tenth Anniversary Summit on 27 to 28 November 2005 in Barcelona will be an important opportunity to help the EU's Mediterranean Partners, including Algeria, to address the challenges of the 21st century, including in good governance. At the Summit, we want leaders to endorse an outcome-oriented Five Year Work Plan. This Plan will include the creation of a large EU Facility which will provide a package of assistance for Mediterranean Partners who show a clear commitment to good governance.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23733]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is committed to reducing its carbon impact on the environment. We use an externally-certified Environmental Management System (EMS) to identify environmental issues on our estate in the UK, including carbon impact. We are currently implementing measures projected to reduce CO_2 emissions from our UK estate by 22.5 per cent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000. We are also introducing this financial year arrangements to offset emissions generated by air travel by Ministers, and officials based in the UK.

We judge that our current system for managing carbon emissions already covers the main elements of the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme, we have not yet signed it but are considering whether to do so carefully.

European Institute of Technology

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the European Commission on establishing a European Institute of Technology. [26201]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not had any discussions with the European Commission on establishing a European Institute of Technology.

The European Commission is currently conducting a wide-ranging consultation on the proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT). The UK response will be submitted shortly and a copy will be placed in the Library of the House. Any proposal must add clear value. Promoting excellence in the European University sector is vital to ensuring Europe's long term competitiveness in the global economy.

Iran

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to Russia about the sale of nuclear fuel to Iran. [26264]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and his officials have regular discussions on Iran's nuclear programme with international partners, including Russia. In their proposal to Iran of 5 August 2005, the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Ministers of France and Germany, with the support of the high representative of the EU, stated that they fully support long-term co-operation in the civil nuclear field between Iran and Russia in the context of an overall agreement on long-term arrangements.

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether US Federal Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald *(a)* contacted and *(b)* sought assistance from his Department concerning the allegations made in British official policy documents that Iraq sought to procure uranium from Niger as part of the recent US Grand Jury inquiry. [24936]

Dr. Howells: No, on both points.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on negotiations with the Iraqi Government concerning troop withdrawals. [25318]

Dr. Howells: The UK is committed to Iraq until such time as the Iraqis are able to take responsibility for their own security. Withdrawal of our troops from Iraq will not depend on reaching certain dates or timetables, but on achieving certain conditions.

These conditions will be based upon principles outlined by the Iraqi Joint Committee to transfer security responsibility and are based on four broad categories: an assessment of the insurgents' threat level; Iraqi security forces' ability to take on the security task; the capacity of provincial bodies to cope with the changed security environment; and the posture and support available from coalition forces.

We will not make significant changes to the UK's force posture in any province in Iraq until we, coalition partners and, in particular, the Iraqis are confident that the conditions set out by the Joint Committee are met.

We expect the Committee's recommendations to be confirmed soon. Thereafter, assessments will be made to determine which areas of Iraq are ready to transfer to Iraqi control. While we do not want to be in Iraq any longer than is necessary, we will not be deflected from our task. We have made a commitment to the Iraqi people and it is important that we honour that commitment and see our task through.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Iranian involvement in the insurgency in Iraq. [25325]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said, the nature of some explosive devices used, including against British troops, leads us either to Iranian elements or to Lebanese Hezbollah, which has very close links with Iran's Revolutionary Guards. We are unable to provide further details as to do so could prejudice the capability, effectiveness, and security of the armed forces.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23371]

Mr. Straw: Complete statistics over this time have not been collected. No requests for training in numeracy were received during this time. One or two employees each year request funding for external training to improve their English language skills.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23409]

Mr. Straw: The vast majority of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff have formal qualifications matching or in excess of the national tests by virtue of their meeting the FCO's entry requirements. As part of a revision of training in writing skills taking place in early 2006, staff who may wish to revise fundamental basic skills will be directed to the national tests as well as other training opportunities.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23430]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not provide in-house training in literacy or numeracy because staff are required on entry to demonstrate these abilities. Any shortfall is met through external training.

Norway

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had discussions with his counterpart in Norway to encourage that country to join the European Union. [25341]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met his new Norwegian counterpart, Jonas Gahr Støre, on 26 October. Mr. Støre explained Norway's approach to EU membership. The United Kingdom would welcome Norway as a partner in the European Union, but the question of applying for EU membership is a matter for the Norwegian Government and people.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the sixth round of inter-Sudanese peace talks on Darfur. [22895]

Ian Pearson: The sixth round of the inter-Sudanese peace talks on Darfur concluded on 20 October. Overall, the parties engaged more constructively than in previous rounds and some progress was made. All three areas identified for inclusion in a final peace agreement, power sharing, wealth sharing and security arrangements, were discussed. The parties agreed two out of the nine agenda items for negotiations on power sharing, adopted the agenda for wealth sharing negotiations to begin at the next round and held informal consultations on security arrangements.

But much greater progress needs to be made at the next round of talks, due to begin on 21 November. The African Union (AU) plans to hold workshops in between rounds on wealth sharing and security arrangements, to enable negotiations on these issues to take place in parallel with power sharing. We and our international partners will continue to co-ordinate our strategy in support of the AU, including through the provision of experts to these workshops. We are also working to help resolve the internal divisions within the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army.

The UK remains fully committed to the AU-led peace talks on Darfur. The UK observer will continue to attend the talks in support of the AU mediation and the parties to help them reach the political solution the people of Darfur need.

Yemen

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to help the Yemeni Government fight terrorism. [25116]

Dr. Howells: We enjoy a constructive political dialogue with the Yemeni Government on counter-terrorism. We also have an extensive programme of counter-terrorism capacity building of the Yemeni authorities in, for example, maritime security, investigative techniques, forensic and crime scene management. We spent £800,000 on counter-terrorism capacity building in Yemen in financial year 2004–05.

Zimbabwe

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with the Governments of *(a)* Botswana and *(b)* Namibia steps they could take to encourage Zimbabwe to make their Government more democratic and accountable. [24293]

Ian Pearson: Ministers will continue to take every opportunity to discuss with African Ministers, including from Namibia and Botswana, issues that affect the region, including the political situation in Zimbabwe. On 22 June my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary challenged African leaders to recognise the scale of the problem in Zimbabwe and we continue to urge them to press the Government of Zimbabwe to restore democracy, and respect human rights and the rule of law.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the UK's current relations with Zimbabwe. [24972]

Ian Pearson: On 1 November my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary confirmed that we maintain full diplomatic relations with the Government of Zimbabwe, which is important for the consular protection of British passport holders and also ensures we have a full understanding about the situation in Zimbabwe. But the Government have made no attempt to disguise our abhorrence for Mugabe's policies which continue to diminish the quality of life for ordinary Zimbabweans. We continue to call for a return to democratic governance, full respect for human rights and the rule of law.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the UK Government have made to *(a)* the UN and *(b)* the Government of Zimbabwe regarding the human rights record of the Zimbabwe regime; and if he will make a statement. [24975]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary is in regular touch with the UN Secretary-General on Zimbabwe. The Secretary-General made a statement on 31 October, deploring Zimbabwe's refusal to accept UN assistance following his recent housing clearances (Operation Murambatsvina). The UK and our international partners have also ensured that Zimbabwe is raised at the UN Security Council, most recently on 27 July and 4 October. We will continue our work with the UN to build the pressure on Mugabe to reform. Our ambassador in Harare raises our concerns directly with the Government of Zimbabwe. In June he called on the Vice President to express our grave concern about the brutality of Operation Murambatsvina.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to try to stop the evictions of white Zimbabwean farmers; and if he will make a statement. [25115]

Ian Pearson: The Government, together with EU and other international partners, have condemned the chaotic and brutal handling of the state-sponsored land grabs together with other flawed policies in Zimbabwe that have resulted in the fastest shrinking economy in the world. This has ruined the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe, impoverishing the farming community and destroying the livelihoods of local farm workers and their families.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in Zimbabwe. [25320]

Ian Pearson: The Government's views on human rights in Zimbabwe are set out clearly in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Human Rights Annual Report. Since its publication in July, Operation Murambatsvina has made 700,000 Zimbabweans homeless and destitute, and new constitutional amendments allowing for passports to be withdrawn, thereby denying individuals their right to free movement, have underlined the Government of Zimbabwe's continued lack of respect for human rights. We will continue to work for the restoration of the rule of law and good governance in Zimbabwe.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Abandoned Court Cases

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Solicitor-General what percentage of cases handled by the Crown Prosecution Service were abandoned in error in each of the last 10 years. [25451]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes a substantial number of cases, a proportion of which are abandoned. It is not known how many may have been abandoned in error.

Since April 2004, the CPS has recorded the reason for each decision to abandon proceedings on its Compass Case Management System. The attached table gives information drawn from the system for 2004–05 and for 2005–06 to date, showing outcome reasons numerically, and expressing each as a proportion of all cases completed during the year. Also shown are the number and proportion of cases acquitted by the courts, and the number and proportion resulting in conviction.

The various reasons are divided into: administrative finalisations (where the defendant cannot be traced by the police, has died, or has been found unfit to plead); evidential reasons; public interest reasons; cases in which a prosecution cannot proceed; and all other reasons.

The figures show that the proportion of abandoned prosecutions has fallen year on year, from 17.4 per cent. of completed cases in 2004–05, to 15.4 per cent. in 2005–06 to date.

It will also be seen that substantial numbers of cases are dropped unavoidably: for example where the victim, or another witness, refuses to give evidence, or fails to attend court, where key legal elements are missing from the prosecution case; or where there is a conflict of evidence.

Reasons for prosecutions dropped 2004–05

	Number	As percentage of completed cases
Administrative finalisations [1]	51,589	4.3
E10 Key witness does not support case	1,503	0.1
E11. Unreliable/lack of identification	7,152	0.6
El Inadmissible evidence—Breach of PACE	330	0.0
E2 Inadmissible evidence—other than Breach of PACE	1,048	0.1
E3 Unreliable confession	152	0.0
E4 Conflict of evidence	6,504	0.5
E5 Essential medical evidence missing	454	0.0
E6 Essential forensic evidence missing	1,387	0.1
E7 Essential legal element missing	32,330	2.7
E8 Unreliable witness or witnesses	3,901	0.3
E9 Key victim does not support case	4,858	0.4
Total dropped for evidential reasons	59,619	5.0
P12 Effect on victim's physical or mental health	515	0.0
P13 Defendant elderly or in significant ill health	1,388	0.1
P14 Loss or harm minor and single incident	601	0.1
P15 Loss or harm put right	1,165	0.1
P16 Long delay between offence/ charge or trial	2,839	0.2
P17 Very small or nominal penalty	2,878	0.2
P18 Other indictment / sentence	8,871	0.7
P19 Informer or other public interest immunity issues	1,731	0.1
P20 Caution more suitable	5,172	0.4
P21 Youth of offender	160	0.0
Total dropped for public interest reasons	25,320	2.1
U22 File not received from police—adjournment refused	2,006	0.2
U23 CPS not ready—adjournment refused	1,715	0.1
U24 Offence taken into consideration	535	0.0
U25 Victim refuses to give evidence or retracts	10,144	0.8
U26 Other witness refuses to give evidence or retracts	1,263	0.1
U27 Victim fails to attend unexpectedly	4,718	0.4
U28 Other civilian witness fails to attend unexpectedly	1,781	0.1
U29 Police witness fails to attend unexpectedly	1,479	0.1
U30 Victim intimidation	26	0.0
U31 Other civilian witness intimidation	33	0.0
U32 Documents produced at court	9,218	0.8
Total in which prosecution unable to proceed	32,918	2.7
O33 Bind over acceptable	15,929	1.3
O34 Acquittal after trial	717	0.1
O35 Other	23,310	1.9
Total dropped for other reasons	39,956	3.3
Total dropped	209,402	17.4
Acquittals	28,931	2.4
Convictions	962,433	80.2
Total completed	1,200,766	100.0

[1] An administrative finalisation is recorded where a defendant cannot be traced by the police, or has died, or has been found unfit to plead.

Reasons for prosecutions dropped 2005–06 (1 April to 2 November 2005)

	Number	As percentage of completed cases
Administrative finalisations [1]	22,216	3.3
E10 Key witness does not support case	945	0.1
E11 Unreliable/lack of identification	3,848	0.6
El Inadmissible evidence—Breach of PACE	163	0.0
E2 Inadmissible evidence—other than Breach of PACE	467	0.1
E3 Unreliable confession	47	0.0
E4 Conflict of evidence	3,975	0.6
E5 Essential medical, evidence missing	207	0.0
E6 Essential forensic evidence missing	743	0.1
E7 Essential legal element missing	20,563	3.0
E8 Unreliable witness or witnesses	2,248	0.3
E9 Key victim does not support case	3,549	0.5
Total dropped for evidential reasons	36,755	5.4
P12 Effect on victim's physical or mental health	280	0.0
P13 Defendant elderly or in significant ill health	877	0.1
P14 Loss or harm minor and single incident	457	0.1
P15 Loss or harm put right	836	0.1
P16 Long delay between offence/ charge or trial	1,417	0.2
P17 Very small or nominal penalty	1,829	0.3
P18 Other indictment / sentence	5,126	0.8
P19 Informer or other public interest immunity issues	818	0.1
P20 Caution more suitable	3,250	0.5
P21 Youth of offender	169	0.0
P36 Inappropriate to compel victim	74	0.0
P37 Inappropriate to compel witness	28	0.0
Total dropped for public interest reasons	15,161	2.2
U22 File not received from police—adjournment refused	1,307	0.2
U23 CPS not ready—adjournment refused	905	0.1
U24 Offence taken into consideration	255	0.0
U25 Victim refuses to give evidence or retracts	5,218	0.8
U26 Other witness refuses to give evidence or retracts	636	0.1
U27 Victim, fails to attend unexpectedly	2,750	0.4
U28 Other civilian witness fails to attend unexpectedly	1,053	0.2
U29 Police witness fails to attend unexpectedly	819	0.1
U30 Victim intimidation	8	0.0
U31 Other civilian witness intimidation	11	0.0
U32 Documents produced at court	4,340	0.6
Total in which prosecution unable to proceed	17,302	2.6
O33 Bind over acceptable	7,563	1.1
O34 Acquittal after trial	376	0.1
O35 Other	4,823	0.7
Total dropped for other reasons	12,762	1.9
Total dropped	104,196	15.4
Acquittals	17,744	2.6
Convictions	555,513	82.0
Total completed	677,453	100.0

[1] An administrative finalisation is recorded where a defendant cannot be traced by the police, or has died, or has been found unfit to plead

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Solicitor-General how many call centres were run by the Law Officers' Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23296]

The Solicitor-General: None of the Departments for which I am responsible runs a call centre.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head, in each year since 2002. [23436]

The Solicitor-General: Of the Departments for which I am responsible, only one has run specific in-house training on literacy and numeracy in the period specified. The figures for the SFO are shown in tabular form as follows. Included in the literacy figures is the cost of running courses on effective writing and business writing. The numeracy figures cover the cost of running courses on financial management.

SFO spend on in-house literacy training

Financial year	*Total cost*	*Cost per head* (£)
2002–03	2,475	9.5
2003–04	1,329	5
2004–05	1,930	7
2005–06	7,720	26

SFO spend on in-house numeracy training

Financial year	*Total cost*	*Cost per head* (£)
2002–03	15,000	58
2003–04	7,500	30
2004–05	8,500	29
2005–06	17,000	57

Note:
The figures for 2005–06 are the anticipated spend for this financial year.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many full-time equivalent employee reductions *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06 as a result of the Gershon review in her Department; what (i) cost savings relating to IT projects and (ii) total efficiency savings (A) were achieved in 2004–05 and (B) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06 as a result of that review; and if she will make a statement. [25916]

Bridget Prentice: There were no headcount reductions planned for 2004–05. By March 2007–08, the Department will have reduced its headcount by 1,100. Progress towards this will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report.

There were no planned cost savings relating to IT projects for 2004–05. By 2007–08 the Department will deliver IT project-related savings of £3 million. Progress towards this £3 million saving will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report.

There were no planned efficiency gains for 2004–05. DCA will deliver savings of £292 million by March 2007–08. While there is no intermediate target for 2005–06, progress towards the £292 million target will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report.

Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people in her Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of Sir Michael Lyons' independent review of public sector relocation; to which locations they have been relocated; and if she will make a statement. [25912]

Bridget Prentice: There were no planned DCA relocations for 2004–05 or 2005–06 under the Lyons review.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ambulance Service

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects ambulance control centres at *(a)* Altnagelvin, *(b)* Antrim and *(c)* Craigavon to close. [24909]

Mr. Woodward: The new regional Emergency Ambulance Despatch Centre, located at Knockbracken Healthcare Park, will open on 23 November 2005. It is planned that Emergency Despatch staff from Antrim will transfer to Knockbracken in January 2006, from Craigavon in February 2006 and from Altnagelvin in March 2006.

The control facility at Altnagelvin will not close as it will become the Regional Patient Care Despatch Centre from April 2006. Antrim and Craigavon Controls will close at this time when Patient Care Despatch staff move to Altnagelvin.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what equality impact assessment was conducted in relation to closure of ambulance control centres at *(a)* Altnagelvin, *(b)* Antrim and *(c)* Craigavon. [24910]

Mr. Woodward: Proposals for the reconfiguration of ambulance control were originally made in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's response to the 2000 Strategic Review of Ambulance Services. The Strategic Review Implementation Plan outlined proposals to move from four control centres to two and this document was subject to public consultation. At the same time an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was published to inform this policy development. The departmental response to consultation, which included replies to points raised by the EQIA questionnaire, was published in May 2002.

The business case for the reconfiguration of control fully considered the new TSN implications of the move to two control centres.

Altnagelvin Control will remain open, dealing with non-emergency calls and providing a back-up to the emergency control, which will be centralised at Knockbracken.

Assets Recovery Agency

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated in each year of its operation to the budget of the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland. [25168]

Mr. Woodward: The annual share allocation of the Assets Recovery Agency's baseline budget to the Northern Ireland Branch is a matter for the Director of the Assets Recovery Agency. A significant increase in funding was allocated this year.

The budget allocation for ARA in Northern Ireland since 2003/2004 is set out in the following table:

	£ million
2003–04	2.071
2004–05	2.326
2005–06	3.24

Attacks on Teachers

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many parents have been prosecuted for attacks on teachers in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [25765]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

Breast Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of women newly diagnosed with breast cancer in the Province in the last 12 months were tested for their suitability for Trastuzumab at the point of diagnosis. [24911]

Mr. Woodward: All patients diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in Northern Ireland are tested for their suitability for Trastuzumab.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women have been given Trastuzumab in the Province in the early stages of breast cancer in the last 12 months. [24913]

Mr. Woodward: Five women in Northern Ireland have been given Trastuzumab for early stage breast cancer as part of the clinical trial. No women in Northern Ireland in the early stages of breast cancer have been given Trastuzumab through public funding.

Trastuzumab has not yet been licensed for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. It has also not yet been evaluated by NICE. In these circumstances I would not expect Trastuzumab to be available on the HPSS in Northern Ireland for patients with early stage breast cancer until further evidence on the safety, quality and effectiveness of the drug is available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many early stage breast cancer patients in the Province have requested Trastuzumab but been refused in the last 12 months. [24914]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not available on the number of patients with early stage breast cancer in Northern Ireland who have requested Trastuzumab but been refused.

Trastuzumab has not yet been licensed for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. It has also not yet been evaluated by NICE. In these circumstances I would not expect Trastuzumab to be available in Northern Ireland on the HPSS for patients with early stage breast cancer until further evidence on the safety, quality and effectiveness of the drug is available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women have been given Trastuzumab in the Province for advanced breast cancer in the last 12 months. [24915]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Lady to my answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1111W.

Class Sizes

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which secondary schools in the Province had classes of more than 30 pupils during 1997. [25799]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information was not collected at the time, and any attempt to collect it retrospectively could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Domestic Regional Rate

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much revenue he expects to raise in 2006–07 as a result of the planned increase in the domestic regional rate. [25841]

Angela E. Smith: The revenue for the regional domestic rate in 2006–07 is estimated to be £251.6 million, an increase of £44.9 million on 2005–06 forecast.

This estimate may change as a consequence of future updates to collection and valuation information.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total estimated revenue would be from the domestic regional rate in 2006–07 as a consequence of increasing 2005–06 rates by *(a)* 3.3 per cent., *(b)* 9 per cent., *(c)* 19 per cent. and *(d)* the rate of inflation. [25849]

Angela E. Smith: The total estimated revenue from the regional domestic rates in 2006–07 for the uplifts quoted, is set out in the following table:

Increase (percentage)	*Estimated total revenue (£ million)*
3.3	218.4
9.0	230.5
19.0	251.6
Rate of inflation	
2.5	216.7

These estimates may change as a consequence of future updates to collection and valuation information.

Education and Library Boards

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Department of Education requires redundancy costs incurred by education and library boards to be accounted for in the financial year in which the redundancy occurs. [21731]

Angela E. Smith: Accounts should be prepared on the accrual basis of accounting. This requires the non-cash effects of transactions and other events to be reflected, as far as possible, in the accounts in the year in which they occur and not, for example, in the year in which any cash involved is received or paid. Therefore, it is for the board to determine when the redundancies arise and apply the above policy to the preparation of their accounts. It is for the NIAO to determine if the accounts reflect a true and fair view and are in compliance with the above policy. Should any liabilities arising be of uncertain timing or amount, recognition in the accounts should be in accordance with the principles contained in FRS 12 governing provisions.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the minimum amount is which an education and library board can disregard for the purposes of accounting in a financial year in respect of bills received after the end of that financial year. [25653]

Angela E. Smith: There is no minimum amount which an education and library board can knowingly disregard for the purposes of accounting in a financial year in respect of bills received after the end of the financial year. If during the preparation of the annual accounts an education and library board is aware of a cost relating to the previous year for which the bill is received after the year end, that amount should be accrued back to the previous year irrespective of the amount. If certain accruals are not captured as part of the accounts preparation process, but are discovered during audit, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) may require the amounts to be accrued back to the previous year, if material. The levels of materiality are determined by NIAO.

Fair Employment

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints of discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland have been supported by the Equality Commission in each year since its inception, broken down by community background of complainant. [25495]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland supported the following new employment and non-employment complaints in each year since its inception:

	Number
1999–2000	440
2000–01	654
2001–02	805
2002–03	150
2003–04	87
2004–05	90

The Equality Commission does not have complete information on the community background of complainants who have received its support."

Fireworks

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the legal retailers of fireworks in Northern Ireland. [25509]

Mr. Woodward: The list of registered retailers of fireworks varies throughout the calendar year, given that each retailer is subject to licence renewal every 12 months and licence durations are not concurrent. However during the Halloween period this year some 226 premises were registered to keep and sell fireworks in Northern Ireland. The list of registered retailers has been placed in the Library.

Harbour Investment

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 91–2W, on harbour investment, what future plans the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has for improvement and development at Portavogie Harbour; how much funding has been allocated; and what the timescale for completion is. [26240]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority is the non-departmental public body that has responsibility for the improvement, management and maintenance of the three Northern Ireland fishery harbours at Portavogie, Kilkeel and Ardglass.

There is an ongoing programme of development works at Portavogie Harbour approved by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and undertaken by the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority.

Future plans include some works that have already started and projects that are due to get underway in the near future, once tendering and other practical procedures are finalised. The ongoing programme comprises four main projects funded under the Building Sustainable Prosperity programme for:

key wall repairs that are currently in progress and are expected to cost £547,600;

upgrade of harbour security systems presently out to tender at an estimated total cost of £104,300;

upgrade of the slipway that will cost £144,500 and on which work has just started; and

a further £125,000 has been approved for re-surfacing of and upgrade to the Princess Anne road.

All of the above projects are due to be completed within the next two years.

There are also several future development projects being considered under the "Taskforce" initiative, which would total approximately £500,000.

These comprise as follows:

developing a net repair area; and

working with Ards borough council and the Portavogie and District Development Group Ltd. to implement a number of other schemes in and around the harbour area and estate (including beach access/walkways, a recycling/fish waste facility, and the construction of business units).

It is expected that works proceeding under these "Taskforce" proposals will be completed within a three-year period.

Home Detention Curfews

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in each district command unit in Northern Ireland are under home detention curfew. [25165]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

There is currently no legislative provision in Northern Ireland for home detention curfew.

Income Statistics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the level of real personal disposable income was in each of the last five years; and what the percentage change from the previous year was in each year. [25221]

Angela E. Smith: The information available is shown in the following table.

Gross disposable household income per head (current prices)

	£ per head	Percentage change, year on year (Percentage)
1999	8,805	4.2
2000	9,424	7.0
2001	10,062	6.8
2002	10,401	3.4
2003	10,809	3.9

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Integrated Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many integrated *(a)* primary and *(b)* post primary schools are planned in each education and library board area over the next three years. [25015]

Angela E. Smith: There are four development proposals for new grant-maintained integrated (GMI) schools to receive funding with effect from September 2006. No decisions have yet been taken on any of the proposals.

The proposals are:

Education and library board area	School/area
Southern	New primary school in Clogher Valley
South-Eastern	New primary school in the Moira/ Hillsborough area
South-Eastern	New post-primary school in the Saintfield area
North-Eastern	Recognition for grant-aid of Lir integrated primary school in Ballycastle (currently an independent school).

Integrated schools can also be established through the transformation of existing schools. The Department is aware of one primary school in the South-Eastern education and library board area which is in the early stages of a parental ballot to determine whether that school would seek transformation to controlled integrated status. No formal timetable has yet been established.

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) assists the development of GMI schools through support to established parental steering groups. The Department has been informed by NICIE that the following proposals are expected for 2007:

Education and library board area	School/area
Western	New grant-maintained integrated primary school for Strabane
Western	New grant-maintained integrated post-primary school in Limavady
North-Eastern	New grant-maintained integrated post-primary school in Antrim

NICIE are not currently aware of any plans to establish integrated schools in 2008.

Lysosomal Storage Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision is made in the Province for sufferers of lysosomal storage disorders; and what estimate he has made of the number of people in the Province who suffer from lysosomal storage disorders. [24920]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of individuals in the Province suffering from lysosomal storage disorders is not available centrally, however hospital admission information is available. In 2004–05, there were 124 admissions to hospital for patients with this condition. Patients can be admitted more than once over the course of the year and these 124 admissions related to 39 individuals.

Mental Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of health spending in the Province was allocated to mental health *(a)* services and *(b)* promotion in each of the last five years. [24864]

Mr. Woodward: The percentage of health and social services spent by HSS boards on the provision of mental health services is given as follows. Information on mental health promotion is not separately identified.

	Percentage
1999–2000	8.43
2000–01	[1]
2001–02	8.06
2002–03	7.70
2003–04	7.66

[1] Not available

Pensioners

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pensioners in Northern Ireland are being held awaiting deportation. [21631]

Mr. McNulty: I have been asked to reply.

There are no immigration detainees of pensionable age being held in Northern Ireland for the purposes of removal or deportation from the UK.

Police Service (Religious Affiliation)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what time scale is planned for the ending of selection by religious affiliation for recruitment for the Police Service of Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [25019]

Mr. Woodward: The temporary 50:50 recruitment measures are being applied as a response to the imperative of achieving a Police Service in Northern Ireland that is more representative of the community that it serves. Our goal, in line with the Patten Report, is to achieve a 30 per cent. Catholic composition among officers by 2010–11. As we are on target to achieve this goal, we do not foresee that these measures will be applied after this time.

These provisions are subject to review and possible renewal every three years, next due in March 2007, when the policy will be subject to detailed review, extensive consultation, and debate in both houses.

PR Consultancies

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list *(a)* communications, *(b)* public relations and *(c)* media consultancy firms which have been contracted to each Northern Ireland Government Department and agency in the last 10 years; and how much each has been paid; [24787]

(2) how much was spent by each Government Department in Northern Ireland on printing public documents in the last five years. [24788]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested by the hon. Gentleman is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Pupil: Teacher Ratios

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to employ more teachers to reduce pupil to teacher ratios in Northern Ireland. [25762]

Angela E. Smith: Under Local Management of Schools arrangements decisions on the number of teachers to be employed and their deployment within a school are matters for the Boards of Governors of each individual school, taking account of the level of resources available.

The recently announced Budget 2005 proposals provide for current expenditure on Education to increase by over £100 million—from £1,567 million in 2005–06 to £1,673 million in 2007–08.

Resource-releasing Savings

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money was redistributed through resource-releasing savings by *(a)* all Northern Ireland Departments and *(b)* by each Department, agency and non-departmental public body in Northern Ireland in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [25839]

Angela E. Smith: No money was redistributed through resource-releasing savings in 2004–05.

A target for efficiency savings of 2.5 per cent. per year was set for the public sector in Northern Ireland for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08.

Respite Care

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to improve respite services for severely disabled young adults within the Eastern Health and Social Services Board area. [24867]

Mr. Woodward: The Eastern Health and Social Services Board currently provides a wide range of respite opportunities for disabled young adults and are working to develop more flexible and innovative respite provision for young disabled adults.

Schools

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment the Department of Education has made of the effects on school building programmes of the use of private finance initiative schemes. [25783]

Angela E. Smith: The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) has an important role to play in delivering investment in school building programmes across the UK. It should only be used where it offers value for money. In Northern Ireland, PFI schemes have helped the Department of Education to announce larger capital programmes each year. Since 2001, PFI projects covering 30 schools with an estimated capital value in excess of £300 million have been announced.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils are enrolled at each primary school in the Province. [25774]

Angela E. Smith: The information has been placed in the Library.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many whole-time equivalent *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other staff are employed at each primary school in the Province. [25775]

Angela E. Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) The information on full-time equivalent teachers in each primary school in 2004–05 has been placed in the Library.

(b) The information on non-teaching staff employed in each primary school is not immediately available, but has been requested from the education and library boards, and I shall write to the hon. Gentleman.

Student Fees

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on student fees for Northern Ireland students. [25776]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland students entering higher education from the 2006–07 academic year will be charged tuition fees of up to £3,000 a year for higher education courses at institutions in England and Northern Ireland. In Scotland the proposed fee levels at Scottish institutions are £1,700 with the exception of

medical courses which are proposed to be £2,700. In Wales, fees will be charged on the same basis as in England and Northern Ireland but from 2007–08. From 2006–07, all Northern Ireland domiciled students studying at institutions in the UK, will be able to defer payment by taking out a non-means tested loan which will not have to be repaid until after the student leaves higher education and is earning more than £15,000 per year.

Teriparatide

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make Teriparatide available to patients in Northern Ireland suffering from osteoporosis. [25524]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 751W.

Translink

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much each education and library board in the Province has paid to Translink in each of the last five years. [25770]

Angela E. Smith: The education and library boards have incurred the following expenditure in the last five years in relation to schools services provided by Translink:

£

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
2000–01	777,597	6,584,803	6,153,086	4,880,971	3,904,699	22,301,156
2001–02	1,039,710	6,960,560	6,216,599	5,077,462	3,945,176	23,239,507
2002–03	827,000	7,373,000	6,419,000	5,135,000	3,731,000	23,485,000
2003–04	845,000	7,620,000	5,917,792	5,446,000	3,731,000	23,559,792
2004–05	866,000	8,373,000	6,931,000	5,966,000	4,340,631	26,476,631

Vacant Teaching Posts

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vacant teaching posts there were within each education and library board in the Province in 1997. [25797]

Angela E. Smith: This information is not held by the Department of Education nor by the relevant employing authorities, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Water Charges

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sum he originally budgeted to receive in 2006–07 from water charges. [25840]

Angela E. Smith: In considering public expenditure allocations for 2006–07, in the course of the Priorities and Budget 2005–08 process, it was estimated that the revenue from the phased introduction of water and sewerage charges, on 1 April 2006, would be between £50 million and £80 million for that year Reflecting the uncertainty regarding the final amount, the lower amount, £50 million, was factored into public expenditure allocations for 2006–07.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Careers Advice

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what arrangements are made to provide careers advice for those who leave higher education without completing their courses. [25745]

Bill Rammell: All Higher Education (HE) Careers Advisory Services, which are funded by institutions themselves, offer some level of information, advice and guidance (IAG) to students who are considering leaving their courses before completion. Institutions determine the level of provision to offer, taking account of funding and resource levels in their careers service, and also the specific circumstances of each discontinuing student.

HE Careers Services work with other IAG services to ensure that students who are leaving their course are referred to the most appropriate source of help, including: Connexions for young people; the national "learndirect" telephone and on-line advice service; and the local "nextstep" information and advice service for adults. Other services such as counselling or financial advice are recommended if appropriate.

Alongside this, the Higher Education Funding Council for England provides higher education institutions with substantial funding—£282 million for 2005–06—to help universities give more support to students who may be at risk of leaving their courses before completion.

Childrens' Diets

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government is taking to ensure young children are eating a well-balanced diet. [25187]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills announced a package of measures in March 2005 to improve school food and good progress has been made. Elements of the package include: (i) the School Meals Review Panel which published its report containing recommendations for new nutritional standards for school lunches. The consultation period runs until 31 December 2005 and finalised standards will be announced in the new year; (ii) an independent School Food Trust which is currently being set up to support schools making the transformation to healthy meals; (iii) the new Ofsted inspection framework which will expect schools to present evidence about their general approach to food and healthy eating; (iv) and from September 2005, the 'Healthy Schools'

programme which has included healthy eating as a key element, which schools will need to address to reach the National Healthy Schools' standard.

The recently published 'Choosing Health White Paper' also sets out a number of actions to improve nutrition and physical activity levels, particularly among children and to reduce obesity.

Finally, the Department of Health's Food in Schools Toolkit provides guidance/resources to help schools deliver a whole school approach to healthier food and drink. A similar toolkit has recently been published by the Food Standards Agency for school Governors; and a Parents Toolkit has been published by the DfES.

Citizenship Education

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps she is taking to improve the quality of citizenship education in schools; [24385]

(2) what steps she is taking to ensure that staff teaching citizenship education have appropriate opportunities for continuing professional development. [24387]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Citizenship was made a statutory subject in the national curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 in 2002. We have introduced Initial Teacher Training in Citizenship and funded places for over 1,000 trainee teachers so far.

For existing teachers, we have developed a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) handbook which supports the development of effective teaching and learning in citizenship education. We are also developing a CPD certificate for the teaching of citizenship, which is currently being piloted in three areas.

In addition, we continue to support the Association for Citizenship Teaching and have developed a short course GCSE in Citizenship Studies which 38,000 pupils took in 2005, an increase of 10,000 over the previous year.

Community Schools

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her policy that community schools should be allowed to be run by religious educational trusts. [27081]

Jacqui Smith: A community school could not acquire a religious character by acquiring a trust. In order for a school without a religious character to acquire such a character proposals must be published to close the school and to open a new school with a religious character in its place.

A school which did not have a religious character could acquire a trust which had some religious objects, as well as educational ones, but that trust could not affect the religious character of the school.

Disabled Students Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how long on average an individual waited when claiming the Disabled Students' Allowance from the point of application to the point of receiving the allowance in 2004–05. [26556]

Bill Rammell: Applications are dealt with by local authorities and the information requested is not held centrally. The target turn round for all applications for student support is six weeks. Applications for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) tend to take longer because they involve a specialist assessment to determine course related needs. We do not set and monitor specific DSA processing times, but we have given advice to local authorities to prioritise DSA applications and speed up the referral process with the aim of achieving payment of DSA in advance of the start of term for those who need it, wherever possible.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are being taken to reduce the time taken for an individual to receive the Disabled Students' Allowance. [26557]

Bill Rammell: Following a review of Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) we changed DfES guidance to local authority awards officers for 2002/03 to allow disabled students to receive a DSA funded assessment of their course needs prior to the start of the course, so that arrangements could be made for their special support to be ready in time for the start of their course.

Currently over 35,000 students are receiving DSAs annually. We are not aware of any general problem of undue delays in the DSA assessment process but are always prepared to consider carefully further proposals for improving the speed and efficiency of administration.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 815–17W, on education maintenance allowance, what representations she has received regarding the 45 per cent. of post-16 students who are not eligible to receive education maintenance allowance. [25530]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* From 1 April 2005, the Secretary of State delegated responsibility for Education maintenance allowance (EMA) operational policy to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). LSC took over responsibility for responding to EMA related correspondence in July. The total amount of correspondence received by the LSC specifically mentioning EMA in the period July to September totals 757 cases. This includes correspondence sent to Ministers and cases sent directly by members of the public to the LSC.

A number of issues are encompassed within that figure of 757 which do not always relate to an individual's eligibility. The broad categories and breakdown of inquiries are listed in the following table (including additional figures for telephone contacts which cannot be classified).

	July	August	September	October	Telephone Queries	Total
Income-related	49	36	262	142	15	504
Age-related	8	3	23	25	4	63
Pilot Area issues	7	3	1	2	0	13
General queries	15	30	31	30	0	106
General EMA Complaints	11	12	24	18	4	69
Other	—	3	3	17	0	25
	90	87	346	234	23	780

Those who are not eligible for receipt of EMA will largely fall into the categories of "Income-related", "Age-related" and "Pilot area issues".

3,762 pieces of correspondence have been dealt with by the DfES Central Correspondence Unit relating to students who are not eligible for EMA during the period September 2004 to the end of October 2005—3,535 of these were from members of the public and 227 from Members of Parliament. The following table shows the types of correspondence as classified by my Department:

	Number
Income-related	2,339
Age-related	1,437
Bonus payments	58

Exam Standards

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to increase the rigour of GCSEs and A-levels. [26339]

Jacqui Smith: Our White Paper, "14–19 Education and Skills" sets out proposals to strengthen GCSEs and A-levels.

We will restructure English and mathematics GCSEs to ensure that in future students cannot get a grade C or above without passing new functional skills units.

At A-level we will introduce a new section in papers covering Advanced Extension Award type material and an Extended Project requiring a high degree of planning, preparation, research and autonomous working.

Failing Schools

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the reasons for school failure; and what steps her Department is taking to tackle school failure. [26082]

Jacqui Smith: Her Majesty's chief inspector of schools has a duty to keep the Secretary of State informed about school failures and the reasons for failure. Inspectors look at the overall effectiveness of a school, teaching, standards and attainment, leadership and management, governance, value for money, improvement since the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve.

The Government have introduced new legislation and a number of successful initiatives, including the Fresh Start programme and Academies, to address failure since 1997. The recent Schools White Paper sets out proposals for further measures to ensure local authorities take rapid and decisive action.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the turnaround of failing schools. [26083]

Jacqui Smith: This is a fundamental responsibility of local authorities, and we have challenged them to use their powers of intervention to tackle failure quickly and effectively. When a school fails an Ofsted inspection, authorities may appoint additional governors, or replace an entire governing body with an interim executive board. The authority may also suspend the school's right to a delegated budget. In addition we have encouraged federation and collaboration with other schools, and emphasised that there may be a need to change the head teacher or other senior staff. In cases of severe failure, schools may be closed and replaced under the Fresh Start initiative, or as Academies.

The recent Schools White Paper announced the Government's intention to require local authorities to consider taking radical options as soon as schools are placed in special measures and to re-consider their use after 12 months if schools are making inadequate progress.

Faith Schools

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many proposals by faith organisations to open new faith schools were made in each year since 1997; and how many were successful. [26489]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the number of proposals made by faith organisations to open new faith schools in each year since 1997, and the number of those proposals that were subsequently approved (whether or not this was in the same year they were published).

	Proposals published	Of which approved
1997	13	12
1998	13	11
1999	8	7
2000	13	12
2001	13	13
2002	10	10
2003	17	16
2004	15	13
2005	10	9
Total	112	103

These figures do not include new faith schools resulting from schools amalgamating or infant and junior schools closing to be replaced by a primary school.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* non-faith schools have been awarded a (i) grade 1 and (ii) grade 2 rating by Ofsted inspectors. [26490]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 7 November 2005:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

Dr Ashok Kumar (Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland): To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what percentage of *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* non-faith schools have been awarded a (i) grade 1 and (ii) grade 2 rating by Ofsted Inspectors.

The tables attached show the percentage of schools judged to be highly effective (grade 1) and very effective (grade 2) by denomination during the academic year 2004/05.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both houses.

Table 1: Percentage of primary schools judged either highly effective (grade 1) or very effective (grade 2): 2004/05

	Highly effective (grade 1)	*Very effective (grade 2)*
Faith schools	1	20
Non-faith schools	1	17

Table 2: Percentage of secondary schools judged either highly effective (grade 1) or very effective (grade 2): 2004/05

	Highly effective (grade 1)	*Very effective (grade 2)*
Faith schools	1	27
Non-faith schools	3	22

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many colleges have offered courses tailored to their local area in each of the last five years. [24978]

Bill Rammell: Information on how many colleges have offered courses tailored to their local area in each of the last five years is not collected. As the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds further education provision on the basis of three year development plans which are agreed between colleges and their local LSCs then all courses should reflect local needs.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Ministers with responsibility for further education her Department has had since 1997. [25004]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills, and its predecessor Departments, has had nine Ministers with responsibility for further education since 1997.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many courses in further education institutions in *(a)* Cheshire and *(b)* Warrington have had their fees (i) increased and (ii) reduced in the current academic year. [26583]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) increased its learner fee assumption from 25 per cent. to 27.5 per cent. of the basic course cost for 2005/06 in respect of all adults liable to pay fees.

Further education colleges have the discretion and responsibility to decide their own fee strategies and will continue to be free to set fee levels for courses and for individuals. My Department expects colleges to collect more of the fees they presently voluntarily forgo and the LSC is implementing a policy of setting fee income targets for all colleges. We do not monitor fees at course level although after the end of the year, detailed information is provided by colleges to the LSC about fees paid by individual learners.

My Department will continue to waive fees for all young people; those taking literacy and numeracy; and learners receiving income based benefits, the pension (guarantee) credit and those on higher levels of the working tax credit.

Gershon Review

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much schools are expected to save as part of the Gershon review; and how these savings are being measured. [25529]

Bill Rammell: The Department is committed to realising total annual efficiency gains of at least £4.3 billion by 2007–08 as a result of Spending Review 2004. Within this total the schools sector is responsible for realising roughly two thirds of the total efficiency gains.

Details of how we plan to measure these gains are laid out in the Department's Efficiency Technical Note, (ETN), which can be found at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/otherdocs.shtml.

Highly Skilled Migrant Programme

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in further education have leave to remain in the UK as a member of a family in the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme; and how much in overseas tuition fees was paid by such students in each of the last five years. [24425]

Andy Burnham: I have been asked to reply.

The figures requested are not held centrally as the Home Office does not record whether dependants of migrants under the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme are in further education. However, dependants, aged 16 to 18, of migrants with leave under the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme are allowed to study in the UK without paying fees. The Department for Education and Skills has no information on the specific immigration leave of overseas students in further education in England and cannot identify any fees they may pay.

Key Stage 2 Results

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who takes decisions on which data are included in the published key stage 2 results; and if she will make a statement. [25980]

Jacqui Smith: Decisions regarding the content and timing of the publication of key stage 2 data, published as National Statistics, are taken by the Head of Profession for Statistics. These decisions are taken in line with the National Statistics Code of Practice. Decisions regarding the content and timing of the Primary (KS2) Achievement and Attainment Tables are taken by Ministers.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the administrative costs of *(a)* the Learning and Skills Council in Wiltshire and Swindon and *(b)* all Learning and Skills councils were in (i) 2003, (ii) 2004 and (iii) 2005. [19339]

Bill Rammell: Administration costs of local council's are a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. LSC's chief executive, Mark Haysom will write to the hon. Member with further information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

The LSC's core administration costs have fallen steadily from 3.4 per cent. of total funding in 2001–02, to 2.5 per cent. of its planned total budget in 2005–06.

The LSC is embarking upon a major transformation programme that will make it a smaller, more dynamic and more customer-focused organisation. This will build upon its existing strengths; further develop its relationships with providers and with its partners, and help push the highest proportion of its funding out through colleges and providers into front line delivery. At local level, the LSC will develop small teams of professional staff who will support the delivery of its priority objectives through strategic relationships with colleges, providers and other key stakeholders and so ensure that the needs of local employers and learners are met. I fully support the changes the LSC is making as I believe it will help bring about an organisation that is fit for purpose.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. Michael Wills, dated 9 November 2005:

I write to provide further information on your recent Parliamentary Question in which you asked the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the administrative costs of *(a)* the Learning and Skills Council in Swindon and Wiltshire and *(b)* all the Learning & Skills councils were in 2003, (ii) 2004 and (iii) 2005.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) financial year covers the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March.

The attached table shows the total administration expenditure of each of the Learning & Skills Council, its regional offices and national office during the financial years 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05.

I hope that you find this information helpful.

Table 2: Administrative costs by LSC

		Financial Year		
	LSC Name	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*
EE060	Norfolk	1,470,219	1,805,963	1,981,816
EE070	Cambridgeshire	1,569,191	2,068,357	2,329,571
EE080	Suffolk	1,468,409	1,762,619	1,695,017
EE090	Bedfordshire and Luton	1,521,678	1,934,059	1,924,289
EE100	Hertfordshire	1,930,225	2,448,685	2,297,987
EE110	Essex	2,835,731	3,295,371	3,243,063
EE900	East England Regional Office	380,229	0	0
EM010	Derbyshire	2,048,732	2,469,016	2,397,296
EM020	Nottinghamshire	2,348,914	2,959,344	3,205,982
EM030	Lincolnshire and Rutland	1,418,725	1,749,342	1,825,183
EM040	Leicestershire	2,367,323	2,454,287	2,375,832
EM050	Northamptonshire	1,422,356	1,808,557	1,805,271
EM900	East Midlands Regional Office	337,254	0	0
GL120	London-North	2,154,313	2,610,722	2,694,684
GL130	London-West	2,587,527	3,315,618	3,644,301
GL140	London-Central	3,591,862	4,411,710	4,485,516
GL150	London-East	4,236,950	4,972,332	4,585,676
GL160	London-South	2,777,363	3,300,762	3,463,520
GL900	Greater London Regional Office	284,024	0	0
NE170	Northumberland	1,100,316	1,375,326	1,436,812
NE180	Tyne and Wear	3,233,259	3,546,660	3,648,120
NE190	County Durham	1,293,844	1,756,866	2,054,976
NE200	Tees Valley	2,049,665	2,461,191	2,546,533
NE900	North East Regional Office	21,466	0	0
NW210	Cumbria	1,377,830	1,713,363	1,909,892
NW220	Lancashire	2,531,682	3,044,097	3,137,275
NW230	Greater Merseyside	3,252,741	3,937,629	4,265,898
NW240	Greater Manchester	4,692,883	5,569,494	5,532,928
NW250	Cheshire and Warrington	1,766,610	2,274,155	2,286,610
NW900	North West Regional Office	72,538	0	0
SE260	Milton Keynes, Oxon and Bucks	2,526,535	2,630,468	2,838,174
SE270	Berkshire	2,190,217	2,737,881	2,536,686
SE280	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	3,116,176	3,597,499	3,746,165
SE290	Surrey	2,270,964	2,700,102	2,754,063
SE300	Sussex	2,544,525	3,108,746	3,173,562
SE310	Kent and Medway	3,228,074	3,676,781	3,948,310
SE900	South East Regional Office	253,955	0	0
SW320	Devon and Cornwall	3,125,682	3,327,553	3,689,940

Table 2: Administrative costs by LSC

		Financial Year		
SW330	Somerset	1,358,010	1,720,098	1,663,936
SW340	Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	1,737,166	2,099,840	2,258,536
SW350	West of England	2,442,757	2,986,288	3,201,167
SW360	Wiltshire and Swindon	1,740,911	2,114,163	2,055,748
SW370	Gloucestershire	1,548,140	2,146,143	2,328,816
SW900	South West Regional Office	269,779	0	0
WM380	Shropshire	1,499,731	1,618,893	1,443,114
WM390	Staffordshire	1,777,020	2,473,728	2,411,065
WM400	Black Country	2,562,023	2,958,276	2,980,075
WM410	Birmingham and Solihull	3,502,543	3,748,183	3,704,107
WM420	Herefordshire and Worcestershire	1,654,769	2,069,515	2,137,807
WM430	Coventry and Warwickshire	1,909,149	2,227,032	2,253,091
WM900	West Midlands Regional Office	127,905	0	0
YH440	North Yorkshire	1,525,159	1,912,682	1,928,042
YH450	West Yorkshire	3,513,807	4,640,313	4,825,085
YH400	South Yorkshire	2,590,809	3,021,919	3,097,246
YH470	Humberside	1,754,635	2,377,909	2,583,204
YH900	Yorkshire Regional Office	120,090	0	0
ANN	National Office and Central costs	124,208,272	120,194,896	106,378,646
	Total	233,242,662	249,134,433	238,711,633

Administration costs per statutory accounts

£000

	Financial Year		
	2004–05	*2003–04*	*2002–03*
Staff costs	140,514	149,097	134,195
Other costs	74,061	82,937	89,070
Depreciation, impairment and losses	18,669	17,099	15,449
	233,244	249,133	238,714

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 962W, on the Learning and Skills Council, by whom those learners not funded by the Learning and Skills Council were funded. [24964]

Bill Rammell: There is a diverse range of possible sources of funding for Further Education (FE) provision that is delivered by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) but not funded by the LSC. The most common sources of funding for learners in 2003/04 include: the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE); the Department of Health, national health service (NHS) and regional health authorities; other HM Government Departments and public bodies; overseas funding; United Kingdom (UK) industry and commerce; private training organisations; the Teaching Training Agency (TTA); local education authorities (LEAs); New Deal for both young people and the long term unemployed; funding from Europe including the European Social Fund (ESF); and learners paying for full-cost courses themselves.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 962W, on the Learning and Skills Council, in what circumstances the level is not specified. [25062]

Bill Rammell: Qualification level of courses delivered by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is not specified where no level is assigned to a course, or where the level is mixed or not known. The vast majority of such provision is:

initial and diagnostic tests in literacy, language and numeracy;

taster provision of one-day or less duration;

vocational study not leading to a recognised qualification; and

leisure courses.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of her Department; [23786]

(2) what proportion of new recruits to her Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23778]

Maria Eagle: In 2002, the last time the Department undertook a large recruitment of administrative staff, candidates were assessed via a selection process, which included written tests for numeracy and literacy.

We are unable to provide information on proportion of new recruits to the Department who have a level 2 qualification as the Department has not undertaken an external recruitment campaign at administrative level since 2002. Our selection processes at this level are competency based, supplemented with written tests covering numeracy and literacy—we do not recruit purely on qualifications.

Maintained Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many maintained schools share their site with another school. [25670]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally. This information would be available only from individual local authorities or schools.

National Employer Training Programme

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which companies were in receipt of funds as part of the National Employer Training Programme in 2004–05; and how much each received in each pilot area. [25519]

Phil Hope: Employer Training Pilots (ETP) were introduced in September 2002 to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly for low skilled trainees. The National Employer Training Programme (NETP) to be rolled-out from April 2006 will apply lessons learned from the Employer Training Pilots.

Information on individual employers taking part in ETP is treated as commercial-in-confidence; and the cost of disaggregating data to a financial year would be disproportionate.

The total number of employers who had participated in ETP since September 2002 (as of 3 November 2005) was 25,938. The numbers participating in each local Learning and Skills Council area involved were:

		Percentage
Berkshire	1,884	7.26
Birmingham and Solihull	1,123	4.33
Black Country	856	3.30
Cambridgeshire	735	2.83
County Durham	264	1.02
Derbyshire	1,565	6.03
Devon and Cornwall	1,142	4.40
Essex	3,125	12.05
Greater Manchester	3,054	11.77
Kent and Medway	1,670	6.44
Lancashire	764	2.95
Leicestershire	1,285	4.95
London East	1,373	5.29
Northumberland	238	0.92
Shropshire	857	3.30
South Yorkshire	1,450	5.59
Tees Valley	309	1.19
Tyne and Wear	1,621	6.25
West Yorkshire	1,189	4.58
Wiltshire	1,434	5.53

The support received by employers, via the pilots, was mainly indirect with payments going to a skills broker, learning provider and Information, Advice and Guidance adviser, rather than directly to the employer. However in some, though not all, pilots employers did receive a wage compensation payment aimed at reimbursing them for the time their participating employees spent on training. The rate of wage compensation varied between pilots, from between zero to 150 of pay, but averaged £260 per learner. Based on an average of eight learners per employer over the period of the pilots, the average payment received per employer for wage compensation equates to £2,080. From Phase 3 of the Pilots (September 2004), employers only receive wage compensation for time off actually taken when a learner successfully completes their learning.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the financial impact on existing commercial providers of the introduction of the National Employer Training pilot. [25520]

Phil Hope: The new National Employer Training Programme (NETP) will be rolled-out from April 2006. It will offer employers informed choice between quality-assured, Learning and Skills Council approved training providers, whether colleges or other providers, that deliver the training employers want. It is based on the lessons learnt from the Employer Training Pilots (ETP) which have been running since September 2002.

By September 2005, over 203,000 individual learners had participated in ETP. The amount allocated from the ETP budget to training expenditure since the launch of the Pilots is £120,878,086. This covers actual training costs (but not other elements of the budget such as initial training assessments or additional learner support).

It is estimated that around 75 per cent. of ETP learning has been provided through commercial, private providers, and 25 per cent. by Further Education colleges. However, college engagement varies between ETP areas—the majority have 25 per cent. or higher college activity, with some reporting up to a 50:50 split of activity between private providers and colleges.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of National Employer Training provision represents *(a)* provision which would have been provided previously at a fee to employers and *(b)* new provision which would not otherwise have been provided. [25521]

Phil Hope: Employer Training Pilots (ETP) were introduced in September 2002 to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly for low skilled trainees. The National Employer Training Programme (NETP) to be rolled-out from April 2006 will apply lessons learned from the Employer Training Pilots.

NETP will give employers real choice over the training they offer their employees, and will respond directly to their business development needs, whether for basic or high level skills. Training will be delivered flexibly, including in the workplace. The Government will fully fund the training of employees undertaking basic skills and first full Level 2 qualifications. Therefore most training up to and including Level 2 will be free to employers and employees.

By September 2005, over 25,000 employers had participated in ETP. A report by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) published in March 2005, "Platform for Progression: Employer Training Pilots Year 2 Evaluation Report", found that half of the employers taking part in ETP had a previous involvement with either a business support agency, a training provider, or a national training initiative. One-third had been involved with at least one agency, provider or initiative. The remaining 14 per cent. had no previous involvement and could therefore be classified as harder-to-reach employers.

The IES evaluation found that ETP employers have a relatively positive approach to training compared with average employers. Most adopt a strategic approach to

training, express positive attitudes, and say that they provided at least some training to low-skilled employees.

Non-essential Learning

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has issued to Learning and Skills Councils on the definition of non-essential learning; and what definition of this term her Department uses. [26582]

Bill Rammell: I have issued no guidance of this type. I do not recognise the term non-essential learning. I wrote to hon. and right hon. Members on 21 October outlining my Department's priorities for further education and training for the period 2006–08. More detailed information is provided in the Learning and Skills Council's publication "Priorities for Success—Funding for Learning and Skills". This document is available on the LSC's website: www.lsc.gov.uk.

Parenting Contracts

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what action is being taken by her Department to ensure that parenting contracts are effective; [26041]

(2) what assessment she has made of the contribution of parenting contracts to school discipline; [26042]

(3) what action is being taken by her Department to improve parental responsibility for pupil behaviour in school. [26045]

Jacqui Smith: Parenting contracts are available for school behaviour and attendance. They are formal agreements between parent and school or parent and local authority in which each side sets out the steps they will take to secure an improvement in the child's behaviour or attendance.

My Department has provided dedicated support and advice to local authorities on the introduction of these measures and their effective implementation. To support further, guidance and examples of effective practice have been published on the departmental website.

Parenting contracts are one of a range of strategies that schools and local authorities can use to improve school discipline. They can be used alone or in conjunction with other measures such as pastoral support programmes for pupils.

Qualifications

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of economically inactive adults without a Level 2 qualification are claiming benefits for people of working age. [25476]

Phil Hope: Analysis of the Labour Force Survey (Spring 2005) indicates that 51 per cent. of economically inactive people aged 16–59/64, in England, are without a Level 2 qualification. Of those economically inactive people, approximately 53 per cent. claim benefits (other than child benefit). In comparison, approximately 31 per cent. of economically inactive people aged 16–59/64, in England, who are qualified to NVQ level 2 equivalent or above, claim benefits (other than child benefit).

School Building Programme

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans there are to rebuild or remodel schools in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England. [26506]

Jacqui Smith: Complete information is not held in the form requested.

The Department is continuing to increase its capital support for investment in schools in England, from £5.5 billion in 2005–06, rising to £6.3 billion in 2007–08. Much of this funding is allocated to local authorities and schools by needs related formulae, so that decisions on how to target these resources can be taken locally in accordance with local asset management plans.

Building Schools for the Future (BSF), is our strategic programme which aims to rebuild and renew all secondary schools over 15 years starting in 2005–06. Prioritisation is based on our published criteria of relative educational and social need, which is being applied fairly and consistently, and all local authorities have been provided with indicative planning information to inform their own plans. We have announced those authorities that have joined the programme in the first three waves.

They are:

Wave 1: Bradford, Bristol, Gateshead, Greenwich, Knowsley, Lancashire, Leicester City, Leeds, Lewisham, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Newham, Sheffield, Solihull, South Tyneside, Southwark, Stoke on Trent, Sunderland, and Waltham Forest.

Wave 2: Birmingham, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kingston upon Hull, Lambeth, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Nottingham City, and Tower Hamlets.

Wave 3: Barnsley, Durham, Derbyshire, Kent, Luton, North Lincolnshire, Salford, Sandwell, Tameside, and Westminster.

For those projects in BSF waves 1 to 3, 12 schools in South Tyneside and Gateshead and 39 other schools in the north-east region will benefit from BSF investment. Nationally projects in waves 1 to 3 will cover around 350 schools.

In addition, from 2008–09 we will be launching a new primary programme, with the aim of renewing at least half of primary school buildings over 15 years. We will be launching a consultation on that early in the new year.

School Expansions

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether there is a limit to the size to which a successful school can expand under the proposals in the White Paper: "Higher Standards, Better Education for All". [26504]

Jacqui Smith: There is no maximum size to which a successful school may expand under the proposals in the White Paper. This is a matter for local determination. Both large and small schools may be successful. There

are a range of strategies for the internal organisation of schools, and schools may spread their expertise by federation and collaboration as well as expansion.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools she expects to apply to expand in each of the next five years after plans to change presumption of the local education authority to be in favour of such an application are implemented. [26507]

Jacqui Smith: A fast-track for the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools was introduced in August of this year. At the same time, statutory guidance reinforced the presumption that such proposals should be approved. Expansion of schools is a matter for the schools themselves and the local education authority, and we have no targets for the numbers that should expand. However, over 1,300 secondary schools currently have no spare capacity, and we estimate that some 80 schools a year might wish to expand.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what evidence she has collated on the effects on schools of choosing whether to apply to expand the powers of local education authorities to restrict and refuse such applications. [26508]

Jacqui Smith: All maintained schools may publish their own proposals to expand, and local authorities may also publish proposals for the expansion of community and foundation schools. Local authorities may decide their own proposals if there are no objections. Proposals are otherwise decided by the local School Organisation Committee or, where the Committee cannot agree unanimously, by the Schools Adjudicator. Statutory guidance to the decision-makers says that there should be a presumption in favour of approval of proposals to expand by successful and popular schools, and we have made capital available to support the expansion of such schools.

Local authorities may object to proposals by a governing body to expand their school, as may governing bodies to proposals by the authority if they do not agree. Four proposals by schools to expand have been rejected since the presumption in favour was introduced in June 2003.

School Food Trust

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to name the board members of the School Food Trust. [25276]

Jacqui Smith: The Board members for the School Food Trust have now been appointed and are as follows:

Chair

Suzi Leather, interim Chair of the School Food Trust and also Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority.

Members

Beverley Baker, Head of Commercial Services for Surrey County Council

Frances Crook, Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform

John Dyson, adviser to the British Hospitality Association on all food and technical matters

Andrew Gillard, Programme Area Manager at Peterborough Regional College

Julian Hunt, Editor of The Grocer and a school governor

Maggie Jones, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at UNISON

Paul Kelly, Corporate Affairs Director for Compass Group PLC

Carmell McConnell, founder of Magic Breakfast

Kristina Murrin, founder of What If!

Sir John Oldham, Head of the National Primary Care Development Team

Jeanette Orrey, school meals policy adviser for the Soil Association

Rob Rees, interim Board member of the School Food Trust, former restaurateur, chef and adviser

Sir Tom Shebbeare, Director of Charities to HRH the Prince of Wales

Sheila Walker, Head of Catering Services at Birmingham City Council

Ian Wasson, general manager of Devon Direct Services and former chair of LACA

Adviser to the Trust

Michael Holmes QBE, national spokesman on healthy eating and public sector procurement for the National Farmers Union

School Funding

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* mean, *(b)* upper decile and *(c)* lower decile funding were for each (i) primary and (ii) secondary pupil in each local education authority school (A) in the last year for which information is available and (B) in 2000. [25414]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The information requested is contained within the following table:

	Number of schools included in analysis[1,2]				*Primary school budget share (plus grants) £ per pupil*					
	Primary		*Secondary*		*Lower decile*[3]		*Mean*[4]		*Upper decile*[3]	
Local authority name	*2000–01*	*2005–06*	*2000–01*	*2005–06*	*2000–01*	*2005–06*	*2000–01*	*2005–06*	*2000–01*	*2005–06*
Barking and Dagenham	49	49	8	9	2,020	2,530	2,160	3,180	2,360	3,560
Barnet	90	89	21	19	1,970	2,740	2,230	3,290	2,660	4,230
Barnsley	87	79	14	14	1,610	2,620	1,740	2,910	2,050	3,350
Bath and North East Somerset	69	62	13	13	1,650	2,320	1,950	2,620	2,810	3,380
Bedfordshire	147	146	57	57	1,570	2,380	1,780	2,720	2,710	3,960
Bexley	63	59	16	16	1,650	2,460	1,830	2,760	2,160	3,510
Birmingham	328	305	77	76	1,930	2,880	2,180	3,310	2,600	4,110
Blackburn and Darwen	59	57	9	9	1,810	2,650	2,060	3,000	2,430	3,480
Blackpool	33	30	8	8	1,650	2,530	1,790	2,890	2,020	3,370
Bolton	105	99	16	16	1,740	2,450	1,890	2,720	2,150	3,150
Bournemouth	28	27	9	10	1,640	2,310	1,840	2,570	2,200	3,000
Bracknell Forest	33	29	6	6	1,710	2,590	1,830	2,730	2,040	3,000
Bradford	149	159	25	28	1,680	2,690	1,800	3,080	2,020	3,700
Brent	60	61	13	13	2,160	3,040	2,370	3,400	2,730	4,030
Brighton and Hove	58	56	10	9	1,660	2,370	1,790	2,660	2,090	3,260

Local authority name	Number of schools included in analysis[1,2]				Primary school budget share (plus grants) £ per pupil					
	Primary		Secondary		Lower decile[3]		Mean[4]		Upper decile[3]	
	2000–01	2005–06	2000–01	2005–06	2000–01	2005–06	2000–01	2005–06	2000–01	2005–06
Bromley	78	77	17	18	1,700	2,310	1,940	2,700	2,850	3,820
Buckinghamshire	193	185	34	34	1,510	2,440	1,740	2,820	2,600	4,350
Bury	69	63	14	14	1,590	2,470	1,760	2,710	2,110	3,080
Calderdale	89	85	15	15	1,690	2,540	1,870	2,840	2,270	3,580
Cambridgeshire	207	202	31	31	1,560	2,420	1,780	2,700	2,320	3,360
Camden	42	41	10	9	2,340	3,460	2,630	3,970	2,900	4,500
Cheshire	290	279	43	44	1,610	2,320	1,830	2,690	2,420	3,540
City of Bristol	119	118	20	17	1,710	2,500	2,000	2,940	2,440	3,860
City of Kingston-Upon-Hull	80	77	16	15	1,810	2,650	2,020	3,010	2,400	3,540
City of London[2]	1	1	0	0	4,180	5,080	4,180	5,080	4,180	5,080
Cornwall	245	237	31	31	1,610	2,560	1,860	2,880	2,810	4,360
Coventry	89	84	19	19	1,680	2,600	1,840	2,990	2,130	3,910
Croydon	94	90	21	21	1,940	2,670	2,170	3,060	2,500	3,910
Cumbria	294	281	42	42	1,780	2,570	2,000	2,930	2,780	4,020
Darlington	32	30	7	7	1,580	2,380	1,710	2,750	2,000	3,280
Derby	79	78	14	13	1,470	2,520	1,760	3,040	2,280	3,860
Derbyshire	362	358	47	47	1,460	2,350	1,670	2,720	2,490	3,980
Devon	322	313	37	37	1,570	2,550	1,810	2,840	2,680	4,060
Doncaster	113	103	17	16	1,760	2,580	1,880	2,800	2,100	3,360
Dorset	138	138	37	34	1,540	2,300	1,780	2,760	2,380	3,850
Dudley	82	82	22	22	1,760	2,560	1,910	2,880	2,210	3,400
Durham	247	241	36	36	1,640	2,520	1,860	2,870	2,510	3,980
Ealing	65	64	13	12	2,070	2,980	2,250	3,350	2,680	4,130
East Riding of Yorkshire	135	132	18	18	1,600	2,450	1,770	2,820	2,500	4,000
East Sussex	155	156	26	27	1,620	2,410	1,800	2,780	2,370	3,840
Enfield	66	67	16	17	1,930	2,870	2,130	3,290	2,370	3,740
Essex	475	473	79	80	1,710	2,490	1,900	2,820	2,430	3,690
Gateshead	74	75	10	10	1,760	2,530	1,930	2,840	2,270	3,520
Gloucestershire	248	248	42	42	1,540	2,450	1,730	2,720	2,440	3,730
Greenwich	69	64	14	13	2,180	3,060	2,490	3,490	2,890	3,980
Hackney	59	53	10	9	2,560	3,810	2,810	4,120	3,210	4,610
Halton	53	52	9	8	1,730	2,510	2,040	3,090	2,500	4,160
Hammersmith and Fulham	37	35	9	9	2,280	3,360	2,580	3,850	3,030	4,500
Hampshire	438	432	71	71	1,690	2,470	1,880	2,840	2,430	3,690
Haringey	70	63	11	10	2,100	3,170	2,260	3,530	2,470	3,880
Harrow	56	54	10	10	1,960	2,880	2,210	3,310	2,620	3,950
Hartlepool	30	30	6	6	1,640	2,570	1,820	2,950	2,460	3,930
Havering	68	65	18	18	1,840	2,640	2,000	2,960	2,210	3,410
Herefordshire	85	83	14	14	1,660	2,460	1,880	2,750	2,710	3,540
Hertfordshire	426	408	85	82	1,710	2,440	1,910	2,780	2,320	3,540
Hillingdon	67	66	17	15	1,900	2,920	2,080	3,250	2,430	3,700
Hounslow	64	60	14	14	1,970	2,860	2,280	3,280	2,760	3,810
Isle of Wight	46	46	21	21	1,920	2,670	2,080	2,950	2,660	3,750
Isles of Scilly[2]	4	1	1	0	2,980	6,270	3,480	6,270	10,850	6,270
Islington	49	45	9	9	2,190	3,480	2,420	3,900	2,650	4,450
Kensington and Chelsea	26	26	4	4	2,880	3,850	3,110	4,240	3,540	4,780
Kent	475	470	105	103	1,670	2,400	1,850	2,730	2,390	3,550
Kingston upon Thames	37	37	10	10	1,850	2,800	2,000	3,080	2,330	3,370
Kirklees	152	150	32	32	1,660	2,630	1,970	3,100	2,640	4,170
Knowsley	60	59	11	11	1,740	2,490	1,860	2,870	2,040	3,560
Lambeth	62	59	10	10	2,400	3,950	2,610	4,310	2,940	4,790
Lancashire	502	486	89	88	1,600	2,500	1,840	2,900	2,530	4,010
Leeds	244	222	43	40	1,760	2,660	1,960	3,050	2,370	3,800
Leicester	87	84	16	16	1,700	2,420	1,900	2,800	2,130	3,440
Leicestershire	226	226	54	54	1,590	2,390	1,730	2,670	2,450	3,880
Lewisham	70	69	13	12	2,400	3,500	2,620	3,790	2,890	4,220
Lincolnshire	289	287	63	63	1,630	2,270	1,820	2,540	2,590	3,460
Liverpool	157	135	33	31	1,810	2,610	2,080	3,200	2,500	4,270
Luton	57	57	12	12	1,780	2,650	1,990	3,080	2,260	3,510
Manchester	150	134	25	22	1,800	2,640	1,950	2,960	2,150	3,430
Medway	89	84	20	19	1,770	2,630	2,010	3,010	2,550	3,800
Merton	49	43	11	8	2,020	2,910	2,210	3,200	2,620	3,740
Middlesbrough	47	42	11	6	1,660	2,430	1,930	3,000	2,160	3,650
Milton Keynes	82	89	11	10	1,620	2,480	1,790	2,820	2,560	3,840
Newcastle upon Tyne	76	72	21	14	1,770	2,350	2,050	2,830	2,480	3,740
Newham	64	66	14	15	1,980	3,440	2,170	3,760	2,580	4,530
Norfolk	385	385	52	52	1,700	2,440	1,940	2,840	2,800	4,250
North East Lincolnshire	60	59	12	12	1,730	2,530	1,860	2,790	2,050	3,260
North Lincolnshire	69	67	14	14	1,670	2,270	1,860	2,600	2,620	3,560
North Somerset	65	65	10	10	1,580	2,380	1,780	2,710	2,280	3,610
North Tyneside	56	56	20	15	1,590	2,450	1,750	2,710	2,030	3,350
North Yorkshire	328	329	47	47	1,580	2,450	1,810	2,810	3,040	4,680
Northamptonshire	270	265	59	39	1,730	2,370	1,920	2,700	2,370	3,590
Northumberland	142	139	59	59	1,610	2,540	1,880	2,980	3,260	4,980
Nottingham City	101	89	20	17	1,890	2,770	2,270	3,260	3,250	4,240
Nottinghamshire	314	300	58	47	1,500	2,310	1,650	2,630	2,190	3,570
Oldham	101	94	15	15	1,660	2,390	1,920	2,710	2,300	3,120
Oxfordshire	234	233	45	34	1,700	2,490	1,880	2,780	2,420	3,550
Peterborough	57	58	13	13	1,720	2,580	2,010	2,950	2,400	3,610
Plymouth	78	74	18	17	1,680	2,480	1,880	2,780	2,270	3,390
Poole	30	29	9	9	1,750	2,400	1,860	2,600	2,150	3,120

Local authority name	Number of schools included in analysis[1,2] Primary 2000–01	Primary 2005–06	Secondary 2000–01	Secondary 2005–06	Primary school budget share (plus grants) £ per pupil Lower decile[3] 2000–01	Lower decile[3] 2005–06	Mean[4] 2000–01	Mean[4] 2005–06	Upper decile[3] 2000–01	Upper decile[3] 2005–06
Portsmouth	53	53	10	10	1,900	2,660	2,060	3,030	2,450	3,720
Reading	38	37	8	7	1,650	2,470	1,830	2,850	2,090	3,270
Redbridge	52	51	16	17	1,740	2,670	1,870	2,930	2,040	3,220
Redcar and Cleveland	51	45	13	11	1,690	2,410	1,940	2,860	2,440	4,020
Richmond upon Thames	39	41	8	8	1,880	2,760	2,050	3,100	2,370	3,840
Rochdale	76	72	14	14	1,610	2,650	1,780	3,040	2,170	3,610
Rotherham	110	104	17	16	1,650	2,490	1,850	2,800	2,150	3,370
Rutland	18	17	3	3	1,810	2,610	2,050	3,040	2,400	4,460
Salford	84	83	15	14	1,640	2,340	1,840	2,800	2,160	3,400
Sandwell	102	98	20	18	1,740	2,580	1,960	2,920	2,340	3,490
Sefton	90	82	22	20	1,740	2,500	1,980	2,840	2,590	3,540
Sheffield	148	140	27	27	1,620	2,340	1,890	2,770	2,420	3,540
Shropshire	144	143	22	22	1,520	2,410	1,730	2,670	2,250	3,540
Slough	31	27	11	11	1,970	2,720	2,230	3,010	2,560	3,350
Solihull	68	67	13	13	1,620	2,300	1,820	2,630	2,120	3,120
Somerset	224	224	39	39	1,660	2,430	1,870	2,800	2,510	4,100
South Gloucestershire	97	96	14	14	1,560	2,310	1,740	2,630	2,240	3,530
South Tyneside	57	53	11	10	1,720	2,530	1,900	2,950	2,150	4,300
Southampton	67	63	14	14	1,930	2,550	2,150	2,950	2,600	3,690
Southend	43	35	12	12	1,850	2,450	2,020	2,830	2,330	3,350
Southwark	71	72	12	12	2,470	3,670	2,660	4,080	2,870	4,610
St. Helens	60	56	12	11	1,680	2,470	1,840	2,740	2,060	3,080
Staffordshire	313	304	69	68	1,600	2,420	1,740	2,680	2,200	3,500
Stockport	103	96	14	14	1,630	2,400	1,820	2,730	2,140	3,360
Stockton-on-Tees	64	62	13	14	1,690	2,550	1,930	2,900	2,410	3,550
Stoke on Trent	88	70	17	17	1,630	2,490	1,750	2,770	2,000	3,090
Suffolk	255	252	78	78	1,740	2,400	1,960	2,780	2,920	4,020
Sunderland	96	84	17	18	1,780	2,560	2,040	2,870	2,540	3,420
Surrey	327	317	52	53	1,710	2,470	1,900	2,860	2,430	3,860
Sutton	43	41	14	14	1,860	2,590	2,050	2,890	2,290	3,510
Swindon	70	67	11	10	1,580	2,300	1,760	2,590	2,190	3,040
Tameside	79	76	18	18	1,660	2,460	1,830	2,750	2,300	3,460
Telford and Wrekin	66	58	13	13	1,540	2,320	1,750	2,690	2,090	3,340
Thurrock	47	45	10	10	1,780	2,610	1,920	2,870	2,120	3,300
Torbay	33	31	8	8	1,650	2,470	1,800	2,720	2,150	3,550
Tower Hamlets	73	69	15	15	2,750	4,090	3,010	4,400	3,320	4,870
Trafford	123	73	31	18	1,590	2,270	1,800	2,570	2,300	3,520
Wakefield	130	123	18	18	1,530	2,640	1,670	2,940	1,940	3,650
Walsall	94	93	20	19	1,700	2,580	1,920	2,930	2,260	3,600
Waltham Forest	65	58	16	17	2,090	3,000	2,270	3,290	2,520	3,710
Wandsworth	56	56	9	10	2,140	3,210	2,350	3,630	2,610	4,240
Warrington	74	71	12	12	1,620	2,380	1,790	2,650	2,200	3,360
Warwickshire	198	195	37	37	1,660	2,350	1,860	2,670	2,330	3,360
West Berkshire	68	64	10	10	1,680	2,570	1,950	2,900	2,850	4,140
West Sussex	248	242	39	40	1,710	2,450	1,900	2,740	2,700	3,660
Westminster	40	40	8	8	2,490	3,530	2,760	4,150	3,050	4,720
Wigan	112	106	21	21	1,650	2,480	1,840	2,780	2,170	3,560
Wiltshire	217	215	33	32	1,620	2,350	1,810	2,620	2,540	3,440
Windsor and Maidenhead	46	46	14	13	1,760	2,610	2,050	2,960	2,700	3,800
Wirral	101	101	23	22	1,560	2,330	1,770	2,710	2,130	3,540
Wokingham	54	52	9	9	1,640	2,490	1,800	2,790	2,170	3,590
Wolverhampton	89	80	18	18	1,710	2,530	1,920	2,960	2,330	3,660
Worcestershire	197	190	61	57	1,580	2,410	1,790	2,750	2,390	3,610
York	58	54	11	11	1,640	2,350	1,820	2,670	2,210	3,270

Local authority name	Secondary school budget share (plus grants) £ per pupil Lower decile[3] 2000–01	Lower decile[3] 2005–06	Mean[4] 2000–01	Mean[4] 2005–06	Upper decile[3] 2000–01	Upper decile[3] 2005–06
Barking and Dagenham	2,800	4,190	2,880	4,430	2,990	5,210
Barnet	2,700	3,820	2,880	4,200	3,030	4,600
Barnsley	2,300	3,370	2,440	3,750	2,620	4,280
Bath and North East Somerset	2,450	3,100	2,540	3,280	2,860	3,800
Bedfordshire	1,880	2,610	2,320	3,280	2,760	3,760
Bexley	2,490	3,470	2,560	3,780	2,640	4,190
Birmingham	2,620	3,840	2,890	4,290	3,390	5,210
Blackburn and Darwen	2,440	3,460	2,640	3,630	2,880	3,880
Blackpool	2,240	3,470	2,380	3,610	2,630	3,890
Bolton	2,430	3,420	2,560	3,670	2,750	4,100
Bournemouth	2,360	3,230	2,470	3,460	2,600	4,070
Bracknell Forest	2,530	3,440	2,590	3,650	2,740	4,170
Bradford	2,290	3,610	2,470	3,860	2,720	4,430
Brent	3,040	4,370	3,170	4,700	3,310	5,300
Brighton and Hove	2,460	3,360	2,580	3,580	2,870	4,010
Bromley	2,520	3,610	2,630	3,770	2,830	4,020

Local authority name	Secondary school budget share (plus grants) £ per pupil: Lower decile[3] 2000–01	Lower decile[3] 2005–06	Mean[4] 2000–01	Mean[4] 2005–06	Upper decile[3] 2000–01	Upper decile[3] 2005–06
Buckinghamshire	2,120	3,220	2,260	3,400	2,360	3,640
Bury	2,290	3,290	2,500	3,560	2,700	3,940
Calderdale	2,370	3,450	2,450	3,680	2,750	4,360
Cambridgeshire	2,200	2,920	2,370	3,270	2,710	3,900
Camden	3,190	4,780	3,510	5,090	3,850	5,620
Cheshire	2,300	3,050	2,460	3,290	2,970	3,840
City of Bristol	2,580	3,680	2,840	4,150	3,330	4,720
City of Kingston-Upon-Hull	2,410	3,410	2,550	3,750	2,850	4,440
City of London[2]	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cornwall	2,230	3,440	2,350	3,590	2,440	3,790
Coventry	2,460	3,510	2,560	3,770	2,790	4,310
Croydon	2,580	3,390	2,790	3,860	3,120	4,510
Cumbria	2,450	3,420	2,600	3,640	3,080	4,410
Darlington	2,410	3,580	2,480	3,730	2,560	3,960
Derby	2,350	3,470	2,590	3,790	3,330	4,640
Derbyshire	2,270	3,290	2,450	3,560	2,790	4,160
Devon	2,310	3,230	2,430	3,380	2,540	3,490
Doncaster	2,530	3,640	2,670	3,870	2,780	4,080
Dorset	1,780	2,560	2,300	3,400	2,640	3,850
Dudley	2,330	3,330	2,490	3,590	2,770	4,040
Durham	2,320	3,310	2,490	3,570	2,770	4,120
Ealing	2,750	4,250	2,900	4,510	3,220	4,960
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,280	3,280	2,350	3,430	2,440	3,660
East Sussex	2,440	3,330	2,610	3,530	2,720	3,800
Enfield	2,710	3,990	2,850	4,240	3,020	4,590
Essex	2,500	3,450	2,610	3,690	2,780	4,040
Gateshead	2,350	3,530	2,450	3,850	2,710	4,450
Gloucestershire	2,230	3,390	2,330	3,590	2,460	3,900
Greenwich	3,020	4,240	3,320	4,610	3,640	4,960
Hackney	3,400	5,000	3,610	5,140	3,810	5,400
Halton	2,500	3,820	2,730	4,140	3,570	4,780
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,990	4,010	3,410	4,890	3,890	5,700
Hampshire	2,360	3,340	2,490	3,540	2,810	3,970
Haringey	2,920	4,420	3,090	4,630	3,320	4,980
Harrow	2,780	3,990	2,920	4,380	3,210	4,770
Hartlepool	2,540	3,830	2,620	3,990	2,710	4,200
Havering	2,720	3,880	2,840	4,170	3,130	4,860
Herefordshire	2,260	3,210	2,400	3,430	2,700	3,710
Hertfordshire	2,430	3,400	2,550	3,670	2,800	4,010
Hillingdon	2,780	3,960	2,960	4,210	4,030	4,540
Hounslow	2,620	3,660	2,910	3,960	3,170	4,230
Isle of Wight	1,970	2,840	2,410	3,390	2,740	3,750
Isles of Scilly[2]	5,370	—	5,370	—	5,370	—
Islington	3,100	4,770	3,320	5,050	3,540	5,230
Kensington and Chelsea	3,810	5,390	3,950	5,570	4,030	5,790
Kent	2,410	3,290	2,520	3,530	2,780	4,030
Kingston upon Thames	2,550	3,880	2,620	4,010	2,760	4,270
Kirklees	2,030	3,000	2,550	3,720	2,970	4,930
Knowsley	2,790	3,600	2,860	3,770	2,920	4,070
Lambeth	3,410	4,870	3,680	5,190	3,910	5,600
Lancashire	2,230	3,130	2,500	3,480	2,890	3,900
Leeds	2,450	3,460	2,700	3,770	3,340	4,410
Leicester	2,300	3,410	2,430	3,760	2,590	4,200
Leicestershire	2,030	2,850	2,360	3,360	2,700	3,810
Lewisham	3,390	4,580	3,510	4,800	3,660	5,270
Lincolnshire	2,430	3,240	2,540	3,410	2,800	3,700
Liverpool	2,690	3,820	2,830	4,110	3,090	4,690
Luton	2,560	3,750	2,730	3,950	2,960	4,150
Manchester	2,520	3,770	2,690	3,990	2,930	4,260
Medway	2,520	3,640	2,610	3,840	2,880	4,210
Merton	2,120	3,730	2,680	4,220	3,190	5,080
Middlesbrough	2,390	3,760	2,810	4,170	3,450	5,020
Milton Keynes	2,560	3,430	2,720	3,680	2,820	3,960
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,930	3,360	2,540	3,820	2,870	4,090
Newham	3,020	4,580	3,220	4,800	3,480	5,130
Norfolk	2,420	3,250	2,600	3,480	2,920	3,880
North East Lincolnshire	2,420	3,340	2,590	3,480	2,900	4,100
North Lincolnshire	2,270	3,050	2,460	3,330	2,820	3,890
North Somerset	2,360	3,290	2,410	3,470	2,480	3,870
North Tyneside	1,840	2,820	2,440	3,780	2,790	4,260
North Yorkshire	2,380	3,160	2,560	3,430	2,920	3,890

Local authority name	Secondary school budget share (plus grants) £ per pupil					
	Lower decile[3]		Mean[4]		Upper decile[3]	
	2000–01	2005–06	2000–01	2005–06	2000–01	2005–06
Northamptonshire	2,120	3,340	2,570	3,610	2,820	3,850
Northumberland	1,770	2,620	2,190	3,410	2,710	4,100
Nottingham City	2,590	3,890	2,850	4,190	3,410	4,880
Nottinghamshire	2,200	3,310	2,380	3,500	2,660	3,740
Oldham	2,550	3,610	2,710	3,910	3,140	4,520
Oxfordshire	2,080	3,430	2,440	3,620	2,720	3,830
Peterborough	2,500	3,700	2,760	4,000	3,240	4,690
Plymouth	2,500	3,490	2,580	3,690	2,720	3,930
Poole	2,300	3,060	2,570	3,610	2,960	4,290
Portsmouth	2,550	3,540	2,640	3,810	2,800	4,320
Reading	2,570	3,860	2,690	4,070	2,950	4,780
Redbridge	2,680	3,710	2,760	3,940	2,890	4,150
Redcar and Cleveland	2,390	3,410	2,660	3,770	3,200	4,440
Richmond upon Thames	2,510	3,930	2,610	4,110	3,100	4,420
Rochdale	2,410	3,770	2,560	4,040	2,820	4,480
Rotherham	2,460	3,570	2,590	3,810	2,770	4,350
Rutland	2,560	3,470	2,710	3,730	2,880	4,110
Salford	2,330	3,280	2,450	3,510	2,610	3,810
Sandwell	2,370	3,600	2,580	3,850	2,940	4,180
Sefton	2,520	3,570	2,690	3,800	3,150	4,330
Sheffield	2,240	3,170	2,450	3,520	2,740	3,960
Shropshire	2,360	3,260	2,480	3,470	2,670	3,760
Slough	2,700	4,110	2,930	4,270	3,240	4,570
Solihull	2,310	3,110	2,390	3,360	2,490	3,710
Somerset	2,070	3,040	2,420	3,350	2,770	3,830
South Gloucestershire	2,370	3,410	2,440	3,540	2,490	3,710
South Tyneside	2,390	3,420	2,460	3,790	2,620	5,010
Southampton	2,580	3,450	2,710	3,810	2,940	4,420
Southend	2,750	3,610	2,840	3,850	2,950	4,090
Southwark	3,290	5,020	3,510	5,170	3,620	5,460
St. Helens	2,480	3,590	2,610	3,850	2,930	4,130
Staffordshire	1,880	2,850	2,310	3,450	2,550	3,900
Stockport	2,390	3,120	2,440	3,380	2,530	3,700
Stockton-on-Tees	2,260	3,400	2,490	3,870	2,820	4,650
Stoke on Trent	2,310	3,530	2,440	3,720	2,670	4,010
Suffolk	2,040	2,800	2,460	3,440	2,790	3,820
Sunderland	2,410	3,470	2,510	3,710	2,670	4,000
Surrey	2,250	3,220	2,370	3,410	2,610	3,720
Sutton	2,450	3,630	2,620	3,890	2,830	4,340
Swindon	2,250	3,090	2,430	3,230	2,500	3,380
Tameside	2,300	3,320	2,450	3,620	2,690	4,090
Telford and Wrekin	2,350	3,300	2,610	3,660	3,140	4,100
Thurrock	2,450	3,310	2,640	3,660	2,900	4,190
Torbay	2,360	3,230	2,520	3,560	2,640	3,790
Tower Hamlets	3,610	5,260	3,830	5,510	4,070	5,870
Trafford	2,400	3,220	2,550	3,500	2,820	4,260
Wakefield	2,190	3,150	2,260	3,310	2,340	3,500
Walsall	2,330	3,490	2,540	3,700	2,860	4,040
Waltham Forest	2,900	4,100	3,150	4,500	3,600	5,020
Wandsworth	3,010	4,250	3,100	4,470	3,250	5,020
Warrington	2,350	3,370	2,490	3,580	2,660	3,900
Warwickshire	2,300	3,020	2,450	3,290	2,690	3,720
West Berkshire	2,430	3,620	2,500	3,740	2,640	3,850
West Sussex	2,310	3,300	2,520	3,560	2,750	4,030
Westminster	3,210	4,860	3,590	5,110	3,860	5,480
Wigan	2,430	3,460	2,580	3,690	2,740	4,090
Wiltshire	2,250	3,210	2,400	3,340	2,670	3,850
Windsor and Maidenhead	2,040	3,260	2,550	3,780	3,070	4,130
Wirral	2,470	3,540	2,570	3,690	2,770	3,910
Wokingham	2,400	3,370	2,470	3,530	2,570	3,710
Wolverhampton	2,550	3,720	2,750	4,020	3,200	4,690
Worcestershire	1,750	2,690	2,250	3,340	2,590	3,840
York	2,370	3,300	2,520	3,560	2,710	4,090

[1] Only schools open for the whole of the financial year are included in the analysis. The number of schools in each authority used in the calculation of the mean and deciles is also provided as each authority has varying numbers of primary and secondary schools which should be borne in mind when interpreting these deciles—as a decile for an authority with very few schools can be somewhat meaningless.

[2] City of London local authority have one primary school and zero secondary schools. On the 1 April 2002 Isles of Scilly amalgamated all their maintained primary and secondary schools into one school which is treated as a primary school for the purposes of Section 52.

[3] The lower decile budget share (plus grants) per pupil is calculated such that 10 per cent. of schools within that authority have per pupil figures below this amount. Similarly, the upper decile amount has 90 per cent. of schools within the authority receiving less than figure.

[4] The mean amount for an authority is calculated as the sum of all that authority's primary or secondary schools budget share plus grants divided by the total number of pupils at the primary or secondary schools within that authority.

Notes:

1. Budget share (plus grants) is the combination of the schools individual budget share plus any devolved standards fund and Excellence in Cities (EiC) grants allocated to the school. In 2005–06 the Schools Standards Grant is also included and this contributed £856 million to the money allocated to primary and secondary schools in England.
2. The amount of money delegated to schools depends very much on the individual local authorities own policy for funding their schools. Different authority's retain varying amounts of funding centrally to spend on behalf of their schools while others chose to give schools more autonomy over how they spend their money by devolving more funding to the individual school.
3. The pupil numbers used to calculate the per pupil amounts are as reported by the local authority on their section 52 budget statement comprising the full time equivalent number pupils registered at the school used for the initial determination of the school's budget share under the local authority's allocation formula.
4. Figures are taken from section 52 budget 2005–06 as reported by LEAs and rounded to the nearest 10.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary school received (i) the highest and (ii) the lowest allocation per pupil in each local education authority in the last year for which information is available. [25415]

Jacqui Smith: *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The available information has been placed in the House Libraries.

Schools (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils left school at the age of 16 years with fewer than five A*-C GCSE grades in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire in each of the last five years. [25566]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is given in the following table.

Percentage of 15-year-olds[1] achieving less than five A-C grades at GCSE and Equivalent[2]*

	Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency	*Hertfordshire local authority*
2000	52.7	44.6
2001	56.8	43.7
2002	54.1	43.3
2003	54.6	41.5
2004[3]	51.6	41.9

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures are for GCSE and Equivalent qualifications for 2004. All previous years are for GCSE/GNVQ only.
[3] 2004 is the latest year for which figures are available at both parliamentary constituency and local authority level.

Science

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have gained *(a)* an A-Level, *(b)* an AS Level and *(c)* a GCSE in (i) biology or human biology, (ii) chemistry and (iii) physics in each year since 1997, broken down by grade; and if she will make a statement. [22928]

Jacqui Smith *[pursuant to the reply, 2 November 2005, Official Report, c. 1205–05]:* There was an error with the rounding in the A-Level table.

(a) A level examination results of 16 to 18-year-old[1] students by grade

Thousand

	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*Other*[3]	*A-E passes*	*Total*[4]
Biological sciences								
1997	7.02	9.35	9.17	8.5	7.01	6.55	41.05	47.60
1998	7.93	9.57	9.46	8.67	7.08	6.18	42.71	48.90
1999	8.21	9.07	9.3	8.44	6.6	5.57	41.62	47.19
2000	8.19	9.16	9.19	8.17	6.44	5.04	41.15	46.19
2001	8.32	8.95	8.87	7.59	6.11	4.75	39.85	44.59
2002	9.66	8.88	8.99	8.18	6.17	3.53	41.87	45.41
2003	9.48	9.15	8.96	7.68	5.93	2.71	41.2	43.9
2004	9.96	9.48	9.19	7.69	5.58	2.34	41.9	44.24
2005[2]	10.52	9.98	9.45	7.93	5.7	2.31	43.57	45.88
Chemistry								
1997	7.78	7.73	5.69	5.39	4.34	4.50	31.93	36.43
1998	8.77	7.78	6.94	5.48	4.10	4.04	33.07	37.10
1999	8.88	7.74	6.76	5.34	3.76	3.36	32.48	35.83
2000	9.03	7.82	6.58	5.19	3.52	3.15	32.14	35.29
2001	8.98	7.43	6.70	4.77	3.52	2.87	31.01	33.87
2002	9.13	7.5	6.20	4.71	3.17	1.61	30.71	32.32
2003	9.06	7.52	5.89	4.42	2.95	1.23	29.83	31.07
2004	9.76	7.85	6.13	4.43	2.91	1.06	31.07	32.13
2005[2]	9.9	8.30	6.39	4.64	2.92	1.16	32.15	33.31
Physics								
1997	6.21	6.21	5.25	4.5	3.28	3.33	25.45	28.78
1998	6.80	6.15	5.54	4.61	3.37	3.21	26.46	29.67
1999	7.21	5.93	5.55	4.55	3.35	2.96	26.59	29.55
2000	7.1	5.61	5.17	4.27	3.19	2.84	25.35	28.19

(a) A level examination results of 16 to 18-year-old[1] students by grade

Thousand

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Total[4]
2001	7.04	5.61	5.17	4.13	3.23	2.86	25.17	28.03
2002	7.49	5.69	5.16	4.49	3.26	1.77	26.09	27.86
2003	7.21	5.51	4.87	4.19	3.11	1.39	24.89	26.28
2004	7.1	5.12	4.71	3.78	2.72	1.18	23.43	24.61
2005[2]	6.92	5.15	4.48	3.75	2.72	1.17	23.01	24.18

(b) AS level examination results of 16 to 18-year-old[1] students by grade

Thousand

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Total[4]
Biological sciences								
2001	9.0	8.5	9.1	8.7	7.1	8.5	42.4	50.9
2002	9.3	8.3	8.9	8.7	7.8	10.1	42.9	53.0
2003	8.5	8.2	9.0	9.3	9.1	11.4	44.1	55.4
2004	8.4	8.7	9.3	9.6	9.0	11.2	45.0	56.2
2005[2]	8.2	8.8	9.8	9.6	9.2	11.3	45.7	56.9
Chemistry								
2001	7.7	6.7	6.3	5.3	3.9	4.8	30.0	34.8
2002	7.4	6.3	6.3	5.8	4.8	5.5	30.6	36.1
2003	7.4	6.5	6.5	6.2	5.2	6.0	31.9	37.9
2004	7.2	6.6	6.7	6.3	5.4	6.5	32.1	38.6
2005[2]	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.4	5.6	6.7	33.4	40.1
Physics								
2001	6.7	5.4	5.4	4.6	3.6	4.5	25.7	30.1
2002	6.6	5.3	5.3	4.7	4.0	5.4	25.9	31.2
2003	6.1	4.9	5.0	4.6	4.3	5.4	25.0	30.4
2004	5.9	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.1	5.4	24.5	29.9
2005[2]	5.6	4.8	4.9	4.6	4.0	5.2	23.9	29.2

(c) GCSE examination results of 15-year-old[1] pupils by grade

Thousand

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[4]	X[5]	Total[6]
Biological sciences											
1997	4.4	9.8	11.3	6.7	2.4	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.1	36.6
1998	4.7	10.6	10.6	7.6	2.8	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	37.9
1999	5.7	10.4	11.0	7.5	2.8	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	38.8
2000	5.7	10.9	10.8	7.8	2.8	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	39.4
2001	6.7	10.8	11.0	7.9	2.8	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	40.5
2002	6.8	11.2	11.2	7.5	2.6	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	40.6
2003	7.2	11.8	11.7	8.3	3.0	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	43.6
2004	8.0	12.7	11.5	8.1	2.9	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	44.8
2005[2]	8.5	13.5	12.0	8.6	3.1	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.0	47.5
Chemistry											
1997	5.5	8.2	10.5	7.3	2.2	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	35.1
1998	5.4	10.2	10.1	7.1	2.4	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	36.6
1999	6.3	10.2	9.9	7.3	2.7	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	37.7
2000	6.4	10.3	9.8	7.4	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	37.7
2001	6.6	10.8	9.8	7.6	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	38.8
2002	6.9	10.8	9.7	7.7	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	39.1
2003	7.7	11.1	10.3	8.6	3.1	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	42.0
2004	8.8	11.6	10.4	8.2	3.0	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	43.1
2005[2]	9.6	11.8	11.0	8.8	3.0	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	45.1
Physics											
1997	5.3	8.4	10.4	6.6	2.2	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	34.5
1998	6.3	9.3	9.4	7.2	2.7	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	36.2
1999	7.4	9.5	9.2	7.2	2.7	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	37.2
2000	6.9	10.1	9.5	7.1	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	37.5
2001	7.1	10.5	9.4	7.6	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	38.4
2002	7.6	10.5	9.1	7.6	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	38.7
2003	7.9	11.1	9.8	8.1	3.1	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	41.1
2004	8.7	11.8	10.1	8.1	2.8	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	42.5
2005[2]	9.4	12.2	11.0	8.2	2.9	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	44.7

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.
[3] Includes ungraded, no award (absent/declined) and pending.
[4] Grade U refers to pupils who are ungraded or unclassified.
[5] Grade X refers to pupils who were absent or results pending.
[6] As numbers are rounded, figures in each row will not sum exactly to row totals.

Secondary School Pupils

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of secondary school pupils in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region for each year between 2006 and 2016 (i) in total and (ii) broken down by (A) 10 to 14 and (B) 15 to 19-year-olds. [25359]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is as follows:

(a) National projections for the number of secondary school age pupils in maintained schools (secondary, special and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)) are shown in the following table.

Pupil projections (full-time equivalent)—number at January, aged at start of the school year

	Maintained secondary and special schools and PRUs	
	Aged 10 to 14	*Aged 15 to 19*
2006	2,395,900	949,600
2007	2,343,600	953,500
2008	2,290,400	952,200

Beyond 2008 the degree of uncertainty in making projections increases substantially particularly when looking at separate types of school and when considering future levels of participation beyond age 16.

For all schools (also including academies and the independent sector) for ages 11 to 15 the projected numbers of pupils are:

	Number
2006	3,242,800
2007	3,205,300
2008	3,153,500
2009	3,[illegible],700
2010	3,089,000
2011	3,054,200
2012	3,017,600
2013	2,979,200
2014	2,924,700
2015	2,907,600
2016	2,915,500

We know that the overall number of 16 to 19-year-olds will fall beyond 2008. At the same time the Department is committed to increasing 16 to 19 participation to 90 per cent. of 17-year-olds by 2015, as set out in the 14 to 19 Education and Skills White Paper published in February 2005. Such an increase in participation would offset the falling number of 16 to 19-year-olds so we might expect the number of 16 to 19-year-olds in schools to remain broadly constant between 2008 and 2016.

(b) Pupil projections by region are not available for the time period requested. The Department has recently released pupil number projections at local education authority level for 2006 and 2007 which it plans to use in setting authorities' Dedicated Schools Grant guaranteed units of funding. These projections are for all children aged three to 15 funded by authorities, and are not split by educational setting. They can be seen at the following address: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9224

To improve comparability between the national projections given above and the pupil number projections used in setting authorities' DSGs the following table provides projections for the pupils aged 11 to 15 and 16 to 19 in maintained secondary and special schools and PRUs, also including a few children aged 11 or over still in primary school.

Pupil projections (full-time equivalent)—number at January, aged at start of the school year

	Maintained primary, secondary and special schools and PRUs	
	Aged 11 to 15	*Aged 16 to 19*
2006	2,975,500	350,900
2007	2,926,700	351,900
2008	2,866,200	356,900

Sex and Relationships Education

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to make sex and relationships education part of the core national curriculum. [26009]

Jacqui Smith: In all maintained secondary schools, sex education is a statutory element of science which is a core subject in the national curriculum. Sex and relationship education is discretionary in primary schools, though primary schools are encouraged to have a sex and relationship education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the children. Schools are encouraged to deliver sex and relationship education through the non-statutory personal social and health education framework.

Social Mobility

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of education upon social mobility. [26180]

Jacqui Smith: In the Secretary of State's speech to IPPR on 26 July 2005, she set out the Government's commitment to help develop a society which can foster greater social mobility. The Secretary of State's speech underlined the important role that education can play in improving life chances for all individuals, and it set out the forward looking context for our programme of reform across the system.

Education has an important role to play in promoting social mobility. For example analysis by researchers at the London School of Economics in their report published by the Sutton Trust: "Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America" estimate that measures of education account for 35 to 40 per cent. of the intergenerational income mobility for cohorts born in 1958 and 1970.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action is being taken by her Department to promote social mobility. [26213]

Jacqui Smith: Improving life-chances for all lies at the heart of the principles behind our 5-year "Strategy for Children and Learners":

Early intervention to support very young children and families to lay the foundations for later success—not just in education, but in supporting the welfare of the whole child, carrying through into better services for all children and young people;

A continuing drive to ensure that every child leaves primary school with the basics in reading, writing and maths; and an enjoyment of learning, built through an enriched curriculum including the arts, music, sport and a foreign language;

Creating secondary and further education which widens choice, stretches and engages the underachieving and prepares young people better for working life;

Reducing the historic deficit in adult skills, not just by greater participation and attainment by 16–19 year olds, but by addressing the needs of those in the work force to update their skills; and

Sustaining an excellent university sector, capable of high quality teaching, world class research and increasing responsiveness to employers.

Education has an important role to play in improving social mobility and so we must make sure that a good education is available to every child in every community. The White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" marks the next phase in the Government's continuing drive towards transforming our education system by:

tailoring education around the needs of each individual child—so that no child falls behind and no child is held back from achieving their potential;

putting parents at the centre of our thinking—giving them greater choice and active engagement in their child's learning and how schools are run; and

empowering schools and teachers to respond to local and parental demands, injecting dynamism and innovation into our schools.

Special Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many and what proportion of special schools have adopted a curricular specialism; [25662]

(2) how many specialist schools have special educational needs specialism. [25663]

Maria Eagle: 12 specialist special schools have been designated with a special educational needs specialism, 11 of which became operational this September. The 12th will become operational in September 2006.

30 special schools are operating as curricular specialists, representing 3.3 per cent. of maintained and non maintained special schools with secondary age pupils.

Student Finance

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students who applied for *(a)* student loans and *(b)* grants from Suffolk local education authority for the 2005/06 academic year received them in time for the start of that year; and what the equivalent figures were in the 2004/05 academic year. [25179]

Bill Rammell: By 16 September 2005, Suffolk local education authority had received just over 8,800 student finance applications, of which 68 per cent. had been processed to a point at which loan and grant payments could be released on the same date in 2004, 59 per cent. of Suffolk's applications had been processed to the same stage. In both years contingency payments were made to a number of Suffolk students to ensure that funds were available to them at the beginning of term; and other local authorities provided assistance to Suffolk to help the timely processing of their applications.

Student Loans and Grants

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students who applied for *(a)* student loans and *(b)* grants from Staffordshire Local Education Authority for the 2005/06 academic year received them in time for the start of that year; and what the equivalent figures were for the 2004/05 academic year. [26168]

Bill Rammell: By 16 September 2005, Staffordshire Local Education Authority had received just over 14,200 student finance applications, of which 89 per cent. had been processed to a point at which loan and grant payments could be released. Staffordshire had also processed 89 per cent. of their applications to this stage by the same date in 2004.

Teaching Standards

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve teaching standards; [26177]

(2) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve teachers' awareness of socio-economic factors and their impact upon pupil achievement; [26059]

(3) what training is given to teachers to improve their capacity to tackle under achievement by pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26047]

Jacqui Smith: According to Ofsted, we already have the best ever generation of teachers and the quality of teaching in our schools has been transformed in our schools since 1997. Ofsted judged teaching to be good or better in 78 per cent. of secondary schools inspected in 2004/05 compared with 59 per cent. in 1996/97, and in 74 per cent. of primary schools compared with 45 per cent. in 1996/97. Our recent White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" set out our plans for a "new professionalism" for teachers, in which career progression and financial rewards will go to those who make the biggest impact on pupil progress and those who show commitment to their own professional development and that of their colleagues. A thorough reform of all teachers' professional standards, with more stretch at every level, will set out what can be expected of teachers at each stage in their career. More effective performance development—which includes performance management—will help focus teachers on effective classroom practice and ensure that they are involved in the professional development that best meets their personal needs and the specific needs of the school and its pupils.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to improve teachers' authority in the classroom. [26212]

Jacqui Smith: This Government are committed to reinforcing teachers' authority in the classroom. To achieve this, we have already:

been clear that we back teachers' right to discipline pupils;

made changes to exclusion appeal panels, including giving a stronger voice for serving and former head teachers, and making it possible to uphold an appeal without reinstating the pupil; and

reinforced parent' responsibility for their children's behaviour.

However, in light of the Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, we recognise that there are further steps we can take to improve teachers' authority in the classroom. We will:

bring forward legislation making a teacher's right to discipline pupils clear and unambiguous, and we will consult with key stakeholders as to how we should frame this new law;

further improve the effectiveness of the exclusion appeal panels, by ensuring that panels have to accept the judgments of head teachers and governors where it is clear that the pupil has committed the offence in question; emphasising the need for head teachers and governors to be from the same phase of education as the excluding school; and making training for clerks and chairs of panels mandatory; and

extending parenting orders so that schools can use them to make parents take responsibility for their children's poor behaviour in school, even if an exclusion has not taken place.

Truancy

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action is being taken by her Department to tackle truancy. [26052]

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to tackle truancy among school children. [26233]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1216W to the earlier question from the Member for Romford.

In addition to our strategy for improving attendance outlined in my previous reply, my Department has introduced a range of measures to promote parental responsibility for school attendance. These include supportive parenting contracts, compulsory parenting orders, penalty fines and prosecution. We are working with 146 secondary schools with high levels of persistent truancy, and a further 293 secondary schools with high levels of absence, to tackle persistent truancy by providing advice and effective practice. We are working with the 265 secondary schools in pathfinder partnerships to improve behaviour and tackle persistent truancy.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of parental education levels upon under-achievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26031]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is aware that research studies show that the level of parental education is a good predictor of their children's achievement.

The Department funds the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL) which produced a report and developed a model of the inter-generational transmission of educational success in 2004. The WBL report concluded that

"parental education is a major influence both directly and via other channels such as income and parenting skills. However, there are many other important elements".

These other factors include pre-school, neighbourhoods and schools which can mitigate or offset the impact of family level factors in a substantial way. Parental beliefs, values, aspirations and attitudes, as well as parental well-being, have an independent effect on pupil attainment. Parental skills in terms of warmth, discipline and education behaviours are all major factors in the formation of school success. These behaviours can be adopted by parents no matter what their background. (http://www.learningbenefits.net/Publications/ResReps/ResRep10.pdf).

Another influential report commissioned by the Department and published in 2003 reviewed a large number of studies on the impact of parental involvement, parental support and parental education on pupil achievement. The review confirmed the importance of maternal education on child outcomes. However, the authors noted that when effects such as parental education and income were controlled the findings show that what parents do is as important as who they are:

"parental involvement in the form of 'at-home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation".

This suggests that parental involvement is particularly important for children from low socio-economic backgrounds. (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR433.pdf)

The Department is sponsoring further research in this area to help increase our understanding of the issues and to inform policy development.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the education and skills of parents of children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26032]

Jacqui Smith: We aim to support such parents through the development of Sure Start with 3,500 children's centres planned by 2010. All centres will provide information, advice and support for parents. Those in the most disadvantaged areas will provide more intensive programmes of family support and parental outreach. These services can help parents to access the wide range of courses in further and adult education designed to help people attain the platform of employability through improving their language, literacy and numeracy skills and studying for a full level 2 qualification (equivalent to five GCSEs at A*-C). Help is also available through family learning programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council with budgets in 2005/06 of £37 million. As part of this, extended schools can offer family learning sessions to enable children and parents to learn alongside each other. Adults from low socio-economic groups, including parents, are already eligible for a wide

range of support to improve their skills, including full fee remission for those on means-tested benefits. The Government's Skills Strategy will roll out implementation of further targeted support for adults to improve their skills, including the level 2 entitlement which gives free tuition for a first full level 2 qualification.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to tackle the impact of socio-economic factors upon under-achievement. [26037]

Jacqui Smith: Improving life-chances for all lies at the heart of the principles behind our 5-year "Strategy for Children and Learners":

> Early intervention to support very young children and families to lay the foundations for later success—not just in education, but in supporting the welfare of the whole child, carrying through into better services for all children and young people;
>
> A continuing drive to ensure that every child leaves primary school with the basics in reading, writing and maths; and an enjoyment of learning, built through an enriched curriculum including the arts, music, sport and a foreign language;
>
> Creating secondary and further education which widens choice, stretches and engages the underachieving and prepares young people better for working life;
>
> Reducing the historic deficit in adult skills, not just by greater participation and attainment by 16–19 year olds, but by addressing the needs of those in the work force to update their skills; and
>
> Sustaining an excellent university sector, capable of high quality teaching, world class research and increasing responsiveness to employers.

The Department remains committed to creating a system of education that allows all children to achieve, regardless of family circumstances. For example our recent White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" sets out reforms to improve our school system and encourage greater personalisation, enabling all children to achieve. Curriculum reform is important too. The White Paper 14–19 Education and Skills sets out how we will build a system of 14–19 education to enable every child to reach their potential by providing better vocational routes; ensuring that all young people have a sound grounding in English and Maths and the skills they need for employment; and providing a stretching curriculum for all while re-engaging the disaffected.

We continue to analyse the impact of socio-economic factors upon under-achievement. Following the publication by the Department of the paper "Has the Social Class Gap Narrowed in Primary Schools" in July (IPPR/2005), further analysis will be carried out over the coming months. In particular, we will look at key stages 1, 3 and 4, to the extent that data for these phases can be tracked over time on a comparable basis.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps are being taken by her Department to tackle social exclusion of children and young people; [26038]

(2) what steps are being taken by her Department to tackle deprivation among children of school age. [26039]

Jacqui Smith: Tackling poverty and exclusion is well embedded in the Department for Education and Skills policies. Through our "Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners" (July 2004), we are committed to giving children and families the best possible start in life, reducing the number of young people who leave school with low qualifications and providing opportunities through widening participation for the number of young adults with low and poor skills.

DfES policies place particular emphasis on tackling child poverty and investing in high quality early years services because we know that this improves outcomes for children and that those benefits are greatest for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many of these programmes, including Sure Start local programmes, neighbourhood nurseries and the early children's centres, are concentrated in the most disadvantaged areas. By promoting children's development, supporting parents and helping build strong local communities, early years provision particularly tackles deprivation and social exclusion by benefiting vulnerable families and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We recognise, though, that the life chances of children and young people are still strongly determined by their parents' background. Through the recently published Schools White Paper we aim to break completely the cycle that makes under-achievement (and not 'lack of ability') and low expectations a regular hand-me-down from parent to child.

Well-organised, safe and stimulating activities before and after school make a real difference to children's chances at school. We have committed additional funding to support the development of extended services in schools by making approximately £160 million of funding available to local authorities since 2003 and we will be making a further £680 million available from 2006–08. Deprivation levels will be a factor in distributing funding.

The 14–19 White Paper sets out our priorities for those aged 14–19, including new opportunities for young people to enjoy new styles of learning, in different settings and with more opportunities for practical and applied learning. Those at most risk of dropping out will get extra support, including progression. Financial support and a number of learner support funds will be available for those who need it.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what efforts are being made to *(a)* reduce the rate of exclusion and *(b)* improve the provision of alternative education when excluded to children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26043]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is putting in place a range of measures to reduce the rate of exclusion of pupils from school, including that of children from low socio-economic backgrounds. In particular, since 2002 the Department's Improving Behaviour and Attendance Programme has provided all schools with high-quality guidance and training materials on managing behaviour, backed by advice from expert teachers; and has targeted extra resources on schools facing the greatest challenges, particularly those in disadvantaged areas.

In addition, by September 2007 we expect all secondary schools to be part of a partnership to improve behaviour and attendance. Partnerships will have funding devolved from their local authorities to enable

them to commission a range of support and provision for pupils at risk of exclusion, persistent truants and excluded pupils. Evidence from existing partnerships shows that they are effective in reducing the rate of exclusion.

Head teachers will have a direct interest in ensuring that the alternative provision available to partnerships is of good quality and is value for money, whether this is provided by a pupil referral unit or is contracted externally. We are committed to developing a more vibrant, diverse and effective alternative provision market. Over the next six months we shall be carrying out a survey of alternative provision to establish a clear picture of the provision that is available and whether it meets the needs of pupils. This information will help us to guide school partnerships, and enable them to commission and procure good quality, effective, and value for money provision that suits the needs of their pupils

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of exclusion upon educational under-achievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26044]

Jacqui Smith: Departmental data shows that schools with higher levels of permanent exclusions tend to have lower levels of attainment and that young people who have been excluded from school also have lower levels of attainment. For example, only one in five young people who was reported as having been excluded from school in years 10 or 11, permanently or for a fixed period, achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs compared to almost three in five young people who had not been excluded. However, a direct causal link between exclusion and attainment has not been established.

As well as having lower levels of attainment, in general schools with higher rates of permanent exclusion also tend to have higher percentages of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. However, there is a lot of variation at individual school level. Data from the Department for Work and Pensions shows that children who have been temporarily excluded from school are more likely to come from lone-parent families or from families where both parents are working less than 15 hours per week.

In the recently published White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All", we committed to requiring schools and local authorities to provide suitable full-time education for all excluded pupils from the sixth day of their exclusion, rather than from the sixteenth day as at present. This should help to raise levels of attainment among excluded pupils.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of truancy upon under-achievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26051]

Jacqui Smith: Analyses of national data show that there is a correlation between both authorised and unauthorised absences from school and pupils' levels of achievement On average, pupils in schools with lower levels of absence tend to perform better at key stage 2, key stage 3 and GCSE than pupils in schools with higher levels of absence.

Analyses of national data also show links between higher levels of pupils in receipt of free school meals and higher levels of absence. Recent research on behalf of the Department by the National Foundation for Educational Research "An analysis of pupil attendance data in Excellence in Cities areas and non-EiC EAZs: final report" reports that the highest levels of attainment at key stage 3 and GCSE, once all other pupil characteristics, prior attainment and school variables were taken into account, were associated with, among other things, pupils who lived in areas of relatively less deprivation compared with the cohort. On average, these pupils also tended to have fewer absences from school than other pupils in the cohort.

The associations identified do not in themselves prove that there is a direct causal relationship between pupils' absences and their attainment. However, we believe that every pupil should attend school regularly if they are to achieve their full potential and our strategy aims to reduce the overall level of absences from school, including those due to persistent truancy.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the introduction of university top up fees upon the educational performance of children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26056]

Bill Rammell: The new student support arrangements are designed to protect and support students from lower socio-economic groups. The new package abolishes up-front costs; makes generous provision of grants and bursaries for students from low-income families; offers extended subsidised loans; and increases the repayment threshold.

Analysis by PwC[1] shows that, once the timing of the payments are taken account of, for many students the average net effect of these changes is to increase the financial benefits to a degree. We expect that those from lower socio-economic groups will benefit the most, being more likely to receive grants and bursaries.

Concern about debt is a significant factor in making HE choices. However this is just one of many issues that people weigh-up in coming to their participation decision, and the new reforms should offer peace of mind by removing up-front tuition costs and only requiring repayments when earning £15,000 or more.

Reference:

[1] PwC (2005) The economic benefits of HE qualifications, RSC and IoP.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the capacity of schools to focus upon socio-economic factors in under-achievement. [26064]

Jacqui Smith: We are providing schools with increasingly sophisticated data to help them measure the progress of their pupils. This includes being able to compare the achievement of pupils taking account of contextual factors including deprivation and prior attainment and against the achievement of similar schools in the top quartile of performance nationally.

School improvement partners will help schools to interpret this data, focusing particularly on groups of pupils that are falling behind and the best ways to help them. The Primary and Secondary National Strategies and other initiatives will continue to provide schools with advice, guidance and a range of targeted support.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to *(a)* remove under-performing teachers from schools and *(b)* retrain them. [26176]

Jacqui Smith: Teachers who fail to perform satisfactorily are monitored and supported by their employers, either through continuing professional development or, if necessary, in accordance with locally agreed capability procedures. Where teachers fail to improve to a satisfactory standard, they may be dismissed or moved to more suitable duties. Teachers dismissed on capability grounds are reported to the General Teaching Council which may require certain conditions of them, including retraining, to retain their registration.

Underperforming Schools

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what resources are available to schools to tackle under achievement; [26177]

(2) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the spread of best practice to schools that are underperforming; [26178]

(3) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the successful adoption of the characteristics of good schools by underperforming schools. [26179]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is working to ensure that underperforming and low attaining schools receive the resources, advice and support that they need to improve outcomes for their pupils.

In particular, the National Strategies focus consultant support on underperforming and low attaining schools at both primary and secondary stages and produce an extensive range of good practice materials which schools can readily access. The Department also supports several programmes which enable successful schools to collaborate and share good practice with other schools including those which are underperforming. This includes Leading Edge Partnership Programme schools that are funded to work with other schools to share their best practice, and a Secondary Performance Project which draws on the expertise of successful schools and the Specialist Schools Trust to work in partnership with schools that while not below the floor target have nevertheless been underperforming in value added terms. Local Authorities are also in the process of appointing trained School Improvement Partners who will work with individual schools to help them identify and access the support their self evaluation identifies as necessary for improvement.

Veterinary School Lecturers

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on veterinary school lecturers receiving commercial funding. [24764]

Bill Rammell: As higher education institutions are autonomous, independent bodies they are responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including terms and conditions for their staff. The Government play no part in setting conditions of service for higher education staff, and as such, have no policy on this specific issue.

HEALTH

Abortions

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many abortions were conducted in the past 12 months in England and Wales *(a)* at 20 or more weeks, gestation and *(b)* at 12 weeks, or fewer of gestation; [24185]

(2) what information she collects on the number of Northern Irish women who come to England or Wales to have an abortion. [24186]

Caroline Flint: The information requested can be found in the Department's statistical bulletin 2005/11 "Abortion Statistics, England and Wales: 2004", which is available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/75/74/04117574.pdf

Copies are also available in the Library.

The available, provisional abortion data for January to March 2005 can be found in "Health Statistics Quarterly 27" at:

www.nationalstatistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=6725&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=422

Assaults on NHS Workers

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many assaults have been committed against NHS workers while on duty in the Gravesham constituency in each of the last three years. [24136]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected in the format requested. The NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS) has policy and operational responsibility for the management of security in the national health service, including work to tackle violence against NHS staff. In November 2003, a comprehensive range of measures were introduced by NHS SMS to proactively and reactively deal with the problem of violence against NHS staff.

Since that time, an estimated 85,000 front line NHS staff have been trained to prevent and manage violence and the number of prosecutions identified involving those who have physically assaulted staff has risen from 51 in 2002–03 to 759 in 2004–05.

Breastfeeding

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to promote breastfeeding. [23758]

Caroline Flint: The Government are committed to the promotion of breastfeeding as the best form of nutrition for infants and has a range of ongoing activities to increase support for breastfeeding. In particular, the Government are demonstrating its commitment to the

promotion of breastfeeding by supporting national breastfeeding awareness week, which will be held 14 to 20 May 2006.

Phase one of healthy start, a reform of the welfare food scheme, is expected to commence later this year and one of its aims is to increase promotion and support for breastfeeding by encouraging earlier contact with the national health service. Healthy start will also provide equal benefits for breastfeeding mothers.

Cancer

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she will take to expedite the approval of *(a)* Xeloda and *(b)* Cetuximab by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [23488]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is currently consulting on its draft guidance on Xeloda for colon cancer and that final guidance is scheduled to be published in June 2006. Guidance on Cetuximab for colon cancer is scheduled for publication in November 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of the number of additional scans needed each year to meet the guidance issued by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommendation that women aged between 40 and 49 years and at high risk of breast cancer be screened every year for breast cancer; what assessment she has made of whether this guidance is being implemented; and what assessment she has made of the relative effectiveness of MRI scans and mammography in detecting breast cancer in women aged between 40 and 49 years. [23967]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline on the classification and care of women at risk of familial breast cancer estimated that an extra 21,000 scans annually would be needed to implement the guideline nationally.

Clinical guidelines from NICE are reflected in the standards published by the Department which provide a framework for continuous improvement in the overall quality of care people receive. Clinical guidelines are covered by the developmental standards, standards which the national health service is expected to achieve over time. The Healthcare Commission has responsibility for assessing progress towards achieving these standards. Clinicians are expected to take full account of NICE guidelines because they are based on the best available evidence and have been put together after wide consultation, drawing on the views of patients and carers as well as the experts in the field.

A multi-centre trial, magnetic resonance imaging for breast screening (MARIBS), compared regular mammographic screening and regular magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for women at a high familial risk of breast cancer. The study ran for five years, and was funded by the Medical Research Council and National Health Service research and development. The results of the study were published in May 2005. The NICE guideline noted that several MRI studies, including MARIBS, would be published over the next few years. When the information from these studies becomes available, the recommendations in the guideline will be reviewed by NICE.

We are delivering an unparalleled expansion in most diagnostic services in the NHS, and there will be a 100 per cent. increase of 900,000 MRI scans between 2004–05 and 2007–08.

Children's TV (Advertising)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact on children's health of advertising of *(a)* fast foods and *(b)* sweets and snacks during children's television. [24366]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency commissioned a comprehensive study in 2003 (Hastings) into the effects of food promotion to children. The study concluded that food promotion is having an impact on children's preferences, purchase behaviour and consumption. Other studies have shown that the majority of foods advertised during children's peak viewing times are for foods high in fat, salt and sugar. The Choosing Health White Paper outlined the Government's strategy to restrict further the advertising and promotion to children of those foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial position of the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley primary care trust. [24137]

Caroline Flint: The latest available data on the financial position of primary care trusts (PCTs) is for 2004–05. The 2004–05 financial position of Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT is £1.1 million deficit.

Dentistry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists in the Cotswold and Vale primary care trust area *(a)* operate fully within the NHS and *(b)* only offer NHS treatment for children. [24699]

Caroline Flint: As at 30 September 2005, there were 95 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within Cotswold and Vale primary care trust (PCT).

The data source is the Dental Practice Board. A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with the PCT. The Dental Practice Board has no information concerning the amount of time dedicated to private or NHS work by individual dentists.

Information about who dentists offer to treat is not collected centrally. However, an analysis of NHS patient registrations data as at 1 June 2005 show that within Cotswold and Vale PCT there were three dentists having only children registered.

Departmental Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many call centres were run by her Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23301]

Jane Kennedy: In 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to date a call centre has been run by the Department but not by any of its executive agencies.

Figures on calls answered and abandoned are not held for 2003. For 2004 and 2005, data is held on calls answered and abandoned but not calls receiving the engaged tone.

In 2004, the Department received 114,883 calls, of which 102,196 were answered by an information adviser. 12,687 calls were abandoned once connected to a message—a rate of 11.04 per cent.

In 2005, the Department has, to the end of October, received 97,488 calls and 93,534 were answered by an information adviser. 3,954 calls were abandoned once connected to a message—a rate of 4.05 per cent.

Health Protection Agency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff are employed at each office of the Health Protection Agency. [23970]

Caroline Flint: The information requested has been placed in the Library. It gives details of staff at each location as at October 2005.

Health Services (Tooting)

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has allocated for *(a)* hospital services, *(b)* general practitioner services and *(c)* dental services in the constituency of Tooting in each year since 1997. [18117]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Funding for general practitioner services and dental services has historically, with some exceptions, been held centrally and not allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs). Funding was demand led, with payments made in response to claims submitted by general practitioners and dentists.

Following the new general practitioner contract, the Department made primary medical services allocations to PCTs in 2004–05 and 2005–06, which will become part of PCTs' overall allocations from 2006–07.

Following the new dental contract, the Department will make dental allocations to PCTs from 2006–07.

The Department has made allocations to PCTs from 2003–04.

The Department made separate primary medical services (PMedS) allocations to PCTs in 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Table 1 shows the allocations made to Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth Health Authority (HA) in 1997–98 and 1998–99. The Department made allocations to HAs from 1996–97 for hospital and community health services (HCHS).

Table 1: HCHS allocations 1997–98 to 1998–99

£ million

HA	1997–98	1998–99
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	309.3	322.3

Note:
It is not possible to separate the allocations for hospital services from the allocations for community health services.

Table 2 shows the unified allocations made to Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth HA between 1999–2000 and 2002–03. The Department made unified allocations to HAs from 1999–2000 covering HCHS, prescribing and general medical services cash limited.

Table 2: Unified allocations 1999–2000 to 2002–03

£ million

HA	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth	423.0	455.9	498.6	563.1

Note:
These services cannot be separately identified. These figures are not comparable with earlier years which cover HCHS only.

Table 3 shows the revenue allocations made to Wandsworth PCT for 2003–04 to 2005–06.

Table 3: Revenue allocations 2003–04 to 2005–06

£ million

PCT	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Wandsworth	275.8	303.1	332.2

In February 2005, the Department announced revenue resource allocations to PCTs for 2006–07 and 2007–08. Table 4 shows the revenue allocations to Wandsworth PCT for 2006–08.

Table 4: Revenue resource allocations 2006–07 and 2007–08

£ million

PCT	2006–07	2007–08
Wandsworth	388.4	420.0

Note:
These include primary medical services funding and are not comparable with earlier years.

Table 5 shows the PMedS allocations to Wandsworth PCT in 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Table 5: Primary medical services allocations 2004–05 and 2005–06

£ million

PCT	2004–05	2005–06
Wandsworth	25.2	26.5

Note:
These allocations covered the bulk of the funding for the new GP contract, with the remaining funding for quality being allocated to the NHS Bank.

Hip Replacement (Waiting Time)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for a hip replacement operation has been in *(a)* Southend primary care trust, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* the Metropolitan police area of London and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [14267]

Mr. Byrne: The main national health service data returns on inpatient waiting times, which provide a count of those waiting for admission and how long they have been waiting, are not available for hip replacement operations but are available for trauma and orthopaedics procedures more generally. Annual average waiting times for each year since 1997 have been placed in the Library. They show that average waiting times for trauma and orthopaedics have fallen from:

15.7 weeks at the end of 2003–04 to 9.8 weeks at the end of 2004–05 in Southend primary care trust.

22.0 weeks at the end of 1997–98 to 10.6 weeks at the end of 2004–05 in Essex strategic health authority (SHA).

22.7 at the end of 1997–98 to 11.3 weeks at the end of 2004–05 in the London SHAs.

18.3 weeks at the end of 1997–98 to 11.3 weeks at the end of 2004–05 in England.

The NHS collects annual data through hospital episodes statistics (HES) on the time waited by patients who have completed their wait for a hip replacement operation. This includes periods of suspension (where the patient is medically unfit for treatment or has made themselves unavailable for treatment) and all patients treated by NHS provider organisations (whether or not they are the responsibility of NHS commissioning bodies in England). This HES data has also been placed in the Library. The data shows increases in the first part of this period followed by more recent reductions and reflects the NHS's achievements during this period in tackling backlogs of long waits for orthopaedic patients.

HIV/AIDS

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has spent on advertising and promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS in England in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [17835]

Caroline Flint: In addition to investment locally by the national health service, the totals the Department has spent on targeted HIV health promotion work, including advertising, are shown in the table.

Totals spent on advertising and promotion of awareness of HIV/AIDS: England, 2000–01 to 2004–05

	Amount (£ million)
2004–05	1.710
2003–04	1.750
2002–03	1.950
2001–02	1.600
2000–01	1.640

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many condoms have been distributed free of charge by her Department in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17851]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally. The Department does not distribute condoms. Primary care trusts are responsible for local sexual health and HIV health promotion including the provision of free condoms.

Infection Control

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to publish her response to the consultation on action on healthcare associated infection in England. [23106]

Jane Kennedy: A summary of the consultation responses will be available on the Department's website shortly.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which groups of health professionals are allowed to prescribe *(a)* Tamiflu and *(b)* other anti-viral drugs; and whether she plans to expand the prescribing rights of groups of health professionals to cover anti-virals (i) in the event of an influenza pandemic and (ii) at other times. [23115]

Jane Kennedy: Anti-virals, including Tamiflu, can be prescribed by doctors, dentists and supplementary prescribers. They can also be supplied and/or administered under a patient group direction by a wide range of health professionals including nurses, pharmacists and paramedics.

Patients in defined at-risk groups are eligible to receive Tamiflu on national health service prescription. Private prescriptions may be issued to other patients outside the defined risk groups.

We are exploring additional ways of making antiviral medicines available for timely patient treatment in a pandemic scenario should that be required.

The Department is already embarked upon a general programme to expand non-medical prescribing to suitably qualified members of registered healthcare professions.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many IT projects have been developed for her Department since 2001; and whether she has agreed to make public Gateway reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23518]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has undertaken 58 information technology (IT) projects since 2001. The Office of Government Commerce has released part of one Gateway review report on the National Programme for IT. The Department has released part of one of the Gateway review reports related to the national health service e-recruitment project.

MRSA

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have contracted MRSA at hospitals in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* London in 2005. [22947]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available in the format requested, but the number of cases of meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* blood stream infections reported from April 2004 to March 2005 in Essex, London and the Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust, which covers Romford, is shown in the table.

Strategic health authority (SHA)	*2004–05*
Essex	183
London SHAs[1]	1373
Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust	98

[1] There are five SHAs in London. The figure covers all of them.

Source:
Health Protection Agency.

NIHCE

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to make a decision on the proposals for changes to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence topic selection process. [24140]

Jane Kennedy: The process of selecting topics for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is reviewed from time to time and we are currently considering the scope for further improvements.

Sterile Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the findings of the Pathfinder initiative on sterile services. [20205]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Pathfinder project will deliver improved decontamination services to the Bradford Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust, the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust. An evaluation report will be published after the project is complete.

Road Accidents

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have died in road accidents in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the north east and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [26571]

Dr. Ladyman I have been asked to reply.

The number of people who have died in road accidents in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* the district of South Tyneside, *(c)* the north east Government office region and *(d)* England in each year since 1997 are given in the table.

Year of accident	*Parliamentary constituency* *Jarrow*[1]	*Local authority (district)* *South Tyneside*	*Government office region* *North east*	*Country* *England*
1997	0	2	135	3,001
1998	1	2	121	2,834
1999	6	6	126	2,922
2000	1	3	93	2,915
2001	1	1	102	2,916
2002	2	3	126	2,980
2003	3	7	132	3,004
2004	3	5	128	2,714

[1] Based on 2004 boundaries

Waiting Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will instruct the Health Protection Agency to carry out an audit of waiting times for genito-urinary medicines services. [23962]

Caroline Flint: The Department commissioned the Health Protection Agency in 2004 to undertake a bi-annual, and now quarterly, audit of waiting times in genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics. The latest data, from a survey undertaken in May 2005, show that 45 per cent. of patients are seen within 48 hours at GUM clinics. Primary care trusts and strategic health authorities have already developed plans on how they will meet the target of 48-hour access through the local delivery planning process. To support this, the Department is investing an additional £130 million for GUM services and infrastructure in 2006–07 and 2007–08 to enable clinics to expand their services and reduce waiting times. An additional £15 million capital funding has also been recently allocated.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 10 November 2005

TREASURY

Economic Growth (Immigration)

7. **Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assumptions he has made, in forecasting economic growth, about the impact of immigration on *(a)* the growth of the labour force and *(b)* the rate of growth of productivity per head of the existing labour force. [26728]

John Healey: Net inward migration makes a positive contribution to growth of the UK labour force and the trend rate of output growth. Details of the Treasury's methodology for projecting trend growth and its productivity and labour input components are set out in the publication "Trend Growth: Recent Developments and Prospects" (2002). The projection for net inward migration is based on projections by the Government Actuary's Department. The Treasury's latest published economic forecast and underlying assumptions for trend growth and its components were set out in Budget 2005, and will be updated in the forthcoming pre-Budget report.

Climate Change

12. **Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research he has commissioned on the relative costs of energy sources and tackling climate change. [26733]

John Healey: This Government attach great importance to tackling climate change, as demonstrated by their decision to make climate change a priority for the UK presidencies of the G8 and EU. To build up our knowledge base of the challenges we face the Chancellor has asked Sir Nick Stern to lead a major review of the economics of climate change. This review will allow us to understand more comprehensively the nature of the economic challenges we face and how they can be met, in the UK and globally.

The review will report to the Prime Minister and Chancellor by autumn 2006.

Biofuels (Capital Allowances)

13. **Chris McCafferty:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the capital allowances are for the development of biofuel production. [26734]

John Healey: Budget 2005 announced that the Government considered that offering enhanced capital allowances for the cleanest biofuels processing plants would be a useful additional measure of support to the UK biofuels industry, subject to Commission approval. We are currently undertaking further detailed work on this issue and will update the position as part of the pre-Budget report. Where combined heat and power is used as part of biofuels plant, that equipment is already eligible for a 100 per cent. ECA.

Millennium Development Goals

14. **Colin Burgon:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what contribution he is making towards meeting the 2015 targets for reducing world poverty. [26735]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: UK aid will reach nearly £6.5 billion a year by 2007–08, and the Chancellor has announced that we will reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent. overseas development aid as proportion of gross national income in 2013.

Stamp Duty

16. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was raised by stamp duty in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2004–05. [26738]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The amount of revenue raised in 1996–97 by stamp duty on residential land and property transactions was £675 million.

The amount of revenue raised in 2004–05 by stamp duty land tax on residential land and property transactions was £5.5 billion.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was raised from stamp duty, on *(a)* residential and *(b)* commerical property in (i) each Government office region, (ii) Wales, (iii) Scotland and (iv) Northern Ireland in each financial year since 1996–97. [26938]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Latest estimates of the amount of stamp duty raised on residential land and property transactions are available at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/table15_2_october04.pdf

Latest estimates for stamp duty raised on commercial transactions are given in the table.

£ million

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
United Kingdom	385	665	1,075	1,360	1,540	1,445	1,485	1,280	760
England and Wales	355	615	995	1,255	1,405	1,285	1,350	1,030	555
North East	5	20	25	30	25	25	35	30	20
North West	30	50	70	95	105	100	145	105	50
Yorkshire and the Humber	20	35	50	75	85	75	85	85	30
East Midlands	20	31	130	70	60	65	80	55	30
West Midlands	30	45	85	90	90	110	120	95	50
East of England	40	55	80	110	115	155	135	95	35

£ million

	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
London	100	210	290	440	500	390	350	260	210
South East	65	110	170	225	290	250	215	185	75
South West	30	45	65	90	100	95	135	90	35
Wales	10	15	30	30	35	30	45	30	15
Scotland and Northern Ireland	30	50	80	105	135	160	135	245	205

European Single Currency

17. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the performance of the European single currency. [26739]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: To be fully equipped for the global economy, Europe must become more open and outward looking, more flexible and competitive, and more committed to reform to compete worldwide and move to full employment. Membership of the European single currency places an additional premium on flexibility in capital, product and labour markets since the ability to vary national interest rates and the nominal exchange rate between euro area countries no longer exists.

Debt Cancellation

18. **Mr. Devine:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy on the cancellation of debt for the world's poorest countries. [26740]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: At the annual meetings in September we secured agreement from the IMF and World Bank for multilateral debt relief for up to 38 of the world's most indebted countries of a full 100 per cent. Britain goes further than this and we will unilaterally service our share of the debts of other poor countries where the resources freed up will be used for poverty reduction.

Illegal Working

19. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the impact on tax revenues and the economy of illegal working by *(a)* British and EU citizens, *(b)* asylum seekers and *(c)* illegal immigrants. [26741]

John Healey: It is not possible to provide reliable estimates of the impact on tax revenues and the economy of illegal working by British and EU citizens, asylum seekers or illegal immigrants.

Tax Credits

20. **Mr. Gauke:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the administration of the tax credits system. [26742]

Dawn Primarolo: In my statement to the House of 26 May I set out a series of important measures for improving the administration of tax credits. I updated the House on progress in a statement to the Treasury Sub-Committee on 26 October.

Over 6 million families—nine out of 10 families in this country—are benefiting from tax credits. For the majority of families the system is working well. And it has helped lift more than half a million children out of poverty since 1998–99.

24. **Meg Hillier:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in Hackney, South and Shoreditch received tax credits in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [26746]

Dawn Primarolo: In 2003–04 there were on average 4,600 families in the Hackney, South and Shoreditch constituency who benefited from child and working tax credits. Figures for 2004–05 will be available after family incomes and circumstances have been finalised.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claimants have made incorrect claims for *(a)* working tax credits and *(b)* child tax credits in 2005. [22962]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the constituent of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead, Mrs. Williams of Slatey Road, Wirral, will receive the tax credits owed to her since July. [25131]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs is statutorily debarred from disclosing information relating to the tax affairs of individuals. The Tax Credit Office will however, be writing to the right hon. Gentleman very shortly about his constituent's claim for tax credits.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the expenditure on child tax credit for parents of 16 to 19-year-olds in full-time education for *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08; [25380]

(2) what the estimated expenditure is on child benefit for 16 to 19-year-olds in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [25384]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

The latest figures on the number of children by age for whom child benefit is received are published in "Child Benefit. Quarterly Statistics. May 2005". The publication can be found on the HMRC website under the link given below:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_benefit/quarterly.htm

The latest figures available on the number of children by age for whom child tax credit is received are published in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. April 2005". The publication can be found on the HMRC website under the link below:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/c-wtc-stats-april05.pdf

Minimum Wage

21. **Mr. McGovern:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of an extension of the minimum wage to 16 and 17-year-olds. [26743]

Dawn Primarolo: In its 2004 report, the Low Pay Commission proposed the introduction of a National Minimum Wage for 16 and 17-year-olds, at an hourly rate of £3.00 per hour. The Government accepted the Commission's recommendation and the Youth Rate was introduced in October 2004.

The Government agree with the Commission that the Youth Rate puts a stop to clear exploitation while neither encouraging young people out of education nor harming the supply of training places.

The Low Pay Commission are currently considering a range of matters in connection with the minimum wage, including the impact of the new rate for 16 and 17-year-olds workers, and we expect to receive their report in spring 2006.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses were found to be employing workers for less than the minimum wage in *(a)* Houghton and Washington East and *(b)* Sunderland city council area in each year since the minimum wage was introduced; and how many were (i) fined and (ii) forced to cease trading. [25514]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

National minimum wage statistical data are not held by reference to constituency or council areas.

City Academies

22. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects a resolution satisfactory to city academies to be reached following the discussions between his Department and colleagues at the Department for Education and Skills. [26744]

John Healey: Discussions with the Department for Educations and Skills are on-going, including about the impact of the VAT rules on academies. The Government are also in discussion with academies about this issue.

Golden Rule

23. **Mike Penning:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce an independent monitoring system for the Golden Rule. [26745]

Mr. Des Browne: Progress against the golden rule is measured by the average annual surplus on the current budget as a percentage of GDP since the cycle began. The independent Office for National Statistics produces the public finance and national accounts statistics on which this measurement is based. These statistics are subject to the same safeguards and quality control procedures that apply to all statistics produced within the National Statistics framework.

In addition, the Comptroller and Auditor General has been asked to audit the end date of the previous economic cycle and give us his view as to whether the judgment is reasonable and cautious.

Child Trust Fund Vouchers

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many child trust fund vouchers had been issued up to 30 September in West Lancashire; how many of these have been cashed; and if he will make a statement. [27747]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is available only at disproportionate cost. UK-wide information on the number of child trust fund vouchers issued and the number of accounts opened are published quarterly on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm. The second set of quarterly figures was published on 31 August 2005.

Data showing activity to 20 November will be published on the 30 November 2005.

Childcare Vouchers

Margaret Moran: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the take-up rate of tax-free child care vouchers. [26105]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the cost of the new tax and national insurance contributions (NICs) exemption for employer supported child care were included in page 6 of the "Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report" and "Financial Statement and Budget Report 2004"[1]. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs are monitoring the levels of take-up but the information is not yet available.

[1] This page can be accessed at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/7A8/DF/bud04_cha_190.pdf

Document Terminology

Andrew Selous: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is on the use of the word spouse in official documents; if he will encourage the use of the term spouse/partner; and if he will make a statement. [24778]

Dawn Primarolo: For tax purposes, official documents and forms will continue to use the term "spouse" where it already occurs. Following the start of the civil partnership scheme on the 5 December 2005 documents and forms will in due course include the term "civil partner" to recognise this new relationship.

From 5 December, in line with the changes to tax credits legislation made by the Civil Partnership Act and consequential regulations, child and working tax credits forms and documents will refer to an extended definition of the term 'couple', including same-sex couples.

Dormant Accounts

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the dates of meetings that have taken place between his officials and representatives of *(a)* banks and *(b)* building societies to discuss dormant accounts in the last two years; and if he will make a statement. [27609]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Treasury meet regularly with representatives of banks and building societies to discuss this and other issues.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in discussions between his officials and representatives of *(a)* banks and *(b)* building societies on dormant accounts; and if he will make a statement. [27654]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As stated in the Budget 2005, HM Treasury is engaged in constructive discussions with the industry to take work on unclaimed assets forward. A report on progress will be made in due course.

Farming Industry (Suicides)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many suicides were recorded in the farming industry in each of the last five years. [26269]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Anthony Steen, dated 10 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to answer your question asking how many suicides were recorded in the farming industry in each of the last five years. (26269)

The most recently available information is for deaths in 2004. Figures for deaths in farm workers or farm owners from suicide or injury or poisoning of undetermined intent are shown in the table for each year from 2000 to 2004.

Number of deaths from intentional self-harm[1] and injury or poisoning of undetermined intent[2] in farm workers or farm owners[3], England and Wales, 2000–04[4]

Calendar year	Number of deaths
2000	58
2001	55
2002	45
2003	55
2004	42

[1] The cause of death for intentional self-harm was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950 to E959 for 2000, and for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84.

[2] The cause of death for injury or poisoning of undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980 to E989 excluding E988.8 for 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes Y10-Y34 excluding Y33.9 where the coroner's verdict was pending.

[3] The occupation coded at death registration is the last gainful occupation of the deceased, as supplied by the informant who registers the death and is recorded for all persons aged 16 to 74. ONS Standard Occupation Classification 1990 (SOC90) was used to code data for 2000, and ONS Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC2K) was used to code data from 2001 to 2004.

[4] Data are for occurrences of death in each calendar year.

Films (Tax Relief)

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will extend the deadline for principal photography and acquisition to be completed for films claiming tax relief under section 48 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 1997; [26691]

(2) what arrangements have been made for the transition period to the new tax credit system for films claiming under section 42 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 1997. [26692]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have recently carried out a consultation on the replacement of the current tax relief for UK film production. We will consider the representations that have been made and make an announcement in due course.

Land Registry (Birkenhead)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what factors are responsible for the delay in settling the increase in the 2005–06 pay of Land Registry staff in Birkenhead; and whether the increase in pay will reflect the delay in the annual pay review. [27246]

Mr. Des Browne: For staff below the senior civil service, Departments and agencies have authority to determine pay and conditions, appropriate to their business needs and taking account of wider Government policies on public sector pay. Proposals for pay remits must be submitted, then negotiated with HM Treasury and, in most cases, are subject to ministerial approval. The length of time to agree is determined, In part, by the complexity of the proposals put forward.

Having submitted their pay remit this year and following discussions with the Treasury and the Cabinet Office, the Land Registry entered into negotiations with the relevant trade union bodies on the final pay award to reach a settlement, publishing details of this year's offer to staff on November 8. The level of award will be back-dated by the Land Registry to the annual settlement date.

National Insurance Contributions Bill

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the possible impact of the National Insurance Contributions Bill on orchestras and ensembles. [24846]

Dawn Primarolo: The National Insurance Contributions Bill was introduced to ensure that employers and employees who have participated in tax avoidance pay their fair share of National Insurance Contributions on rewards of employment. It has no specific impact on orchestras and ensembles.

Revenue Increases

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Government have made of the causes of increases in *(a)* stamp duty revenues and *(b)* inheritance tax revenues since May 1997; and if he will make a statement. [26943]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Tax revenues will automatically rise each year as the economy grows, asset prices increase, more people are in work and people are earning more.

This is a sign of economic success and increased national prosperity with employment increasing by over 2.2 million since 1997.

The Government publish their analysis of the economic factors that influence tax revenues twice yearly: at the pre-Budget report and the Budget.

VAT

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the intended date is for introduction of VAT on outsourced insurance services; and whether it will apply to services outsourced to *(a)* Crown dependencies and overseas territories, *(b)* countries of the European Union and *(c)* other countries. [26202]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs issued a consultation document on the proposed changes to the VAT exemption for insurance-related services in July. The consultation exercise formally closed on 30 September 2005. The responses are currently being considered very carefully ahead of any decision.

Whether UK VAT is chargeable on services outsourced from outside the UK depends on the exact nature of the service supplied. This will determine where they are deemed to be supplied. General administration services are deemed to be supplied where the supplier belongs and would be outside the scope of UK VAT when supplied from outside the UK.

Windfall Tax

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria are used to decide whether to impose windfall taxation. [27151]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government believe that a modern and fair tax system should encourage work and saving, keep pace with business practices and the global economy and provide the foundation for building world-class public services. The Government keep all taxes under review and any changes to taxation are considered as part of the normal Budget process.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Air Weapons

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many air weapon offences were committed in the Humberside police area in each of the last five years. [24737]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is given in the following table.

Offences involving air weapons recorded by Humberside police, 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	Number of offences
1999–2000	482
2000–01	433
2001–02[1]	410
2002–03[2]	312
2003–04	264

[1] Figures for some crime categories may have been inflated by some police forces implementing the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard in advance of national implementation.

[2] The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures before and after this date are not directly comparable.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the Violent Crime Reduction Bill on the pastime of airsofting; and what representations he has received on this issue. [25350]

Hazel Blears: We have received representations from both participants and organisers, including the Association of British Airsoft, about the effects of the Violent Crime Reduction Bill and are considering whether it would be appropriate and possible for the sport of airsoft to be exempted from the provisions of the Bill without undermining its main purpose. Under the provisions of the Bill as currently drafted, participants will still be able to use their existing guns and will be able to buy any airsoft which is not so realistic as to make it indistinguishable from a real firearm.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of those issued with antisocial behaviour orders in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Tendling district have breached the terms of their order in the most recent period for which figures are available. [25450]

Hazel Blears: Data on convictions for breach of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from one June 2000 to 31 December 2003. Of the 1,892 ASBOs issued during this period within England and Wales, as reported to the Home office, 42 per cent. of persons (793) breached their ASBO on one or more occasions.

ASBO breach data are available at Criminal Justice System area level only.

Asylum Seekers

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Somalian nationals have claimed asylum at Heathrow arriving on flights from *(a)* Nairobi and *(b)* Addis Ababa in the last five years. [25121]

Andy Burnham: In the last five years, 58 Somalian Nationals, arriving on flights from Nairobi, have claimed asylum at Heathrow and 44 Somalian Nationals, on arrival from flights from Addis Ababa, have claimed asylum at Heathrow over the corresponding period.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of new substantive asylum applications received between 1 January and 30 June 2005 had initial decisions reached and served within two months. [26662]

Andy Burnham: Information on the timeliness of initial decisions is published quarterly and annually, data for Q2 2005 will be published in the Asylum Statistics: 3rd Quarter 2005 publication available on

22 November 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Biometrics

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if any future use of biometrics for both passports and identity cards will be entirely managed and delivered within the public sector. [25657]

Andy Burnham: It is currently envisaged that the services required to support the delivery of biometrics for the use in both passports and identity cards, will be managed within the public sector and delivered using both public and private sector resources. This approach ensures that the best possible use can be made of external capability, while retaining critical decision making and strategically important functions within the public sector. Any developments in the future will support this principle and will ensure that the public sector retains control of all key decision making in regard to the use of biometrics and all decisions about enrolments using biometrics.

Community Policing

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on community policing in Romford; and what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of ward policing in London. [26442]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to every area in England and Wales benefiting from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams by 2008. Within London, the roll-out of safer neighbourhoods teams are a decision for the commissioner of the Metropolitan police. There are currently eight teams in the London borough of Havering, and the commissioner plans that all areas of London will benefit by April 2007.

The Home Office has commissioned an evaluation of the impact of the National Reassurance Policing programme which includes four wards in the Metropolitan Police Service, in Bexley, Enfield, Kensington and Chelsea and Merton. This study will assess the impact of police activity on public feelings of safety and security, community engagement and confidence in the police, and will be published in the early part of 2006. The MPS are conducting their own internal assessment of the Safer Neighbourhoods programme for operational purposes, which includes a public attitudes survey.

Court Orders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many breaches of anti-social behaviour orders have *(a)* resulted in and *(b)* not resulted in court action in (i) Romford and (ii) Havering since they were introduced. [26441]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office court proceedings database holds breach proceedings only where there has been a conviction. These data are available at Criminal Justice System area level only.

Criminal Assets

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his target is for the recovery of criminal assets in 2005. [26649]

Hazel Blears: As set out in the Home Office Strategic Plan 2004–08 (Cm 6287) the target for 2004–05 was £60 million, with more in future years. In 2005–06 we aim to exceed last year's performance where £84.4 million of criminal proceeds was recovered.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of cases have been considered for more than two years before a decision has been reached under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001. [21262]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority advises that in 2003–04 (the first year in which any case could satisfy this criterion) the percentage was 2.5 per cent. In 2004–05 it was 4.5 per cent.

Cross-border Co-operation

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what protocols the Government have in place to ensure that cross-border co-operation between police forces is effective; and if he will make a statement. [24516]

Hazel Blears: There are currently protocols for forces to collaborate to deal with cross border crime. The Closing the Gap report identified that some of these arrangements were not as effective as they could or should be. These issues are currently being progressed as part of the Review of the Structure of Police Forces.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23468]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In 2004–05, as part of the interior art strategy for the new Home Office at 2 Marsham Street, £17,260 was spent on art. The exterior art strategy for 2 Marsham Street was paid for by the developer Annes Gate Property plc. Art provided to Ministers' offices are loaned by the Government Art Collection at no cost to my Department.

Firearms Certificates

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms certificate applications were processed by each police force in England and Wales in each of the last three years for which records are available. [24732]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is given in the following table.

Firearm certificate applications in England and Wales by police force area, 2001 to 2003–04

Number

Police force area	*2001*	*2002*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon and Somerset	1,692	1,689	1,430	633
Bedfordshire	470	475	453	196
Cambridgeshire	919	806	747	322
Cheshire	919	852	763	349
Cleveland	273	276	219	121
Cumbria	986	1,055	896	332
Derbyshire	768	1,003	839	467
Devon and Cornwall	2,845	2,823	2,452	954
Dorset	967	912	774	483
Durham	647	803	691	293
Essex	1,160	1,373	1,183	553
Gloucestershire	847	860	749	225
Greater Manchester	680	542	458	315
Hampshire	1,484	1,471	1,438	753
Hertfordshire	591	606	537	307
Humberside	960	945	872	349
Kent	1,393	1,241	1,427	577
Lancashire	935	859	787	381
Leicestershire	579	578	504	246
Lincolnshire	1,210	1,237	956	269
London, City of	5	9	7	5
Merseyside	348	265	260	38
Metropolitan police	1,645	1,538	1,354	734
Norfolk	1,216	1,144	1,026	454
Northamptonshire	728	769	726	417
Northumbria	1,117	1,158	1,036	387
North Yorkshire	1,607	2,357	2,127	738
Nottinghamshire	657	681	637	331
South Yorkshire	531	520	461	283
Staffordshire	899	944	854	340
Suffolk	1,283	1,030	935	428
Surrey	887	848	780	399
Sussex	1,892	1,506	1,479	538
Thames Valley	2,163	1,929	1,973	569
Warwickshire	615	587	542	260
West Mercia	1,259	1,079	1,199	893
West Midlands	592	646	634	435
West Yorkshire	871	923	811	432
Wiltshire	906	1,049	978	282
Dyfed-Powys	1,142	1,191	1,117	351
Gwent	233	379	463	120
North Wales	795	733	634	255
South Wales	518	608	553	257
England and Wales	42,194	42,299	38,761	17,071

Notes:

1. Data collected by calendar year until 2002, financial year thereafter.
2. Includes granted and refused applications for new, renewal and variation certificates.

Knife Crime

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rate of knife crime was in each police authority area in each year since 1997. [25041]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally. Crimes involving the use of a knife cannot be separately identified in the recorded crime statistics.

Military Police

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what criteria are used in assessing whether military police should participate in policing civilian areas and events; [23652]

(2) how long he expects Cheshire police to be collaborating with military personnel in Operation Yellow Card; [23653]

(3) what guidelines are in place for establishing chain of command when military police and civil police forces work together; [23654]

(4) what assessment he has made of how the civil police force might be supplemented by the military police force; and if he will make a statement. [23655]

Hazel Blears: I am advised by Cheshire police that operation yellow card does not involve military personnel. Operational policing is the responsibility of the chief police officer in the area concerned. Military assistance can be sought in exceptional circumstances in accordance with arrangements that include the need to seek approval of the relevant Ministers in the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence. In such circumstances, military personnel provide support to and work under the control of the chief police officer. This remains the case even in circumstances where military personnel are deployed in support of the police.

Offensive Weapons

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been found to be carrying knives in public without a good reason or lawful authority in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Teignbridge constituency since the coming into force of the Knives Act 1997; and how many of these received a prison sentence. [25892]

Hazel Blears: The information available is shown in the following table.

Defendants sentenced and given custody for carrying a weapon or blade, 1997–2004[1]

		1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Teignbridge magistrates court[2]					
Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	Sentenced	5	1	1	7
	Immediate custody	2	0	1	0
Having an article with a blade in a public place	Sentenced	1	1	1	3
	custody Immediate	0	1	0	0
Total of both offences	Sentenced	6	2	2	10
	Immediate custody	2	1	1	0
South Devon magistrates court[2]					
Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	Sentenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Immediate custody	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Having an article with a blade in a public place	Sentenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Immediate custody	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total of both offences	Sentenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Immediate custody	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Defendants sentenced and given custody for carrying a weapon or blade, 1997–2004[1]

		1997	1998	1999	2000
England and Wales					
Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	Sentenced	4,130	4,375	4,135	4,108
	Immediate custody	509	585	554	595
Having an article with a blade in a public place	Sentenced	3,341	3,788	3,548	3,518
	Immediate custody	372	550	534	499
Total of both offences	Sentenced	7,471	8,163	7,683	7,626
	Immediate custody	881	1,135	1,088	1,094

		2001	2002	2003	2004
Teignbridge magistrates court[2]					
Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	Sentenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Immediate custody	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Having an article with a blade in a public place	Sentenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	custody Immediate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total of both offences	Sentenced	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Immediate custody	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Devon magistrates court[2]					
Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	Sentenced	23	18	29	20
	Immediate custody	2	1	2	3
Having an article with a blade in a public place	Sentenced	8	17	31	14
	Immediate custody	1	1	0	0
Total of both offences	Sentenced	31	35	60	34
	Immediate custody	3	2	2	3
England and Wales					
Possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse	Sentenced	4,873	5,441	5,394	5,758
	Immediate custody	634	787	760	817
Having an article with a blade in a public place	Sentenced	4,303	5,269	5,311	5,802
	Immediate custody	589	766	755	803
Total of both offences	Sentenced	9,176	10,710	10,705	11,560
	Immediate custody	1,223	1,553	1,515	1,620

[1] The aboye offences are not covered within the Knifes Act 1997 which came into force, partly in September 1997 and fully in March 1999. The offences are covered under previous Acts. The offences of possession of offensive weapons without lawful authority or reasonable excuse is covered under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 S.1. The offence of having an article with a blade or point in a public place is covered by the Criminal Justice Act 1988 S.139.

[2] The Teignbridge Court was amalgamated into the South Devon magistrates court in 2000–01. The figures are shown for each court separately

Source:
RDS NOMS 3 11 2005

Persistent Offenders

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is being taken to deal with persistent offenders. [24286]

Hazel Blears: The Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) strategy was launched by the Prime Minister in March 2004 to target not only existing prolific offenders but also those young people who are on the cusp of a prolific offending lifestyle. The strategy has three strands: prevent and deter—to stop young people becoming prolific offenders; catch and convict—tackling those who are already prolific offenders; and rehabilitate and resettle—working to increase the number of offenders who stop offending by offering a range of supportive interventions.

Over 10,000 existing prolific offenders have been identified by schemes across England and Wales. In addition, approximately 4,000 young people have been identified as suitable for support as part of the prevent and deter strand. A report of the early findings of the evaluation of the PPO strategy was published in October 2005. It provides encouraging but early indicative data on the impact on the offending rates of PPOs, as well as information about the characteristics of the targeted PPO population and how schemes are intervening with them.

Police

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in *(a)* the South Tyneside area command and *(b)* Northumbria in each year since 1997. [24289]

Hazel Blears: The available information is provided in the following table.

Number of police officers (full-time equivalent) (1997–2005)

As at 31 March	*South Tyneside*[1]	*Northumbria*
1997	—	3,677
1998	—	3,769
1999	—	3,840
2000	—	3,788
2001	254.93	3,857
2002	267.59	3,929
2003	333.31	4,018
2004	392.14	4,061
2005	441.27	4,088

[1] Data are unavailable prior to 2001.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide additional resources over the next four years to the Thames Valley police for the enforcement of the recent ban on hunting with dogs. [26110]

Hazel Blears: The enforcement of the ban on hunting with dogs is a normal policing function and forces are expected to absorb the costs of this activity within their plans and budgeted resources. These are operational matters for the local chief constable.

We have invested heavily in policing in England and Wales over the past five years. Expenditure supported by Government grant or spent centrally on policing increased by 39 per cent. or over £3 billion between 2000–01 and 2005–06. Thames Valley is receiving its fair share of the available resources.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are to expand the number of *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time police officers working in (i) Romford, (ii) Havering, (iii) Essex and (iv) Greater London over the next 12 months. [26443]

Hazel Blears: This information is not available centrally. The number of police officers deployed in particular areas of Essex and London are operational decisions which are the responsibility of the chief constable and the commissioner.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were charged for speeding in each police force in each of the last 10 years. [26447]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of police personnel charged by type of offence is not collected centrally.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many graduates in the police force's fast-tracking system met his Department's target of becoming a chief inspector in seven years in each of the last five years. [26563]

Hazel Blears: There is no target for fast tracking police officers with a university degree to the rank of chief inspector within seven years. The Police High Potential Development Scheme, which is currently placed 20 in the 2005–06 Times Top 100 Graduate Employers listing, provides development opportunities tailored to individual needs for those who successfully pass the selection process to combine real work experience, practical training and academic study in order to move through the ranks to senior leadership positions in the police service.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police cells are in use in Essex, broken down by location. [18085]

Hazel Blears: This is an operational matter for the chief constable of Essex police but I understand that the numbers of cells in use in Essex are as set out in the following table.

Police cells in use in Essex	*Number*
Braintree	8
Brentwood	7
Chelmsford	11
Clacton	12
Colchester	17
Grays	12
Harlow	14
Harwich	5
Loughton	3
Rayleigh	16
Southend	23
South Woodham Ferrers	4
Stansted	3
Tilbury	3
Total	138

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the projected funding per head of the population was for each police authority in England and Wales in 2004–05. [24934]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 514W.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in Leeds, North West in each year since 1997, broken down by ethnicity; and what percentage of the total in each year was accounted for by each ethnic group. [23998]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally. Data are available for West Yorkshire police and is provided in the following table.

Police officer strength for West Yorkshire (1997–2005)
Ethnicity breakdown[1]

Full-time equivalent[2]

As at 31 March	*White*	*Mixed*	*Black or black British*	*Asian or Asian British*	*Other ethnic group*	*Not stated*	*Total minority ethnic*	*Total all Police officers*
1997	—	—	—	—	—	—	130	5,209
1998	—	—	—	—	—	—	133	5,155
1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	131	4,982
2000	—	—	—	—	—	—	127	4,822
2001	—	—	—	—	—	—	139	4,815
2002	—	—	—	—	—	—	152	4,889
2003	4,830	29	38	87	9	45	163	5,037
2004	5,088	38	37	100	11	40	186	5,314
2005	5,427	46	43	120	12	24	221	5,671

[1] Ethnicity breakdown is only available from 2003 onwards.

[2] FTE includes those on career breaks and maternity/paternity leave.

Police officer strength for West Yorkshire (1997–2005)
Ethnicity Breakdown[1]

Percentage

As at 31 March	*White*	*Mixed*	*Black or black British*	*Asian or Asian British*	*Other ethnic group*	*Not stated*	*Total minority ethnic*	*Total number (FTE) of police officers*
1997	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.5	5,209
1998	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.6	5,155
1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.6	4,982
2000	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.6	4,822
2001	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.9	4,815
2002	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.1	4,889
2003	95.9	0.6	0.8	1.7	0.2	0.9	3.2	5,037
2004	95.7	0.7	0.7	1.9	0.2	0.8	3.5	5,314
2005	95.7	0.8	0.8	2.1	0.2	0.4	3.9	5,671

[1] Ethnicity breakdown is only available from 2003 onwards

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many official complaints have been lodged against police officers in each London borough in each of the last 10 years. [27121]

Hazel Blears: The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is responsible for the management of the police complaints system. I will ensure that the chairman receives a copy of the question and replies to the hon. Member directly. Copies of the letter containing the IPCC's response will be placed in the Libraries.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department provides on the minimum number of officers necessary to staff a police station at night. [24475]

Hazel Blears: This is a matter for local determination according to operational need. The Home Office does not issue guidance on it.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many criminal investigators there were in the Bedfordshire police force in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [24378]

Hazel Blears: The available information is for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 and is given in the table. Information for previous years is not currently available.

Police officers in CID function (full-time equivalent) in Bedfordshire (1997–2005)

	CID[1] *officers*
1997	n/a
1998	n/a
1999	n/a
2000	n/a
2001	n/a
2002	n/a
2003	85
2004	124
2005	131

[1] This table contains full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to reduce the loss of experienced criminal investigators from Bedfordshire to other forces, as identified by the Police Performance Assessment 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [24379]

Hazel Blears: We understand that the numbers of detectives transferring from Bedfordshire has declined and is not considered a problem. Like all forces, Bedfordshire have a range of pay and other incentives to retain officers in particular posts.

Student Task Force

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the 1,206 colleges visited by his Department's student task force were judged to be *(a)* genuine colleges and *(b)* not genuine colleges. [26668]

Andy Burnham: Between April 2004 and December 2004, 1,218 educational institutions were visited and 314 (25 per cent.) were found not to be genuine. All applications from students to study at institutions found not to be genuine were refused.

Terrorist Attacks (London)

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 180W, on terrorist attacks in London, how long it took to reach each underground train affected by the incidents. [24245]

Hazel Blears: After consultation with the Metropolitan Police Service, the British Transport Police, the London Fire Brigade Service and the London Ambulance Service I can inform the hon. Member that the information he has requested is not readily available.

Following normal practice, the London Ambulance Service did not record the times that their paramedics and technicians reached the trains, only the stations which were the locations given in the 999 calls. This also applies to the Metropolitan Police Service, the British Transport Police and the London Fire Brigade.

It is considered that to collate the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost as it would require information from each of the individual responders from the emergency services.

I can inform the hon. Member that the London Underground have provided information that in respect of the Aldgate and Edgware Road incidents, London Underground staff reached the trains within 3–5 minutes of the blasts occurring.

In respect of the Kings Cross incident, London Underground staff reached the train within 3–7 minutes of the blasts occurring. Again, exact arrival times are not recorded.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Belfast Protocol

Joan Walley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action he will take in response to the publication of the Belfast Protocol by the British Toilet Association on 11 October; and if he will make a statement. [26623]

Mr. Woolas: I met with the British Toilet Association on 11 October to discuss good practice in public toilet provision. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will work with the BTA to produce further guidance, including examples of best practice. This will be undertaken as part of our "How To Deliver Cleaner, Safer, Greener Communities" good practice programme.

Departmental Estate

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information he collects on *(a)* the number of buildings, *(b)* the number of staff working from each building and *(c)* the management of the buildings in (i) his Department and (ii) its executive agencies. [24412]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information collected by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is as follows:

(a) Number of buildings

(i) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has four headquarters buildings in London which are in the process of being rationalised. There is additional minor office space at Hempstead House, Kernel Hempstead, Ashdown House, Hastings and 1 High Street, Glossop.

The Fire and Rescue Service Directorate also occupies premises at Marchington, Moreton-in-Marsh, Little Rissington and Garston.

A team to oversee Thames Gateway is based in Gateway House, Exchange Tower and similarly a small team is based within the Planning Inspectorate Offices at Temple Quay House, Bristol.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also owns Burlington House in London, Sheffield House in Stevenage, West Point in Manchester and a building at Little Rissington.

(ii) In relation to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Executive Agencies, the Fire Services College occupies buildings at Moreton in Marsh and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre is located in Westminster. The Planning Inspectorate occupies Temple Quay House, Bristol.

(b) Number of staff working from each building

(i) Figures are based on staff with an entry on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister personnel database, but exclude staff on temporary leave of absence from the office, eg maternity leave, staff working in the Regional Coordination Unit and staff working in the Executive agencies which are recorded as follows. Figures for staff are likely to differ from those published elsewhere as they have been produced on a different basis. All figures are shown as actual number of staff.

Figures as at 30 October 2005 are as follows:

	Number
Ashdown House Victoria	329
Eland House, Victoria	1,368
Hempstead House	95
Glossop	3
Building 3 Garston	13
Marchington	49
Fire Experimental Unit, Moreton-in-Marsh	8
Admiralty House, 26 Whitehall	153
Allington Towers, Victoria	143
Ashdown House, Hastings	40
Exchange Tower, London	13
Temple Quay House, Bristol	29

Figures are not available for Little Rissington, Burlington House, Sheffield House, Stevenage or West Point, Manchester as these buildings are not occupied by ODPM staff.

(ii) Figures for staff in buildings occupied by the Executive agencies are only available as full-time equivalents and this will almost certainly be an underestimate of the number of individuals employed. Figures include agency staff and contractors and may differ from figures published elsewhere using different definitions.

Figures as at 30 June 2005 are as follows:

	Full-time equivalents
Fire Service College	296.2
Planning Inspectorate	821.14
Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre	53.3

(c) Management of the buildings

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister centrally collects information relating to the Sustainable Development in Government targets for each and publicly reports on this. This can be viewed at http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/delivery/integrating/estate/estate.htm. No other information is retained centrally.

This answer does not include buildings occupied by Government offices, which carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Departmental Funding

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding was allocated by his Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in the last eight years. [25742]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) does not hold separate expenditure information on the Hemel Hempstead constituency.

The following table sets out payments made to Dacorum borough council since the ODPM was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. For earlier years (from 1999–2000), the table shows the amount paid by ODPM's predecessor Departments from programmes which are now administered by the Office.

All figures (£ million)

Funding to Dacorum borough	*(a) Capital*	*(b) Revenue*
1999–2000	1.354	7.504
2000–01	2.958	7.868
2001–02	6.190	8.488
2002–03	5.237	8.608
2003–04	4.315	8.800
2004–05	3.873	8.159
Total	23.927	49.247

Departmental Spending

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding was allocated by his Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23503]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The following table sets out payments made to Milton Keynes since 2002–03. For earlier years, the table shows the amount paid by ODPM's predecessor Departments from programmes which are now administered by ODPM.

Funding

£ million

	Capital	*Revenue*
2000–01	0.012	131.448
2001–02	14.050	132.734
2002–03	32.200	138.753
2003–04	26.455	162.572
2004–05	53.473	173.529
Total	126.190	739.036

Departmental Working Groups

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 448W, on departmental working groups, which *(a)* staff member and *(b)* Minister within his Department approves the creation of new departmental working groups. [24718]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 608–09W. A variety of cross-divisional groupings exist within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. There is no formal definition of these as departmental working groups and no centrally held record of the creation of them. There is no designated staff member with the role of centrally approving the creation of new departmental working groups.

Fire Precautions Regulations

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what requests for exemptions to the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 have been made under regulation 12 of the regulations since 1989. [26555]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not keep such records centrally, nor do we require fire and rescue authorities to supply any to us.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Pope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage change in central government funding to Hyndburn borough council has been in each of the last five years. [25623]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage change in central government funding to Hyndburn council in each of the last five years for which data are available is shown in the table as follows.

	Change in funding on previous year (%)
1999–2000	2.9
2000–01	4.7
2001–02	8.2
2002–03	12.7
2003–04	13.7

Notes:

1. Central government funding is defined here as the sum of Specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance (AEF) and Formula grant (Revenue Support Grant, Redistributed business rates and Police Grant). Specific grants inside AEF are those revenue grants paid for councils' core services (such as waste collection), excluding funding for local authorities' housing management.
2. Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities.
3. The information provided excludes capital funding and funding for local authorities' housing management responsibilities.
4. The information excludes those grant programmes, such as European funding, where authorities are simply one of the recipients of funding paid towards an area.

Source:

ODPM Revenue Outturn (RO) returns—RS data

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people in his Department were relocated in 2004–05 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation, broken down by locations to which they have been relocated; how many are expected to be relocated in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23690]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* 103 posts were relocated from September 2003 to April 2005, of which 91 were to locations outside of London and the south-east, excluding Hastings. Relocation of up to 138 posts is taking place during 2005–06.

Region	*Number of posts relocated*
Yorkshire and the Humber	14
North-west	14
North-east	5
South-west	8
West Midlands	6
East Midlands	17
East	17
South-east—Hastings	10
Sub-total	91
South-east excluding Hastings	5
London	7
Total	103

Pathfinder Areas

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 814W, on pathfinder areas, if he will break down the estimated number of homes to be demolished by pathfinder area. [22471]

Yvette Cooper: Pathfinders have drawn up their own plans on the level and tenure of demolition required. Not all of the pathfinders have included information on tenure in their submissions to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. For those who have, the information is recorded in the following table for 2005–06.

Estimated demolitions 2005–06

Pathfinder/tenure	*Number*
Birmingham Sandwell	
Private	77
Social	294
East Lancashire	
Private	526
Social	41
Hull and East Riding	
Private	8
Social	38
Merseyside	
Private	706
Social	1,040
Manchester Salford	
Private	n/a
Social	n/a
Newcastle Gateshead	
Private	n/a
Social	n/a
North Staffordshire	
Private	52
Social	0
Oldham Rochdale	
Private	84
Social	63
South Yorkshire	
Private	156
Social	723
Total	3,806

n/a = Not available.

Planning

Steve Webb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what circumstances a local councillor living in the ward that he represents may make representations to his local authority about a planning application relating to that ward; and by what means such a councillor may represent his community's interests where he himself is directly affected also by the application. [25536]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the Adjournment debate: Roll of Local Councillors in the Planning System that took place on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 65–72WH.

Standards Board for England

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to abolish the Standards Board for England; and if he will make a statement. [23763]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to abolish the Standards Board for England.

Terrorism

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Multi Agency Initial Assessment team pilot following its response to the bombing on 7 July; and what plans he has to allocate funding for its *(a)* continuation and *(b)* development. [26025]

Hazel Blears: Ministers are currently considering the results of the Multi Agency Initial Assessment team trial and I will write to you shortly.

HEALTH

Avian Influenza

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of *(a)* the impact of an influenza pandemic on bed occupancy rates and *(b)* the adequacy of the current supply of intensive care beds in the event of an influenza pandemic. [19686]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We recognise that a major influenza pandemic, or indeed any major biological or infectious illness whether caused by nature or terrorist activity, would place a serious burden on critical care facilities.

All trusts have escalation plans for increasing short-term capacity to meet incidents, whether natural or terrorist, and we are constantly reviewing these plans. We are working closely with the Intensive Care Society and other professional organisations on ensuring that these plans are robust and appropriate for possible contingencies including an influenza pandemic.

Bed Numbers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely effects of the change in bed numbers planned in West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust Investing in Your Health Plan on the standard of healthcare for the people of Hemel Hempstead; and if she will make a statement. [24721]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No assessment has been made of any likely effects of the change in bed numbers planned in West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust's "Investing in Your Health" plan. The Department's capacity planning focuses on activity rather than bed numbers. It is for the national health service locally to ensure there is suitable provision of beds in order to deliver this.

Cancer

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment has been made of the likely effects of the decision to end the automatic offer of testing for bowel cancer at the age of 69 years when the screening programme is introduced from April 2006; [23826]

(2) if she will fund a pilot for screening for bowel cancer with no upper age limit. [23827]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are determined that the new screening programme should not have a detrimental effect on services for patients with bowel cancer symptoms. The decision to begin screening with men and women aged 60 to 69 was based on evidence from research studies and the United Kingdom colorectal (bowel) cancer screening pilot. The risk of bowel cancer increases with age, with over 80 per cent. of bowel

cancers arising in people who are 60 or over. When we have rolled out the programme to the whole country, we will make an assessment on whether to expand it to other age groups.

We will encourage men and women aged 70 and over to self refer by seeing their general practitioner or contacting their local screening unit.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has undertaken into a possible link between breast cancer survival rates and the availability of *(a)* monitoring and *(b)* on-going care for cancer patients. [17512]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not commissioned any research into the link between breast cancer survival rates, monitoring and/or on-going care for breast cancer patients.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made to ensure those for whom Herceptin may be suitable are offered the HER2 test; and what recent estimate she has made of the percentage of potentially eligible women who are being offered the HER2 test. [23972]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Each of the 34 cancer networks has been asked to submit action plans to the Department by 4 November 2005 on how they will implement human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) testing.

Information on the percentage of potentially eligible woman being offered the HER2 test is not collected centrally.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of women diagnosed with breast cancer were tested for the presence of Human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor 2 in 2004–05. [24423]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not collected centrally on the proportion of women diagnosed with breast cancer who are tested for the presence of human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2).

Plans are now being put in place to ensure that all women diagnosed with breast cancer are tested for the presence of HER2.

Cataract Operations

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations were carried out by the NHS in England in 2003–04; and how many have been performed on NHS patients in mobile independent sector treatment centres by Netcare. [20359]

Ms Rosie Winterton: 301,664 cataract operations were carried out by national health service hospitals in England in 2003–04. Netcare UK has been operational since February 2004 and its mobile cataract units have carried out over 17,000 procedures to date.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applications to extend dental school training places were submitted to her Department by 28 September; how many were applications for *(a)* establishing new dental schools and *(b)* expanding existing dental schools; which organisations submitted applications; and when she expects the joint implementation group to reach conclusions on the business cases submitted. [23963]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Six applications have been received from universities that do not currently have dental schools and eight from universities wishing to expand their dental schools. We do not consider it appropriate to release the name of these universities while competition is still under way. The joint implementation group will put its recommendations to the board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England to consider at its meeting on 26 January.

Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doses of influenza vaccine are available in *(a)* Herefordshire, *(b)* Worcestershire and *(c)* England. [24938]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not centrally purchase flu vaccine. General practitioners purchase their own supplies of vaccine from one of the six United Kingdom suppliers, based on the number of eligible patients on their practice register.

13.4 million doses of flu vaccine are available to order this year.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to vaccinate poultry handlers against *(a)* seasonal influenza and *(b)* influenza of subtype A/H5N1. [25273]

Caroline Flint: There are no plans to vaccinate poultry workers against seasonal influenza in the absence of an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). When an outbreak of HPAI is confirmed, or in the case of heightened risk of an outbreak in poultry, poultry workers on the infected farm, together with vets, contractors and other people engaged in disease control activities, will be offered seasonal influenza vaccine, plus anti-viral therapy, within 24 to 48 hours of disease confirmation.

There is currently no vaccine against influenza of subtype A/H5N1. Manufacturers have been asked to tender for a contract to supply a limited amount of vaccine against the H5N1 strain of avian influenza currently circulating in South East Asia. This vaccine could offer some protection against an H5N1 flu strain.

If an outbreak occurs or is deemed likely, we will make the vaccine available for those at high risk of infection through occupational exposure to diseased birds.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health over what time period the contracts agreed by her Department with seasonal influenza vaccine manufacturers have effect; with which influenza vaccine manufacturer such contracts have been agreed; and when each was agreed. [23114]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not place contracts with manufacturers but negotiates with manufacturers for United Kingdom influenza vaccine

supply. General practitioner practices make their own contractual arrangements with manufacturers for the supply of influenza vaccine.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how soon it is necessary for tamiflu to be administered once someone has been infected with influenza for the treatment to be effective. [25537]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Tamiflu is licensed for the treatment of influenza A and B when influenza is circulating and should be administered within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms. Full details of antiviral agents for influenza can be found in annex H of the "UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan", which is available in the Library.

NHS Ambulance Service Trusts (London)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* administration and *(b)* management costs by each NHS ambulance service trust in London, expressed (i) as a percentage of their total budget and (ii) as the cost per head of population in areas they cover in the latest year for which figures are available. [23882]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested for 2004–05, the latest available year, is shown in the table.

London Ambulance National Health Service Trust

Management costs per weighted head of the population (£000)	1.41
Management costs as a percentage of turnover	3.9

Notes:
1. Administration costs are not identified separately so all information given relates to management costs only.
2. London has one ambulance trust. The population figures for this have been compiled by the primary care trust weighted population figures within the London area.
3. 'Total budget' has been interpreted as total income (turnover).

Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the named trust.

NICE

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional resources she will be making available to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in respect of the new single technology appraisal process. [26397]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Funding available to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is sufficient for it to accommodate the new single technology appraisal process without detriment to its existing work programme. NICE'S funding for 2005–06 is £30.2 million[1].

[1] This figure includes capital charges.

Primary Care Trusts (London)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* administration and *(b)* management costs by each primary care trust in London, expressed (i) as a percentage of their total budget and (ii) as the cost per head of population in areas they cover in the last year for which figures are available. [23881]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested for 2004–05, the latest available year, is shown in the table.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) in the London area

	Management costs (£000)	*Management costs per weighted head of population (£)*	*Management costs as a percentage of net operating costs*
Barking and Dagenham	3,744	18.97	1.9
Barnet	7,957	26.07	2.0
Bexley Care Trust	2,926	14.99	1.2
Brent Teaching	11,273	42.80	3.0
Bromley	4,931	18.07	1.4
Camden	7,399	27.99	2.0
City and Hackney Teaching	5,708	18.48	1.7
Croydon	5,703	17.63	1.5
Ealing	5,985	17.90	1.5
Enfield	4,710	17.51	1.5
Greenwich Teaching	3,374	13.65	1.1
Hammersmith and Fulham	3,997	23.14	1.7
Haringey Teaching	5,296	19.43	1.7
Harrow	3,932	21.25	1.7
Havering	5,205	22.33	1.9
Hillingdon	2,590	10.99	0.9
Hounslow	5,168	23.92	1.7
Islington	5,176	20.97	1.7
Kensington and Chelsea	6,979	35.96	2.4
Kingston	3,850	26.96	2.1
Lambeth	6,752	20.19	1.4
Lewisham	5,854	20.35	1.7
Newham	5,978	17.86	1.7
Redbridge	4,406	19.69	1.7
Richmond and Twickenham	3,459	23.31	1.6
Southwark	6,169	20.12	1.7
Sutton and Merton	9,828	29.43	2.3
Tower Hamlets	4,556	15.64	1.4
Waltham Forest	4,329	17.31	1.5
Wandsworth	7,166	26.35	2.0
Westminster	6,598	30.27	1.9

Notes:
1. Administration costs are not identified separately so all information given relates to management costs only.
2. 'Total budget' has been interpreted as net operating costs for PCTs.

Source:
Audited summarisation schedules and weighted population figures of the named PCTs.

Smoking

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her most recent estimate is of the proportion of pubs which will fall into the category of preparing and serving food for the purposes of the ban on smoking in enclosed public places; and what estimate she has made of the percentage of pubs which will discontinue serving food as a result of the proposals contained within the Health Bill. [25272]

Caroline Flint: In the White Paper, "Choosing Health", we estimated that some 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. of pubs would fall into the category of preparing and serving food. Two separate nationwide estimates have been produced, one by Action on Smoking and Health of 29 per cent. and one by the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) of 19 per cent. The percentage of pubs that might discontinue serving food will depend on the final content of the regulations that the Bill provides for. Until the regulations are finalised it will not be possible to estimate meaningfully how many pubs might choose to allow smoking rather than serve food.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Vehicles

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many abandoned vehicles were crushed in England in the past 12 months for which figures are available. [26121]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most recent data available are for the year 2003–04 when 221,400 abandoned vehicles were removed and destroyed by local authorities.

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts about possible EU-wide co-ordinated action in the event of an outbreak of Avian influenza. [24116]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have had discussions with ministerial counterparts on a regular basis since the H5N1 strain of the virus emerged in South East Asia four years ago.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department has taken to prevent the spread of avian influenza to the United Kingdom. [22734]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 28 October, the EU introduced a ban on imports into the community of all captive birds (wild birds), along with new restrictions on the importation of pet birds. UK import rules have been amended to reflect this.

In line with EU-wide measures, we have banned imports of all live birds and products which could potentially transmit the disease to other birds from countries with the H5N1 strains of avian influenza.

The risk assessment that we have carried out on the spread of the avian influenza virus indicates that there is a high risk that the geographical spread will continue, given the recent detections of the virus in various geographical areas since May 2005.

The UK recognises that the situation continues to develop worldwide. We are monitoring it closely and have stepped up work on surveillance, biosecurity and emergency preparedness.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on EU guidance on the vaccination of poultry. [25042]

Mr. Bradshaw: Prophylactic or preventative vaccination of poultry against avian influenza is not permitted except under special circumstances. Emergency vaccination in an outbreak is permitted in principle by Council Directive 92/40/EEC, providing it is used only to supplement other control measures subject to a Decision by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) Any vaccine used must be authorised by the competent authority.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether pigeons are vulnerable to avian influenza. [25137]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The susceptibility of pigeons appears to vary with the strain of avian influenza virus, but in general they appear to be less susceptible than poultry and some wild birds. Wild pigeons do not appear to play any significant role in the spread of disease.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many qualified personnel her Department has at its disposal to manage an outbreak of Avian influenza. [26830]

Mr. Bradshaw: The State Veterinary Service has about 1,500 staff including veterinary surgeons, animal health officers and administrative personnel. Regular training and exercising helps to equip these staff to deal with an outbreak of exotic disease including Avian influenza. These front line staff are supported by the staff in policy divisions and corporate services in Defra.

In the event of an outbreak these staff would be augmented as necessary by contingency LVIs, vets from other signatory country members of the International Animal Health Emergency Reserve and staff from elsewhere in Defra, other Government Departments and agencies.

Brazilian Meat

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are taken by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the European Commission to ensure that there is no cross-border transit of cattle or carcases between those provinces of Brazil from which imports are banned and those from which imports are still permitted. [26075]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The European Commission is aware of problems in Brazil with regard to control mechanisms in place in Brazil with regard to transit of animals. It is for this reason that the area from which imports have been banned cover a much wider area than would normally be necessary.

The restrictions will not be lifted until the Commission has received positive evidence of improved controls. The European Commission has undertaken to keep member states informed of developments.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements are in place to test imports of beef from Brazil for the foot and mouth virus. [26076]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Testing imported meat would be both impractical and prohibitively expensive. Currently available tests have only been validated for detecting viruses in clinical samples.

Current EU legislation contains measures to ensure that meat imported into the EU does not originate from animals infected with serious disease.

All meat imported into the UK from third countries must enter at designated UK border inspection posts (BIPs) where it is subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks and at least 20 per cent. of consignments undergo

physical checks. These ensure import conditions are met and that the products remain in a satisfactory condition during transport.

Caseous Lymphadenitis

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* sheep and *(b)* goats have been infected with caseous lymphadenitis in each of the last five years. [25434]

Mr. Bradshaw: Caseous lymphadenitis is not a notifiable disease and so there are no records of total numbers of cases occurring nationally. The Veterinary Laboratories Agency retains records of the numbers of diagnoses made in samples which have been submitted to its laboratories in England and Wales in its Veterinary Investigation Diagnosis Analysis (VIDA) database. The figures for the years 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 are as follows:

	Sheep	*Goats*
2000	38	3
2001	28	4
2002	22	16
2003	23	6
2004	35	2

Electric Shock Collars

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from the Kennel Club on electric shock collars in the context of the Animal Welfare Bill. [25546]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have received correspondence from, and met with representatives of the Kennel Club, to discuss the issue of electric shock collars in the context of the Animal Welfare Bill.

Energy Efficiency

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures have been introduced since 1997 to help homeowners meet the cost of improved energy efficiency measures. [26963]

Mr. Morley: The Government has introduced a range of measures to help homeowners meet the cost of improved energy efficiency measures. Key examples include: the Energy Efficiency Commitment (and its predecessor)—an obligation on energy suppliers to increase household energy efficiency; the Warm Front programme, providing grants to those in fuel poverty for a variety of energy efficiency and heating measures; reduced VAT levels for certain commercially installed energy efficient materials, notably insulation; and the Landlords' Energy Saving Allowance, providing landlords a clear incentive to improve the energy efficiency of their properties.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many publicly funded household energy efficiency grant schemes are available to householders in north west Leicestershire. [27061]

Mr. Morley: It is not possible to specifically quantify the number of grants available in North West Leicestershire. However, the Government funds the Energy Saving Trust which, through its own website (www.est.org.uk) and its network of local Energy Efficiency Advice Centres, provides householders with details of all grants and offers for energy efficiency measures in a particular area, including those which are publicly funded, such as Leicester city council's Energy Sense Grant.

The Government's main tool for tackling fuel poverty in private sector households in England is the Warm Front Scheme, which provides a range of energy efficiency measures to householders in receipt of certain qualifying benefits. The measures can include heating and insulation works alongside energy efficiency advice.

EU Decision 2005/745/EC

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what circumstances poultry industry events will be authorised based on a veterinary risk assessment specific to that event, as permitted under Decision 2005/745/EC. [24941]

Mr. Bradshaw: My Department, on veterinary advice, has carried out a preliminary risk assessment which takes a precautionary approach to the risk of transmission of highly pathogenic avian influenza attached to gatherings of birds. This has shown that gathering of specified types of birds may be permitted under certain conditions.

At present low risk gatherings can be licensed. This means the gathering can only consist of budgerigars, canaries, zebra finches, Bengalese finches and birds classed by fanciers as "British" birds (i.e. captive bred birds of species native to the British Isles, not including pigeons, poultry and waterfowl). The show organiser must agree to meet a number of conditions such as record keeping and biosecurity measures before a licence is granted. Sales from licensed gatherings are not permitted.

Gatherings of other birds including poultry, waterfowl, pigeons and exotic species are considered to be higher risk. Conditions under which shows of higher risk birds might be permitted to take place are still under consideration. Such gatherings will not be licensed until we are confident that they can take place without undue risk.

Fish Stocks

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to preserve fish stocks in the North sea. [25902]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK Fisheries Departments' response—published in July 2005—to the "Net Benefits" report set out a clear aim for fisheries management in the UK. That aim is to achieve

> "a fishing sector that is sustainable and profitable and supports local communities, managed effectively as an integral part of coherent policies for the marine environment".

The Department published "Charting a new course" in October which sets out how we will work with our stakeholders in England to achieve this aim.

Flood Defences

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has made to reinforce flood defences. [25456]

Mr. Morley: The Government are committed to the effective management of flood and coastal erosion risk and has increased funding from £310 million a year in 1996–97 to £570 million. The operating authorities—the Environment Agency, local authorities and, in low-lying areas, internal drainage boards—invest a large part of this in physical flood defences as well as in other measures to manage flood risk, including flood warning systems, advice to planning authorities on proposals for development, emergency planning, public awareness campaigns etc.

The Department relies on operating authorities to put forward projects and programmes of work but seeks to ensure a long term strategic perspective to this through encouragement of Shoreline Management Plans and Catchment Flood Management Plans. These are designed to develop appropriate long-term flood and coastal erosion risk management policies.

Defra is leading on development of a new cross-Government Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in close consultation with stakeholders. This will take a holistic approach to management of risk from all forms of flooding (river, coastal, groundwater, surface run-off and sewer) and coastal erosion and ensure the programme helps deliver sustainable development.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department and its related agencies spent on flood defences in each year since 1997. [25457]

Mr. Morley: Defra funds most of the Environment Agency's flood related work and grant aids individual projects undertaken by local authorities and, in low-lying areas, internal drainage boards. The programme to manage risk is driven by these operating authorities; Defra does not build defences, nor direct the authorities on what specific projects to undertake. The following table shows Defra grant and, additionally for local authorities, Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue) (SCE(R)):

£ million

	Environment Agency[1]	*LAs and IDBs*[2]
1997–98	287.9	4.9
1998–99	285.6	3.3
1999–2000	294.3	3.5
2000–01	302.1	4.3
2001–02	333.9	6.5
2002–03	341.5	13.7
2003–04	385.7	8.6
2004–05	425.5	9.2

[1] Expenditure on defences against flooding from rivers and the sea; excludes flood warning.

[2] Defra capital grant and SCE(R) to local authorities and internal drainage boards.

A significant sum is also provided in Defra grant and SCE(R)) to local authorities for projects to manage risk from coastal erosion; these also often provide benefits in terms of risk of flooding from the sea but have not been included in the above figures. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides further support to local authorities through its Revenue Support Grant mechanism.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department and its related agencies plans to spend on flood defences in each of the next 10 years. [25458]

Mr. Morley: The Government will spend some £570 million on management of flood and coastal erosion risk in England in each of the three years up to and including 2007–08. This includes funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to support local authority expenditure. A large part of this funding will be for management of flood risk, from both rivers and the sea. The actual amount will depend on the mix of flood and coastal erosion schemes put forward by the operating authorities—the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards. However, projects to manage coastal erosion often also provide significant benefit in terms of reducing risk of flooding from the sea.

Expenditure for the period beyond 2007–08 will be considered in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the costs of cleaning up flood damage in each year since 1997. [25460]

Mr. Morley: The costs of cleaning up are borne in the main by local authorities and individual property owners and their insurers. No estimates of the total costs incurred by all parties involved are available.

However, under the Bellwin schemes arrangements, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister makes financial assistance available to local authorities if there has been an emergency or disaster involving destruction of or danger to life or property on a scale which is clearly exceptional in relation to normal experience in the locality. The purpose of a Bellwin scheme is to provide emergency relief, not to put right all the [illegible] effects of an incident. Before qualifying for grant, a LA must have spent 0.2 per cent. of its budget on eligible expenditure. Above that threshold grant is normally paid at 85 per cent.

Records of expenditure on Bellwin Schemes do not differentiate as to the cause of the emergency. The following statistics of expenditure since 1997–98 therefore include payments relating to all emergencies. However, the majority of the expenditure related to flooding emergencies:

	£ million
1997–98	0.3
1998–99	0.44
1999–2000	0.35
2000–01	4.1
2001–02	25

	£ million
2002-03	0.35
2003-04	0.1
2004-05	2.3

Notes:
Up until 2000-01 and again in 2002-03 only a small number of authorities received grant in any one year. In 2000-01, 17 authorities received grant, 16 of which were in connection with the autumn 2000 floods. In 2001-02 nearly 75 authorities received payments which were also in connection with the autumn 2000 floods, and nearly 50 in connection with foot and mouth disease. In 2001-02, around £6 million of the total expenditure was in relation to foot and mouth disease.

Fruit Growing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much fruit was grown in England in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by type; and how much was destined for *(a)* export, broken down by country, and *(b)* the domestic market in each case. [24954]

Mr. Bradshaw: Production data from 2004 for fruit produced in England and Wales and the UK are summarised in table 1; production data are not available for England only. Information on exports taken from Customs relate only to exports from the UK rather than from England only so are shown against UK production figures. This shows the split of production between exports and produce available for the domestic market.

More detailed information on the destination countries for fruit exports as recorded in the overseas trade statistics are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Production and export data for fruit for 2004

Thousand tonnes

2004 data	*England and Wales*	*UK*
Apples		
Home Production Marketed	137.6	172.4
Exports	—	17.7
Available for domestic market	—	154.7
Pears		
Home Production Marketed	22.7	22.7
Exports	—	2.4
Available for domestic market	—	20.3
Plums		
Home Production Marketed	13.6	13.6
Exports	—	1.0
Available for domestic market	—	12.6
Cherries		
Home Production Marketed	1.0	1.0
Exports	—	0.2
Available for domestic market	—	0.8
Strawberries		
Home Production Marketed	41.2	50.2
Exports	—	0.2
Available for domestic market	—	50.0
Raspberries		
Home Production Marketed	6.6	9.1
Exports	—	0.0
Available for domestic market	—	9.1

Table 1: Production and export data for fruit for 2004

Thousand tonnes

2004 data	*England and Wales*	*UK*
Blackcurrants		
Home Production Marketed	17.3	19.3
Exports	—	0.0
Available for domestic market	—	19.3
Other soft fruit		
Home Production Marketed	4.3	5.1
Exports	—	0.2
Available for domestic market	—	4.9

Notes:
1. Includes re-exports
2. Calculated as home production marketed less exports

Table 2: UK exports of fruit for 2004

Description	*Tonnes*
Apples	
Irish Republic	10,794
Netherlands	3,989
Germany	1,462
Belgium	1,117
France	316
Other	45
Apples total	17,724
Plums	
Irish Republic	615
Netherlands	360
Other	8
Plums total	983
Cherries	
Irish Republic	116
Netherlands	33
Germany	31
Other	33
Cherries total	213
Pears	
Irish Republic	1,777
Netherlands	305
Belgium	198
Other	106
Pears total	2,387
Other soft fruits	
Barbados	70
Spain	39
Cayman Islands	14
Dubai	14
Other	48
Other soft fruits total	157
Raspberries	
Hungary	21
Irish Republic	17
Other	0
Raspberries total	38
Strawberries	
Irish Republic	159
Hungary	13
Other	6
Strawberries total	177
Grand total	21,678

G8 Summit (Gleneagles)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will *(a)* place in the Library and *(b)* post on the departmental website papers submitted by (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) other national delegations and (iii) international organisations to the meeting convened by the United Kingdom presidency of the G8 to follow up the proposals from Gleneagles on climate change, held in London on 1 and 2 November. [25477]

Mr. Morley: There were no official papers submitted by the UK Government on the follow up to the 1 November Meeting of the Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development. The meeting was an informal process aimed at sharing ideas on how to implement the plan of action and tackle the problems of climate change, clean energy and sustainable development between countries. A set of draft conclusions on how the UK Government viewed the dialogue meeting can be found on the No. 10 website.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps have been taken to implement the G8 Gleneagles plan of action; what steps have been taken in conjunction with *(a)* the World Bank, *(b)* the International Energy Agency and *(c)* other international bodies; and what jobs she expects to be created in (i) the United Kingdom and (ii) Blaenau Gwent as a result of the plan. [25852]

Mr. Morley: The UK has started work on a survey of activities underway to implement the plan of action. Highlights so far include:

Consolidated support for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership. Defra will be providing a further £2.5 million pounds per year in 2006-07 and 2007-08. In addition, the FCO will be providing funding of £1 million in 2006-07 and 2007-08 giving a total of £6 million from the UK over the coming two years.

Increased co-operation on specific CCS projects with China and India, including EU-China, Canadian and US initiatives.

Dialogues with Latin America and China on low carbon investment strategies under way.

Active participation by G8 in Italian-led Global Bioenergy Partnership, due to be formally launched in 2006.

High level of support from industry and Government for the UK's Environmentally Friendly Vehicles conference in November 2005.

Since July, the IEA Governing Board approved the G8 work programme and we have managed to secure funding commitments of €3 million, 60 per cent. of the total funding required. The IEA work programme includes new work on efficiency in buildings, appliances and transport including outreach to the +5, as well as new links to the World Bank and Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum on best practice in coal-fired power stations and accelerating the use of carbon capture and storage (CCS).

The World Bank is working to create a framework for investment in cleaner energy technologies and in measures necessary for adaptation, involving the private sector and the regional development banks. Consultations on this framework are well underway with initial findings due to be presented to the World Bank Spring meetings next year.

As a result of this increased investment, we can expect jobs to grow in the environmental technology industry in areas such as renewables and energy efficiency. Defra has not conducted any quantitative research on the creation of new jobs, nor any analysis of regional distribution.

Intensive Chicken Farms

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects of intensive chicken rearing farms on those living nearby; and if she will make a statement. [24166]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities, as part of their local air quality management duties under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 are required to assess the effects of any local emission source against health-based national objectives for seven airborne pollutants. Local authority assessments are ongoing but, to date, no local authorities have identified the need to declare an air quality management area in the vicinity of intensive chicken rearing farms.

It is the duty of the local authority under section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to take reasonable steps to investigate complaints of "any dust, steam, smell or other effluvia arising on industrial, trade or business premises and being prejudicial to health or a nuisance". If the investigating environmental health practitioner is satisfied that a statutory nuisance is present, the local authority must serve an abatement notice requiring that the activity causing the nuisance cease or is restricted. Those against whom the abatement notice has been served will have 21 days in which to appeal against the notice in the local magistrates court. If no appeal is made, or if the appeal is unsuccessful, the abatement notice will remain in force. The fine for non-compliance to an abatement notice is a maximum of £20,000 for industrial, trade or business premises upon summary conviction.

Under section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 complainants can take private action through the local magistrates court in order to deal with odour nuisance. If such a case were successful, the court would order an abatement of the nuisance and may award costs to the complainant, although this is not a requirement.

Intensive livestock units will be subject to environmental regulation for the first time under the integrated pollution prevention and control ('IPPC') regime. IPPC will ensure that the environmental and health impacts of poultry farms housing more than 40,000 birds is assessed and minimised. The IPPC regime will also help to ensure a common basis for the prevention and control of pollution from intensive livestock units across Europe. The application window for intensive livestock units is from 1 November 2006 to January 2007.

Liver Fluke

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the incidence of liver fluke in each of the last five years. [25503]

Mr. Bradshaw: Liver fluke is not a notifiable disease and so there are no records of total numbers of cases occurring nationally. The Veterinary Laboratories Agency retain records of the number of diagnoses made in samples which have been submitted to its laboratories in England and Wales in its Farmfile/Veterinary Investigation Diagnosis Analysis (VIDA) database.

The total number of liver fluke diagnoses recorded are:

	Cattle	*Sheep*
2000	393	131
2001	366	91
2002	373	164
2003	468	167
2004	348	91

Micro-generation Power Supplies

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to encourage the use of crops for energy in micro-generation power supplies; and if she will make a statement. [26255]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The Government support the use of energy crops in micro-generation power plants. We are working closely with industry and others to develop markets and promote uptake. DTI and the big lottery fund's bio-energy capital grants scheme has allocated £66 million of funding to develop end-use markets for biomass, including small-scale combined heat and power plants. The Community Renewables Initiative's local support teams are working to develop local projects in their areas. Support is also available to develop heat projects.

The Biomass Task Force, led by Sir Ben Gill, was set up to identify the barriers to developing biomass energy, including energy crops, and to recommend ways to overcome the problems. Their report was published in October and a number of their recommendations are relevant to micro-generation. The Government have committed themselves to publishing a full response to the report within the next six months.

Single Payment Plan

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure that farmers will receive their entitlements in time to complete their Single Payment Plan applications for 2 April and 15 May transfer deadlines. [25586]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is responsible for implementing the Single Payment Scheme and making payments in England. RPA intends to issue definitive entitlement statements as soon as practical, following the validation of the 120,000 claims made to the 2005 scheme. RPA remains on target to issue entitlement statements in advance of the notification deadlines established for the 2006 scheme.

Stewardship Scheme

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will authorise the manual processing of all higher level stewardship applications which have been submitted within existing departmental guidelines. [26257]

Jim Knight: A delay with the new IT system in support of Environmental Stewardship has meant that a 1 November start date for the initial higher level stewardship applicants has not been possible.

In the interim, all higher level stewardship applications are being processed on a manual basis as far as possible, however regulatory requirements mean that agreements must be properly cross-checked and validated with other agreement data and Single Payment Scheme declarations. As there are numerous options available under higher level stewardship, this complex part of the process can only be undertaken through the IT system. As a consequence of these IT system delays, it is now our intention that the first higher level agreements will come into force on 1 February 2006.

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for public consultation on plans to upgrade the A21 between Flimwell and Hurst Green. [27218]

Dr. Ladyman: A public consultation was held from November 2002 to March 2003 on proposals to upgrade the A21 between Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst and between Flimwell and Robertsbridge. The Preferred Route was announced in February 2005 and an information exhibition was held at Hurst Green Village Hall on 4 March 2005.

A further meeting has been scheduled for 28 November 2005, chaired by the Hurst Green Parish Council Chairman, where the Highways Agency will discuss, with individual groups, the plans to upgrade the A21 between Flimwell and Hurst Green. As part of the scheme development, there will be further discussions with key stakeholders and local interest groups.

Cycle Lanes

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of cycle lanes are due to be established in the next *(a)* 12 months, *(b)* five years and *(c)* 10 years. [26533]

Derek Twigg: Local highway authorities forecast they will establish 327 km of cycle lanes in 2005–06. Local authorities intentions for future years will be set out in their 2nd Local Transport Plans which are being finalised and will be submitted to the Department at the end of March 2006.

Light Rail Systems

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the environmental effects of light rail systems. [26248]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* It is for scheme promoters to undertake a detailed assessment of the environmental effects of their light rail scheme, as part of their bid for major scheme funding. The Department takes account of environmental effects on a scheme by scheme basis.

M3

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles use *(a)* junction 6 and *(b)* junction 7 of the M3 motorway each day; and what he estimates the capacity of each junction to be. [26398]

Dr. Ladyman: Traffic counts were carried out at the southern roundabout of junction 6 in September 2005 during morning and evening peak periods. From these it is estimated that between 55,000 and 75,000 vehicles per day use the roundabout. The capacity of the roundabout is approximately 5,500 vehicles per hour, but capacity is very sensitive to traffic flow patterns.

There have been no recent traffic counts for the roundabout at junction 7.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the daily number of vehicles which will use *(a)* junction 6 and *(b)* junction 7 of the M3 motorway in (i) five years, (ii) 10 years and (iii) 15 years, based on (A) current house building plans and (B) the South East of England Assembly plans for increased house building. [26400]

Dr. Ladyman: No recent estimates have been made of the daily numbers of vehicles using junctions 6 and 7 of the M3 in the future. However, at the public local inquiry, held earlier this year, into the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan Review, the Highways Agency concluded that, in 2016, the peak flow between junctions 6 and 7 would be around 5,400 vehicles per hour in either direction.

Traffic flows on the M3 between junctions 6 and 7 based on the South East of England Regional Assembly's current proposals for house building will depend upon the future location of housing and other factors such as the future regional transport strategy, all of which are subject to ongoing discussion between the Assembly and regional stakeholders. The Highways Agency is continuing to contribute to deliberations on the draft South East Plan.

Maritime Rescue

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were rescued by HM Coastguard working together with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution in each of the last 30 years, broken down by region. [25599]

Dr. Ladyman: The numbers of persons rescued by HM Coastguard, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution or other search and rescue facilities during the period 2000–04 is shown in the table.

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Scotland and NI region	1,184	1,022	1,394	1,245	1,624
Wales and west of England Region	1,364	1,376	2,075	2,194	1,888
East of England region	780	815	2,382	2,250	1,764
Southern region	1,889	1,639	—	—	—
Total persons rescued	5,217	4,852	5,851	5,689	5,276

In 2002, the former southern region was divided and the two parts incorporated into the Wales and west and eastern regions. Comparable information for the period prior to 2000 is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Ports

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) on how many occasions Transec has recorded a breach of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code since its introduction; [24197]

(2) whether *(a)* a physical port assessment and *(b)* a ship verification inspection conducted by the Transport Security Directorate in the last 12 months has resulted in suspension of operations. [24214]

Dr. Ladyman: It is not our policy to comment on, or provide information relating to, the compliance of individual ships or port facilities for security reasons.

Rail Passengers Council

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the work of the Rail Passengers Council will be reviewed; and when these reviews will take place. [26536]

Derek Twigg: As part of the Department's role in sponsoring the Rail Passengers Council (RPC), Ministers and officials regularly discuss with the RPC their work and performance. The Department also has a role in agreeing the RPC's corporate and business plans, including performance targets, and these plans will be published in early 2006. In addition, the RPC is required to publish an annual report and accounts which will give details of their work during a particular financial year.

In the longer term, in accordance with Cabinet Office guidance on 'lighter touch' reviews of non-departmental public bodies, the work and role of the RPC will be reviewed on a five yearly basis. These reviews will ensure that the RPC is delivering effectively against its aims and objectives. The first review of the RPC will take place in 2009–10.

Railways

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's *(a)* policy is on and *(b)* funding allocation is to a direct rail service from London to Sunderland. [25513]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport has no plans at present to sponsor the introduction of a direct service between London and Sunderland.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many operational arrangements have been established by the Rail Accident and Investigation Branch; and with which organisations. [26530]

Derek Twigg: The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has established a number of operational agreements to ensure that it is able to effectively carry out its investigations.

A Memorandum of Understanding for investigation in England and Wales has been drawn up between the British Transport Police (BTP), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Association of Chief Police Officers and the RAIB. A similar Memorandum has been agreed for Scotland with the BTP, the HSE, the RAIB, the Association of Chief Police Officers (Scotland) and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. A further Memorandum of Understanding has between agreed between the RAIB, the Crown Prosecution service and the Air and Marine Accident Investigation Branches.

A Memorandum of Understanding is being established with BEATT, RAIB's French equivalent in readiness for RAIB becoming operational for the Channel Tunnel in January (2006).

While industry has the responsibility to implement the necessary arrangements to comply with the Rail (Accident Investigation and reporting) Regulations 2005, RAIB has published guidance and met with industry representatives and discussed these issues in order to facilitate this process.

Road Safety

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of his Department's budget has been allocated to road safety initiatives in financial year 2005–06. [24977]

Dr. Ladyman: Around £45 million has been allocated in 2005–06 to specific initiatives related to road safety, this represents 0.4 per cent. of the Department's Expenditure Limit of £12 billion. In addition, much of the expenditure by the Highways Agency and local authorities, which is funded through block funding by the Department, contributes to road safety.

Safety Cameras

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements are made for using the revenue raised from speed cameras. [27116]

Dr. Ladyman: Revenue raised from speed cameras can be used to fund safety cameras operating within the National Safety Camera Programme. In order to participate in the "netting off" arrangement, partnerships must comply with the strict criteria set out in the "Handbook of Rules and Guidance for the National Safety Camera Programme for England and Wales for 2005–06", which is published on the DfT website.

"Netting-off" means that the costs associated with the deployment and operation of safety cameras and the detection and enforcement of offences detected by cameras can be reclaimed from the receipts generated by the fines. The receipts are passed to the Department for Transport (DfT) and DfT reimburses the safety camera partnerships for approved expenditure incurred.

Any surplus fine revenue is paid to the Consolidated Fund at HM Treasury.

Fine revenue from cameras operating outside of the National Safety Camera Programme is passed directly to the Treasury.

Walking

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what walking activity targets have been set by each local authority. [26537]

Derek Twigg: No mandatory indicators for walking are required in either the first or second local transport plans (LTPs). However, some local authorities have set targets either as local targets within their LTPs or as part of local public service agreements. Data on these targets are not collected centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by the Law Officer's Departments; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22572]

The Solicitor-General: None of the Departments for which I am responsible are currently engaged in any form of formal public consultation. However, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) headquarters is currently preparing a policy statement and guidance on the transmission of serious sexual diseases and will offer this for formal public consultation for a period of six weeks between February and March 2006.

CPS areas may be engaged in consultations locally. However, the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost (code of practice on Access to Government Information, part 2, clause 9).

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23794]

The Solicitor-General: I superintend the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO), Treasury Solicitor's Department (TSol) and HM CPS Inspectorate (HMCPSI). The Departments employ a variety of methods for assessing literacy and numeracy skills, dependent on their particular needs and the grade and specialism of the person being recruited.

Crown Prosecution Service

A variety of assessment methods are used for example, shortlisting application forms; undertaking competence based interviews; and/or using other selection methodology such as assessment centres, ability testing or job simulation exercises. These can include presentations, case studies, in-tray exercises and group discussions.

Treasury Solicitor's Department

TSol recruits both qualified and trainee lawyers, all of whom have to be qualified to degree level. In recruiting administrative staff they are either required to be qualified to at least GCSE level or have demonstrated relevant skills, including literacy and numeracy, in previous employment, which are essential to be able to undertake administrative work in the department.

Serious Fraud Office

The SFO uses a number of recognised tools to assess both literacy and numeracy skills for both internal and external applicants. These are supplied by SHL Ltd. and take the form of online and hard copy ability tests which assess verbal and numerical critical reasoning. They used to assess applicants below grade 7. Applicants at grade 7 and above are asked to demonstrate a wider range of skills through a number of work specific assessments.

HM CPS Inspectorate

HMCPSI's recruitment is based on assessing candidates against a person specification. Literacy and numeracy skills are not routinely the subject of formal assessment but for some posts for example HM Inspectors and HM Assistant Inspectors the recruitment process usually includes a report writing exercise. While this is mainly focused on the candidates ability to analyse information and draw conclusions from it, it is also used to ensure they are competent in written communication generally and the drafting of reports in particular.

Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office

RCPO has only been in existence since April 2005. No specific assessment methodologies are used at present.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23416]

The Solicitor-General: Of the Departments for which I am responsible, no records have been identified of requests by staff for literacy and numeracy training from the Treasury Solicitor's Departments, the Serious Fraud Office, the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office and HM CPS Inspectorate.

For the CPS no information is held regarding individual requests. Areas may fund individuals to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and some have relationships with local colleges and Learning Skills Councils, but this is usually for level 3 and above as there is little need for levels 1 or 2.

Parachute Regiment (Prosecutions)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Attorney-General was consulted by the Army Prosecution Authority before the prosecution of the seven recently acquitted members of the Parachute Regiment took place; and if he will make a statement. [27055]

The Solicitor-General: The Army Prosecuting Authority took the decision that there should be prosecutions in this case. As three of the accused were no longer serving soldiers it was not possible to prosecute them by court martial without the express consent of the Attorney-General, in accordance with section 132A of the Army Act 1955. The APA sought the Attorney-General's views on the appropriate jurisdiction and his consent to prosecute those three soldiers advising that they considered that there was a realistic prospect of conviction against all the accused on a joint charge of murder and a second charge of violent disorder.

The Attorney-General accepted the advice that there was sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and granted his consent to the prosecution of the three soldiers as required. He did not provide advice on the case.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry where the 0.2 per cent. of telephone lines in England which at present cannot get broadband are located. [26962]

Alun Michael: I am unable to add further to the answer I provided on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 476W, namely that the information is not available in the form requested.

BSkyB

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what formal representations BSkyB has made to the Office of Fair Trading in each year since 1997; [23214]

(2) what formal representations have been made to the Office of Fair Trading concerning BSkyB in each year since 1997. [23215]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Having consulted the Office of Fair Trading I understand this information is not held in a form that would make it possible to answer this question without incurring disproportionate cost. OFT stores information by individual cases or mergers, not by the parties that submit representations.

Company Directors

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the number of 16 and 17-year-olds who would opt to become a company director should the legal age be reduced to 16 years; and how many company directors there are aged 18 years. [27000]

Alun Michael: There is no minimum age for company directors and therefore no proposal to reduce the legal age, as implied in the question. The Company Law Reform Bill introduces a minimum age, 16, for an individual person to be a director. The Bill also contains a clause which confers on the Secretary of State power to make regulations specifying the circumstances in which someone under 16 may be the director of a company. As to the number of company directors there are aged 18 years, this cannot be ascertained without disproportionate cost noting that the records do not easily distinguish between those directors that are corporate bodies and those who are individual people.

Departmental Staff (Relocation)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 following the Lyons Review; where they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [25076]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The information is as follows.

(a) In 2004–05 the Department relocated 171 posts against a target of 85 posts by 31 March 2008. Posts have been relocated to; Sheffield, Billingham, Belfast, Cumbria, Cardiff, Manchester and Newport.

(b) So far in 2005–06 a further 23 posts have been relocated to Cardiff, Newport and Belfast. A further tranche of 491 relocations are planned to take place up to 31 March 2010. Locations include; Manchester, Sheffield and Glasgow with further locations to be confirmed once detailed plans are finalised.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many full-time equivalent employee reductions have been made as a result of the Gershon review; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* total value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [25080]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* DTI is making good progress toward meeting the SR04 headcount reduction of 1,010. As of 1 October 2005 headcount had been reduced by 720 posts including 80 in Government offices. UKTI has reduced headcount by 94 posts towards its target of 200. Further progress will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report.

(a) (i) Cost savings achieved relating to IT projects in 2004–05 are not held. There are however (ii) expected efficiency savings of a least £7.3 million as detailed in the Departmental efficiency technical note (ETN) to be realised in 2007–08.

(b) For the total value of efficiency savings achieved in 2004–05 (i) progress will be reported in the Department's autumn performance report and for those expected to be achieved in 2005–06 (ii) the Department has an efficiency forecast saving of £129.8 million for 2005–06 as detailed in the ETN.

Grocery Trade

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individual responses his Department has made in the last 12 months to *(a)* members of the public, *(b)* commercial organisations, *(c)* hon. Members and *(d)* other bodies in response to inquiries, questions and representations about (i) the grocery trade and (ii) Tesco; and if he will make a statement. [26877]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department currently handles around 50,000 letters a year and approximately 200,000 e-mails on a wide range of issues. Further breakdown in the form requested is not available.

IT Projects

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list for each IT project his Department has undertaken since May 1997 which has incurred a total expenditure of £5 million or more *(a)* the name of the project, *(b)* its intended purpose, *(c)* the principal contractors involved and the payments made to each, *(d)* the original estimate of the cost of the project, *(e)* the actual outturn of expenditure on the project, *(f)* the intended date on which the project was to be fully implemented, *(g)* the actual date on which it was fully implemented or cancelled, *(h)* modifications which have been made to the project since it was first commissioned, *(i)* contractors on the project whose contracts have been cancelled, *(j)* replacement or additional contractors on the project, *(k)* the most reliable estimate of public expenditure saved as a result of implementing the project and *(l)* the most reliable estimates of improved performance of departmental functions as a result of implementing the project. [20622]

Alan Johnson: During the period May 1997 to the present the Department's IT services have been provided through a PFI agreement with Fujitsu Services. This covers desktop services, web infrastructure services, documents management and HR systems. However, due to a change in the Department's accounting system during 2003–04 and the devolved nature of the ICT, consistent data on all the information requested cannot be obtained without disproportionate cost.

Mobile Phones

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of ways of increasing mobile phone coverage in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [26586]

Alun Michael: Regulation of the mobile market is a matter for the independent regulator Ofcom and Ofcom is accountable to Parliament rather than to Ministers for the way it carries out that regulation. One of Ofcom's duties is ensuring that a wide range of electronic communications services—including high speed data services—is available throughout the UK. Assessment of how to fulfil this duty falls to the regulator. Ofcom's annual report and annual plan include details of its actions to do so.

Mobile phone coverage in the UK stands at around 98–99 per cent. of populated areas. Rollout of networks is a matter for the mobile operators, but the Government believe that competition between networks has been the spur to coverage reaching this level, and will provide incentives for further investment in the networks, potentially including further geographical coverage.

Pirate Radio Stations

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful prosecutions for the unauthorised transmission of radio signals there have been in each of the last five years; [25681]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of pirate radio stations broadcasting within *(a)* London and *(b)* the UK; [25682]

(3) what discussions he has had with Ofcom on reducing the number of pirate radio stations in operation. [25683]

Alun Michael: The matter raised is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. Accordingly, my officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member and to send me a copy of his response. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will also be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Transsexual People

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on protection against discrimination for transsexual people in the provision of goods and services. [25613]

Meg Munn: The Government will address the issue of protection against discrimination for transsexual people in the provision of goods and services as part of the Discrimination Law Review.

Unsolicited Mail

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what rights consumers have to opt out of hand-delivered unsolicited mail. [26096]

Barry Gardiner: By registering with the mailing preference service (MPS) individuals who object to receiving unsolicited mail can have their details removed from mailing lists to reduce the amount of addressed advertising literature they receive. The MPS is not designed to stop unaddressed items of mail, direct mail delivered to the door or the delivery of free newspapers. Mail addressed to 'occupant', 'resident' or 'homeowner' is also not covered under the MPS.

Those who wish to stop mailings from organisations that are not part of the MPS or with whom they already have a relationship, such as a bank or building society, must contact respective organisations direct.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Algeria

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the British Government *(a)* have taken and *(b)* is taking to restore peace and democracy in Algeria. [25901]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

We continue to work with the Algerian Government to promote peace and democracy and are committed to the development of closer counter terrorism co-operation with the Algerian authorities. Algerian officials have recently visited the UK to study UK counter terrorism structures. We have welcomed the participation of the Algerian people in the national referendum on the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. We hope that, based upon consultations with its people, Algeria will achieve lasting peace and reconciliation based on the rule of law and respect for human rights.

On 27–28 November we will be co-hosting with Spain the EuroMed Tenth Anniversary Summit in Barcelona, which will be an important opportunity to help the EU's Mediterranean Partners, including Algeria, to address the challenges of the 21st century, including good governance.

Commonwealth Development Corporation

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the rate of return was of former Commonwealth Development Corporation Investments in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa in each year since 1997. [26357]

Hilary Benn: Details of the rates of return on the Commonwealth Development Corporation's (CDC)s investments in Sub-Saharan Africa in each year between 1999 and 2004 are shown in the table. The CDC did not hold any investments in the Middle East during this period. Data are only available on a consistent basis from 1999 when the CDC became a public limited company.

Sub-Saharan Africa

	Percentage
1999	11.4
2000	(3.5)
2001	(8.0)
2002	14.3
2003	23.2
2004	19.3

Note:
Figures in brackets represent a negative return.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what profits the Commonwealth Development Corporation made on investments in *(a)* Asia, *(b)* South America, *(c)* the Middle East and *(d)* Africa in each year since 1997. [26371]

Hilary Benn: Details of the profits the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) made on its investments in Asia, South America and Africa in each year between 1999 and 2004 are shown in the following table. The CDC did not hold any investments in the Middle East during this period. Data are only available on a consistent basis from 1999 when the CDC became a public limited company.

$ million

	Asia	*Americas*	*Africa*
1999	27.5	25.5	38.6
2000	7.2	(13.0)	(12.6)
2001	(5.1)	(54.4)	(19.8)
2002	33.3	(2.2)	29.8
2003	58.6	(41.9)	44.1
2004	58.5	32.0	60.7

Note:
Figures in brackets represent a loss

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23469]

Mr. Thomas: During the period between 2004–05, the Department for International Development did not accrue any expenditure on the purchasing of items of art.

Forestry

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the UK has made available in each of the last 10 years to help developing countries with forestry programmes and re-forestation projects; and what proportion of the total international development budget that figure represented in each year. [23058]

Hilary Benn: The following table gives DFID's expenditure on forestry for the 10 year period from 1995–96 to 2004–05. It also gives DFID's expenditure on forestry as a percentage of expenditure on bilateral aid and as a percentage of total DFID expenditure on development.

DFID also makes contributions to multilateral institutions some of whose funding will also help developing countries with forestry programmes and reforestation projects.

DFID expenditure on forestry: 1995–96 to 2004–05

£000

	Total forestry spending	*Total GPEX on Bilateral Aid*	*Total GPEX on Development*	*Forestry as percentage of total on Bilateral Aid*	*Forestry as percentage of total on Development*
1995–96	21,705	1,418,381	2,634,465	1.53	0.82
1996–97	20,823	1,281,571	2,414,793	1.62	0.86
1997–98	15,162	1,438,684	2,529,815	1.05	0.60
1998–99	13,305	1,379,719	2,656,802	0.96	0.50
1999–2000	17,941	1,660,868	2,977,597	1.08	0.60
2000–01	19,865	1,757,823	3,231,282	1.13	0.61
2001–02	17,321	1,990,607	3,477,460	0.87	0.50
2002–03	18,885	2,516,333	4,146,992	0.75	0.46
2003–04	18,462	2,597,740	4,712,900	0.71	0.39
2004–05	19,342	2,800,467	4,822,795	0.69	0.40

Note:
GPEX = Total Gross Public Expenditure

Microbicide Development Programme

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to extend the grant to the Microbicide Development Programme beyond 31December 2006; and what progress has been made on the development of the revised EC programme of action to tackle HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria through external action between 2007 and 2011. [26005]

Hilary Benn: DFID is currently providing a grant of £16 million to 31 September 2006 to the Microbicide Development Programme (MDP) co-ordinated by the Medical Research Councils Clinical Trials Unit and Imperial College. A proposal to allow an extension of the work of the MDP to complete a Phase III trial of the leading candidate microbicide Pro 2000 has been now been agreed with DFID providing £23.8 million of additional funding.

The Programme for Action to tackle HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria through external action between 2007 and 2011 was agreed in May 2005. The Commission is currently working on a roadmap with the objective of translating the commitments made into deliverables. Discussions have been on-going via an EU Health Experts Network Group and it is expected that agreement will be reached next year. Funding for the Programme for Action has yet to be agreed under the new Financial Perspectives.

Nigeria

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid has been allocated to Nigeria to assist with the development of democratic government. [25900]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development is committed to assisting Nigeria to develop more effective democratic governance to eliminate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Between November 2000 and December 2008 £101.85 million has been allocated to programmes aimed at helping Nigeria to develop the institutions and processes necessary for effective democratic governance. These include a £7 million programme of support to the 2007 Elections and technical assistance of £2.65 million to the Nigerian Parliament. Other support includes assistance to a government-led Public Sector Reform programme, technical assistance to state and local governments and support to civil society to better represent the interests of Nigerians and engage more constructively with government.

Background table of current active programmes:

Programme	*Begin date*	*End date*	*Allocation (£ million)*
Support to the 2007 Elections	March 2005	March 2008	7
Support to the National Assembly	April 2005	March 2008	2.65
Security, Justice and Growth	October 2001	March 2007	30
State and Local Government	November 2000	March 2007	22.8
Public Service Reform	April 2005	December 2008	19

Background table of current active programmes:

Programme	*Begin date*	*End date*	*Allocation (£ million)*
Service Delivery Initiative	November 2004	June 2007	7.5
Support to the Nigerian Census	November 2004	December 2006	7.5
Voices: Using Radio Programming to Explore Governance Issues	August 2003	August 2006	5.4

Papua New Guinea

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the international support available to Papua New Guinea to meet costs incurred in caring for refugees from West Papua. [26217]

Mr. Thomas: International support for West Papuan refugees in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is provided through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Their priorities are to regularise the status of refugees, to strengthen the capacity of the PNG institutions to meet refugees basic needs and to promote self reliance and integration. DFID has undertaken no separate assessment of needs.

Sierra Leone

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 431–2W, on Sierra Leone, if his Department will retract its planned support for a communications project to support the Sierra Leone National Commission for Privatisation and offer to assist with a public consultation project that gives information about both public and private water sector models; and when his Department expects a decision to be made on whether Guma Valley Water Company will be reformed under a public or private sector model. [25979]

Hilary Benn: The planned support is to assist with public consultation that gives information on all options for reform and assesses the best ways to improve the performance of 24 enterprises including the Guma Valley Water Company. There is currently no presumption as to the final option of reform for the Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC). The National Commission for Privatisation (NCP) has a much wider scope than looking at privatisation alone, which as stated by the NCP, may indeed not be a practical option in the case of GVWC. The NCP intends to consider a range of options including both public and private sector participation. DFID's assistance is to help ensure good quality public consultation with provision of accurate and balanced information across a range of sectors. This will help towards the overall transparency and accountability of the reform process. The consultation will include local civil society organisations, with a good knowledge of conditions in Freetown.

DFID will not decide on what model will be used to reform the GVWC; that is a matter for the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL). However there is an urgent need to reform and rehabilitate the GVWC, the GoSL lacks the resources to do this alone. The scope and nature of the possible role of the private sector, and the full range of options available to achieve GOSL's objectives, have yet to be evaluated. DFID's programme of support is intended to ensure the NCP has adequate resources to make informed decisions about the reform of the GVWC as well as the other enterprises in its portfolio.

DFID assistance is in direct response to a GoSL request to build capacity of the NCP, and help ensure transparent processes with correct procedures and regulation are put into place. No final decision on the future shape of GVWC would be expected before 2008.

Workers Rights

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to improve the rights of working people in developing countries; what changes have been made; and if he will make a statement. [26098]

Mr. Thomas: The effective implementation of workers rights can play an important part in the reduction of poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Government have current commitments of over £46 million to support activities to improve treatment of workers in developing countries, including the elimination of child labour and trafficking for forced labour. This is primarily channelled through the International Labour Organisation (ILO) but also supports the work of non-governmental organisations, trade unions and business.

There is a long way to go but changes are being achieved. For example the project for the elimination of child labour in Andhra Pradesh India, which DFID funds through the ILO, has reported the near total elimination of child labour in its initial pilot district. This project is now being extended to more districts. Another example is the increased number of companies joining the Ethical Trading Initiative, which DFID has supported since it began. These companies make a commitment to implement a labour code of conduct through their supply chains and to working with trade unions and non-governmental organisations to improve the lives of working people around the world.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Council

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with the Arts Council; and if she will make a statement. [25982]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met Sir Christopher Frayling, Chair of Arts Council England, on 26 May 2005 and will meet him again before the end of the year. I meet Sir Christopher and members of the Arts Council's senior executive team on a more regular basis.

Justices' Licences

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications there were for revocations of justices' licences issued under the Licensing Act 1964 in England and Wales in *(a)* 1992–95, *(b)* 1995–98, *(c)* 1998–2001 and *(d)* 2001–04; how many of these were (i) successful and (ii) unsuccessful; and if she will make a statement. [24121]

James Purnell: Data for the number of justices' licences revoked are collected every three years and are available for a 12 month period to the 30 June as detailed in the table:

Year to 30 June	*Total revocations*
1992	262
1995	378
1998	317
2001	183
2004	354

Source:
DCMS Statistical Bulletin: Liquor Licensing: England and Wales, July 2003-June 2004, Table 5.

Information is not available on the number of applications for revocation of justices' licences.

London Olympics

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether contracts to be granted in connection with the London Olympics 2012 will be subject to European Union rules in respect of public sector contracts. [17667]

Tessa Jowell: Procurement activities for the Olympic Games will take place within both a domestic and international legal framework, including European Procurement Directives. The Procurement Principles published by the interim Olympic Delivery Authority recognise the importance of maximising local benefits and the wider economic dividend, as well as bringing lasting economic, social and environmental benefits to London and the UK.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what changes have been made to the proposed budget for security for the 2012 Olympics since the London terrorist attacks. [25208]

Tessa Jowell: The security planning and budgeting for the 2012 Olympics have been robust and detailed. However, we cannot at this stage know exactly what the security situation will be in 2012. Over the next seven years we will keep the plans under review, informed by advice from the Metropolitan Police Service and the Security Services.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Olympic lottery tickets have been sold, broken down by region. [25486]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Camelot Group plc. have informed us that, as at the end of September 2005, some 10.2 million Olympic Lottery tickets had been sold. There is no breakdown available by region but the related scratchcards have been distributed to lottery retailers throughout the UK.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what person specification she has set for the job of Chief Executive of the Olympic Delivery Authority; and whether applicants will be required either to have worked previously on delivering an Olympic Games or to have been a participant in the Olympic Games. [25490]

Tessa Jowell: As the job description makes clear, the successful applicant for the job of Chief Executive of the Olympic Delivery Authority will be respected for their track record of delivery. They will be credible, persuasive, energetic, self-motivated, highly innovative and inspirational. They will be highly focused on the delivery of the venues, facilities and infrastructure for staging the Olympics and on the creation of lasting legacy for the nation and the communities in which the Games will take place. They will exhibit a high degree of probity and integrity and will lead by example. They will not be required to have worked previously on the delivery of an Olympic Games or to have participated in them.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had on appointing a representative of the British Paralympic Association to the Olympic organising committee for 2012. [25654]

Tessa Jowell: Paralympic Sport is well represented on the organising committee for 2012 with Mike Brace, the Chairman of the British Paralympic Association and Tony Sainsbury, President of the International Paralympic Committee both having seats on the Transitional Board of LOCOG.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what improvements are planned to Romford's sports facilities as a result of London's successful Olympic bid. [25875]

Mr. Caborn: London's Olympic bid provided details of planned improvements that were necessary to stage the Olympics. This did not include possible improvements to other sporting facilities as part of a wider effort to maximise the benefits of hosting the games.

Hosting the Olympics provides an opportunity to create a sporting legacy across the UK and relevant authorities in a number of regions across the UK are considering whether to develop sporting facilities as part of their plans to maximise the benefits of the UK hosting the games.

By 2006, Government and the national lottery will have committed over £1 billion to develop new or refurbished public sports facilities. This represents a considerable investment in our facilities infrastructure.

Sports facilities programmes such as Active England, New Opportunities for PE and Sport, and the Community Club Development Programme have already supported the development of over 4,000 new or refurbished sports facilities.

Romford facilities that have benefited from such investment include the Central Park Leisure Centre, which officially opened to the public on 13 November 2004, which was part funded by a Sport England lottery grant of £4.244 million.

Online Gambling

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures are being taken to ensure that children do not undertake online gambling. [25871]

Mr. Caborn: Under the current legislation British licensed operators are permitted to offer betting on-line. These operators are subject to the same regulation as bricks and mortar bookmakers, including the existing prohibitions and penalties relating to underage betting. A bookmaker in breach of these prohibitions is a risk of both losing his licence and prosecution. On-line casinos, however, cannot be based in Great Britain under existing legislation. As a result they currently operate off-shore and beyond British jurisdiction. This was one of the major reasons why the Government decided to introduce the Gambling Act 2005.

The protection of children from being harmed or exploited by gambling is one of the key objectives of the Gambling Act, and it contains a package of measures aimed at preventing children from gambling.

Most importantly the Act provides a new regulatory regime for on-line gambling. For the first time on-line casino operators will be able to be licensed in this country, and as such subject to strict licence conditions.

These conditions will include explicit provisions on social responsibility, including 'know your customer' requirements and the use, by on-line gambling operators, of age verification systems.

These conditions will be enforced by the new Gambling Commission, which came into existence in October this year, with robust powers to investigate and ultimately withdraw licences and prosecute those in breach of the law. The Gambling Commission will be proactive in this regard, and the Act allows the Commission or the police to use children to test the robustness of a gambling operator's age verification systems.

Under the Gambling Act it will be an offence for a licensed on-line operator to invite or permit a child or young person to participate in on-line gambling, including all casino gambling. Some very limited exceptions allow 16 to 18-year-olds to take part in on-line football pools or purchase a lottery ticket. It will also be an offence for anyone in the UK to bring gambling advertising to the attention of a person under the age of 18 years. Furthermore the Act will prevent any on-line operator based in a territory outside the European Economic Area from advertising in the UK, unless that territory has be specified by the Secretary of State in regulation. The Government believe that this will prevent UK citizens from being exposed to a large number of operators based in territories which do not offer the same protections to children and young people.

The Act also introduces several new provisions designed to prevent children and young people from gambling, including providing that a young person of 16–17 years old will him/herself commit an offence if he/she gambles. In addition, a licensed gambling operator who, for whatever reason, permits a person under the age of 18 to gamble will have to return the stake gambled to that child or young person. Operators, however, will have no rights to reclaim any winnings awarded. While we expect that the British licensed industry will readily maintain the very highest standards, we believe that this will act as a further incentive to operators to ensure that their age verification systems are robust.

The Gambling Act will be fully implemented in September 2007. In the meantime my Department is working closely with the international gambling industry to promote socially responsible practices now. The Remote Gambling Association, the trade association for remote gambling operators, will very shortly make compliance with their Social Responsibility Code of Practice a condition of membership. This Code includes specific conditions relating to age verification. The Gambling Commission will also active push for improvements in age verification systems and will work closely with software developers, gambling operators and the banking sector to do so. My Department is also looking at building on international links with regulators in other jurisdictions to work across borders to protect our citizens from exploitation from unscrupulous remote gambling operators.

The protection of children and young people from harm from gambling is a key priority for my Department. We remain dedicated to doing all we can under the existing legislation in preparation for the modern, more robust regime, the Gambling Act will introduce.

Public Entertainment Licences

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications for revocation of public entertainment licences there were in England and Wales in each year since 1994; how many of these were *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful; and if she will make a statement. [24133]

James Purnell: The statistics are not held centrally, but are held by each individual local authority.

Television Licences

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for what reason the monarch is exempt from the requirement to purchase a television licence; and whether this exemption extends to television sets in staff quarters. [25029]

James Purnell *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The BBC, as licensing authority, has responsibility for interpreting the television licensing legislation and determining licensing requirements in individual cases. However, my understanding is that the monarch is exempt from the television licensing requirements set out in the Communications Act 2003 under the general rule of constitutional law that an Act of Parliament does not bind the Crown unless and to the extent specified in the Act. Crown exemption would extend to servants of the Crown who install and use television on Crown premises for official purposes, but not to sets installed or used for recreational purposes or to sets installed for private use in staff living quarters.

The Royal Household has indicated that, notwithstanding Crown exemption, Her Majesty does in fact purchase licences for each of her official and private residences.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much revenue the fines from unpaid television licences generated in the last year for which figures are available; and what happens to the revenue. [25878]

James Purnell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 845–46W.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of people who operated televisions without a licence in each year since 1997. [25879]

James Purnell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 846W.

Tourism

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Chinese tourists have visited the UK in each month since January 2004. [25885]

James Purnell: Monthly data on the number of inbound visits to the UK from China have not been provided because of difficulties over the statistical reliability of results given the small sample size. The following table details total quarterly and annual visits since the start of 2004 from China and Hong Kong.

Total inbound visits from China

	Visits (thousand)
Q1 (January-March)	18
Q2 (April-June)	14
Q3 (July-September)	35
Q4 (October-December)	28
2004	95
Q1 (January-March)	17
Q2 (April-June)	18
2005 (year to date)	35
Total inbound visits from Hong Kong	
Q1 (January-March)	36
Q2 (April-June)	25
Q3 (July-September)	57
Q4 (October-December)	29
2004	147
Q1 (January-March)	32
Q2 (April-June)	41
2005 (year to date)	73

Source:
International Passenger Survey (IPS), ONS

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the number of tourists visiting London before and after the 7 July terror attacks. [25886]

James Purnell: There are no figures available for the total numbers of tourists visiting London. London's tourism sector assesses its success in attracting visitors to the capital using a range of statistical resources including hotel occupancy figures, and the numbers of people visiting major tourist attractions.

Both hotel occupancy and visits to attractions fell following the bomb attacks in July, when compared both to the preceding months in 2005, and—more relevantly for the industry—with the same months in 2004. While hotel occupancy had recovered to its 2004 rates by September 2005, visits to major central London attractions are still to reach the levels achieved in 2004. Visit London estimates that visits to these attractions were down nearly 21 per cent. for the period July to September 2005, compared to 2004.

The Government, VisitBritain, and Visit London have been co-ordinating recovery work since July through the Tourism Industry Emergency Response Group. Economic forecasting commissioned by the group has projected that the negative effect of the bombings on the London economy may be as high as £500 million for the rest of 2005. However, that work also projects that the total turnovers of both the London and the UK tourism industries for the whole of 2005 will still be higher than those achieved in 2004.

Ultra-local Television

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact on the licence fee of BBC plans for the large-scale introduction of ultra-local television in medium-sized cities. [25342]

James Purnell: As stated in the Green Paper published in March of this year, we are currently undertaking a review of BBC funding in order to determine the future level of the licence fee. We will be taking all relevant factors into account and will make an announcement in due course.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Personal Injuries (Small Claims)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment has been made of the likely impact of the proposals to raise the personal injuries limit for small claims from £1,000 to £5,000. [26486]

Bridget Prentice: The Better Regulation Task Force in its report, 'Better Routes to Redress' recommended that research should be carried out into the potential impact of raising the small claims limit for personal injury cases from the current limit of £1,000. The Government indicated that it would carry out this research and would also consider other options for dealing with these claims in a more proportionate and cost effective way. That research is currently underway and consultation will take place on any proposals which may emerge.

DEFENCE

3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment (Incident)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the findings were of the Special Investigations Branch investigation of the incident of 13 May involving soldiers of the 3rd Battalion Parachute

Regiment in the officers' mess at Hyderbad Barracks, Colchester; how many soldiers have subsequently been charged with offences arising from the incident; and how many soldiers have been discharged. [25357]

Mr. Touhig: The Special Investigation Branch conducted a full investigation and found insufficient evidence to support the allegations made. Therefore, no soldiers have been charged with offences or discharged as a result of the investigation.

Ammunition

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to modify the CHARM 3 L27 depleted uranium kinetic energy round. [25100]

Mr. Ingram: We have no plans to modify the L27 CHARM 3 round.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 27 October, *Official Report*, column 518W, on ammunition manufacturers, whether BAE Systems Land Systems *(a)* manufactures the small arms ammunition in the UK and *(b)* is on a fixed term contract; what proportion that company's supplies represents of small arms ammunition supplied to British forces; and where the balance comes from. [25289]

Mr. Ingram: Small arms ammunition supplied to the Ministry of Defence by BAE Systems Land Systems (BAES LS) is manufactured in the UK at the Radway Green facility under the terms of the MOD/BAES LS Framework Partner Agreement. This 10 year agreement was signed in 2000.

BAES LS supply approximately 95 per cent. of the MOD's current small arms ammunition requirements. The balance is supplied from companies in Sweden, Israel, Finland, Germany, Canada, Norway and Belgium.

Armed Services

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of raising the minimum recruitment age on the ability of the armed services to meet recruitment targets. [26271]

Mr. Touhig: If the armed forces were required to raise minimum age of entry it would create serious manning problems, since 35 percent of all recruits in financial year 2004–05 were aged under 18. The services, in particular the Army, would be unable to man current structures and maintain current capabilities. It is probable that should minimum entry age be raised, the good quality candidates would settle into other careers and thus be lost to the services.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to investigate ways in which a broader pool of post-18 year-old recruits to the armed services might be attracted. [26272]

Mr. Touhig: Recruit marketing and advertising is both strategic and tactical and aimed at all ages within the target audience, but focused where necessary. Examples of initiatives specifically aimed at those aged 18 and over include:

- Graduate Recruitment Seminars
- University Bursaries
- Medical Cadetships
- Defence Training Undergraduate Scheme—specifically aimed at technical students
- Leadership and Development courses at Universities
- Sponsorship of students at Colleges of Further Education
- Golden Helios for Army Operational Pinch Point trades, e.g. Royal Engineers, Royal Logistics Corps, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Intelligence Corps and Amy Medical Services
- Recruiting visits by specialist teams to universities
- Others (e.g. Jobcentre Plus workshops, Adult Look at Life Courses, Careers Exhibitions).

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his definition of the target recruit population for the armed services is; and what groups or individuals are excluded. [26278]

Mr. Touhig: Armed forces employment is open to British, Commonwealth and Republic of Ireland citizens providing they meet the required entry eligibility standards. While marketing is aimed at those of pre-eligible age, eligibles, and parents/gatekeepers, the bulk of recruit marketing is targeted at the 16–24 age group.

Employment in cap-badged posts in the Royal Marines General Service, the Household Cavalry and Royal Armoured Corps, the Infantry, and the Royal Air Force Regiment are closed to women for reasons of combat effectiveness.

The armed forces also remains closed to those with unspent criminal convictions.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what means he monitors the practice of Phase I training establishments *(a)* in collecting information concerning the immediate family members of recruits and *(b)* providing contact details of welfare officers and commanding officers; and what steps he is taking to review this information at Phase II entry level. [26285]

Mr. Touhig: A study into current working welfare arrangements is currently being undertaken by the Defence Individual Training Capability Team in conjunction with the Service Personnel Policy area. The main part of their remit is to look closely at working welfare arrangements on training establishments.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* casualty notification officers and *(b)* casualty visiting officers are employed by the Army; what the course content of induction training for these posts is; and what the duration of training is for each. [26306]

Mr. Touhig: All brigade headquarters maintain a roster of available officers for Casualty Notification Officers and Visiting Officers duties. Numbers on the rosters vary but each headquarters will normally have about 50 Officers listed to carry out these duties.

Seminars/Study days are conducted by all brigade headquarters on a regular basis. They comprise of presentations and discussions on: casualty administrative

procedures; repatriation; funerals; pensions; Army Welfare Service; understanding bereavement (but not counselling); role of Army chaplains; and the investigation process.

The Army is developing a standardised training package covering all relevant issues which will be available to all headquarters and units by the end of March 2006.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he approved the issue of a guidance note dealing with the care and management of under-18s in the armed services; what the principal developments are that build upon existing practice and previous guidelines; what steps he has taken to circulate the note among *(a)* those responsible for implementing its recommendations and *(b)* under-18 recruits; how he will monitor the effectiveness of the guidelines; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [26276]

Mr. Touhig: A guidance note on care for the Service personnel under the age of 18, approved by the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, was issued to the Principal Personnel Officers of each of the three Services on 12 July 2005. This was then disseminated through the three Services' chains of command. The armed forces continuously monitor the effectiveness of the care given to under-18s. External inspection and audit provides further assurance.

A copy of the guidance note is available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to further his investigation of the feasibility of undertaking Criminal Records Bureau checks on personnel who supervise recruits and trainees who are aged under 18 years; and what plans he has to introduce these checks. [26280]

Mr. Touhig: Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, Criminal Records Bureau checks do not apply to those working with service personnel between the ages of 16 and 18 because they are in full-time employment. We continue to keep the relevant legislation under review.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the result was of his review of policy concerning under-18s conducting guard duty. [26302]

Mr. Touhig: A guidance note on care for the under-18s was issued to the Principal Personnel Officers of each of the three Services on 12 July 2005. This includes guidance on armed guarding. A copy of this guidance note is available in the Library of the House.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the total strength was of *(a)* the Regular Army and *(b)* the Territorial Army on 1 October; [26191]

(2) how many people have been recruited to the Infantry Territorial Army in the last 12 months. [26216]

Mr. Touhig: As at 1 September 2005, the total strength of the Regular Army was 107,340. This figure includes trained and untrained personnel. The Regular Army data as at 1 October 2005 is not yet available. The data is due to be released on 11 November and will be available on the DASA website www.dasa.mod.uk

As at 1 October 2005, the total strength of the Territorial Army excluding non-regular permanent staff (NRPS) was 35,270 of which 1,200 were Mobilised TA.

Between 1 October 2004 and 30 September 2005, 1,590 people have been recruited to the Infantry Territorial Army. This only includes new recruits and those from the Regular Reserve. This figure does not include recruitment to NRPS, those joining the University Officer Training Corps, Full Time Reserve Staff and those flowing to and from Mobilised TA.

Bullying/Harassment

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's definitions are of *(a)* bullying and *(b)* harassment; and by reference to which external organisations these definitions were benchmarked. [26291]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence's definitions of harassment and bullying are set out in the Department's unified guidance on the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying, issued as a Joint Service Publication (JSP 763) in April 2005, which states that:

> Bullying is a form of harassment, and describes a threatening or intimidating environment in which one or more people may become fearful or intimidated because of the negative or hostile behaviour of one or more people. It often involves a misuse of power or position. It is usually persistent, often unpredictable, and may be vindictive, cruel, or malicious. However, it can also arise without intent, such as when a person is unaware of the impact of his or her behaviour on someone else. Harassment is unwanted behaviour by one or more people, whether intentional or not, which violates a person's dignity and creates feelings of anxiety, humiliation, awkwardness, distress or discomfort which can have devastating consequences for that person.

The industrial and non-industrial trade unions were consulted in the drafting of these definitions, and legal advice was taken to ensure that the definitions are compatible with employment law.

Challenger 2 Upgrade

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has *(a)* to replace and *(b)* to upgrade the L30A1 high-pressure 120mm rifled gun fitted to the Challenger 2 tank. [25095]

Mr. Ingram: There are no plans to upgrade the L30A1 gun fitted to the Challenger 2 tank. However, studies are being undertaken to provide information for our future direct fire weapon requirements. This might include a potential replacement for the current Challenger 2 gun.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to upgrade the *(a)* L31 HESH and *(b)* L34 smoke rounds used by the L30A1 gun. [25099]

Mr. Ingram: We have no plans to upgrade the L31 HESH and L34 smoke rounds. However, the next production run of these rounds will have a slightly modified fill to improve its insensitive munitions performance.

Child Protection

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what mechanism convictions in courts martial are made available to the Criminal Records Bureau for the purposes of child protection. [26290]

Mr. Touhig: Details of convictions are communicated to the military police of the relevant single service. Recordable offences are then passed on to the Police National Computer, from which they are accessible to a Criminal Records Bureau check.

Cut and Sew Contract

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many garments in each category of the Cut and Sew contract were checked for faults; how many faults were found; and what specific criteria were used to check for different faults. [24731]

Mr. Ingram: The number of checks carried out up to 31 October 2005 are detailed in the table as follows:

Category		*Number of garments checked*
1	Complex Cut and Sew e.g. combat jacket	245
2	Simple Cut and Sew e.g. ties	133
3	Semi-structured e.g. shorts	18,657
4	Knitted e.g. fleeces	16,243
5	Towels	301

More checks were carried out in Categories 3 and 4 due to new items being added to the contract. Contractor's Workmanship samples are also requested from the Contractor, so that any faults can be rectified before production.

Garments are checked against the contractual specification, which includes certain tolerances to allow for the bulk manufacturing process. Only one fault outside of these tolerances has been identified.

Departmental Telephone Lines

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how the money that is raised from his Department's 0870 prefix contact telephone number is spent. [27131]

Mr. Touhig: The use of 0870 numbers in the Ministry of Defence is determined at the local level in accordance with individual business requirements. Records of 0870 numbers and the revenue received from them is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Disablement Benefits

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the implications for his Department's policy on provision of disablement pensions for ex-servicemen and medical auxiliaries of the decision in the case of Daniel Martin at the Pension Appeal Tribunal on 31 October. [25508]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence's policy on the provision of war disablement pensions to former members of the armed forces is unchanged. Awards will continue to be made where evidence of disablement is shown and where that disablement is due to, or aggravated by, service.

Firearms

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he expects completion of the review of policy on the issue, control and security of firearms being conducted by the Director General of Training and Education. [26301]

Mr. Touhig: It is anticipated that the review of policy on the issue, control and security of firearms during initial training (Phase 1 and Phase 2), currently being conducted by the Director General Training and Education, in conjunction with the single Services, will culminate in revised policy early in the new year. Stringent regulations are already in place, but the purpose of the review is to ensure best practice is employed in weapon security in converting inexperienced Service personnel in Phase 1 through to trained individuals on completion of Phase 2 who fully understand their responsibilities for personal weapon security.

Forces Mental Well-being Policy

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what means and via what institutions the armed services maintain contact with *(a)* the Department of Health and *(b)* the devolved Administrations in order to develop the Forces' Mental Well-being policy. [26282]

Mr. Touhig: The Armed Forces Mental Wellbeing policy is developed and monitored through a steering group which comprises representatives from throughout the Ministry of Defence. The steering group monitors activities involving mental wellbeing in the United Kingdom including, for example, the outputs from the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Official contact between the Department of Health and MOD is regulated by a concordat that has been in place since 2002. This has led to arrangements with NHS Hospital Trusts, both those which host MOD Hospital Units and others, which enable MOD clinical personnel to be trained and to maintain their skills in the NHS environment. The concordat has now been extended to include the Health Departments for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Future Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons revised in-service dates of 2013 and 2016 for the two Future Aircraft Carriers were published on the Department's website on 19 September; and why this information was subsequently removed. [24568]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The dates were published on the website in error. These dates were removed as the in-service dates (ISDs) for the Future Aircraft Carriers will only be set following the main investment decision and once they have been approved by Ministers. This decision has not yet been taken, and will only be taken when we know with confidence the risks involved in building the carriers, when we have a proper understanding of the costs

involved and the implications in terms of the wider interface with other projects, and for the shipbuilding industry.

Hearing Loss (Service Veterans)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research he has commissioned on hearing loss among armed services veterans; and if he will make a statement. [26622]

Mr. Touhig: Neither the Ministry of Defence, which is responsible for veterans' matters, nor the former Department of Social Security, which was responsible for the War Pensions Scheme until 2001 and remains responsible for the related civilian Industrial Injuries Scheme, have commissioned any research on this issue. The Government's approach to noise-induced sensorineural hearing loss assessment is based on contemporary scientific evidence and understanding. This has been confirmed in recent years by several reviews carried out by independent audiological experts including an Industrial Injuries Advisory Council review. The Ministry of Defence routinely scrutinises the published peer reviewed literature to ensure that compensation policy and approaches continue to take account of contemporary evidence.

HMS Nelson

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many times HMS Nelson has been subject to random drug testing in each of the last three years; and what the results were. [26881]

Mr. Touhig: The dates, numbers and results of Naval personnel who underwent random drug testing at HMS Nelson are as follows:

	Date	*Location*	*Tested*	*Positive*
2003	22 July	RM Band Portsmouth	54	0
2003	2 October	HMS Nelson	189	0
2004	21 April	RM School of Music	83	0
2004	9 November	HMS Nelson	188	0
2005	12 May	RM School of Music	44	0
2005	2 June	RM School of Music	10	[1]0
2005	10 August	Nelson UPO	32	0
2005	25 October	Nelson PTIs and RN Boxing Team	47	0

[1] new recruits

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will order an urgent investigation into whether there have been *(a)* breaches of security and *(b)* drug abuse in HMS Nelson; and if he will make a statement. [26882]

Mr. Touhig: Suspected breaches of security and allegations of illegal substance abuse at MOD establishments are taken very seriously and are rigorously investigated. Following recent media allegations, investigations are already under way at HMS Nelson.

Interceptor Body Armour

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to issue interceptor body armour to troops on operational deployments, with particular reference to *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [24822]

Mr. Ingram: Interceptor body armour is the protection system used by US forces. UK body armour systems offer similar levels of ballistic stopping power, and we have no plans to acquire the interceptor equipment. As with all equipment, we keep personal protection equipment under continuous review.

Iraq

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether parts of Basra City are no longer regularly or routinely patrolled by UK forces. [26185]

Mr. Ingram: UK forces continue to operate throughout Basra City. No areas are considered out of bounds.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26603]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many married quarters will be required to meet his Department's plan in each of the next three years. [23320]

Mr. Touhig: Defence Estates (DE) is currently responsible for some 49,000 Service Families Quarters in England, Wales and Scotland. Of these, around 43,000 are seen as long-term core stock aspiration and it is DE's intention to reduce its holdings to that number.

The figures provided are contained within the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05, which are available online via the MOD's website www.mod.uk.

Ottawa Convention

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent progress has been made in fulfilling the UK's obligations under the Ottawa Convention on landmines. [23059]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom completed its destruction of its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines in October 1999 and only retains a number of anti-personnel mines under Article 3 of the Ottawa Convention for the development of, and training in, mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques. Under the Ottawa Convention, the UK is also required to clear all anti-personnel mines from its territory by March 2009. The only UK territory affected is in the Falkland Islands. Discussions have taken place with the Government of Argentina to agree a joint feasibility study, including a field survey of the Islands. A decision on how to proceed will be made once the results of the feasibility study are known.

RAF Recruitment

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many new recruits there have been to the Royal Air Force on average in each of the last 10 years. [25262]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Financial year	*Officers*	*Other ranks*	*RAF total*
1995–96	280	2,150	2,420
1996–97	320	2,360	2,680
1997–98	400	3,130	3,530
1998–99	430	3,820	4,250
1999–2000	480	3,610	4,100
2000–01	440	3,190	3,630
2001–02	450	3,340	3,780
2002–03	460	3,990	4,450
2003–04	520	3,640	4,160
2004–05	300	1,880	2,180
10 year average	410	3,110	3,520

Note:
Figures are for UK regular forces (including both trained and untrained personnel), and therefore exclude full-time reserve service personnel and mobilised reservists.

Research and Development

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has for research and development in new defence technologies. [18319]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* Continued investment in science and technology will remain critical if we are to develop and sustain effective capabilities in the face of new and emerging threats. Technical excellence is fundamental to providing the major enabling support to front-line operations and to underpin the competitiveness of our national defence industry.

The Defence Science and Technology Board will ensure that we get the right investment balance between sustaining in-house expertise and developing new technology in our supplier base. A well-structured policy of collaboration between MOD, industry and academia allows us to focus on commonly-identified technology development areas, improves risk reduction and maximises our ability to incorporate world class technologies developed in the UK into the equipment we buy.

We have launched four Defence Technology Centres in areas of high priority for MOD and industry. They are jointly funded by MOD, industry and academia to carry out research at the basic science level. This is then exploited by each partner for their own purposes.

Further information has been published in "Delivering Security in a Changing World", the Defence White Paper of 2003 (Cm 6269) and in the MOD Departmental Plan 2005–09 under Future Capabilities chapter. Copies of these are in the Library and can be found on the MOD internet site at www.mod.uk.

Skynet

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1251W, on Skynet, how bandwidth is measured; and what units of measurement other than megahertz his Department has used. [26204]

Mr. Ingram: The SKYNET 5 bandwidth is measured in megahertz (MHz). This is the standard unit of measurement for specifying satellite communication bandwidth within the Department.

UK Sourced Food

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to increase the proportion of food for the armed services which is sourced in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [25504]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Under the terms of Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome, which prohibits quantitative restrictions on imports between member states and all measures having equivalent effect, the Ministry of Defence must treat fairly and evenly all potential EC product suppliers. However, the MOD's contracted food supplier, '3663', is specifically required to source British products whenever they are competitive and when they meet the required quality standard. MOD is working with Defra and industry to establish ways in which British producers can become more competitive. The Meat and Livestock Commission has chaired a forum involving MOD, '3663' and farming union representatives. These meetings have been highly productive and through them, the MOD has increased volumes of British meat purchased at competitive prices and of a quality standard consistent with the requirements of the British armed forces.

Unified Diversity Strategy

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place a copy of the departmental Unified Diversity Strategy in the Library. [26292]

Mr. Touhig: Yes.

Welfare Services

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how frequently *(a)* the Armed Forces Policy Strategy Group, and *(b)* the Tri-Service Welfare Working Group have met in the past 12 months; and what conclusions each forum has reached on the merits of the creation of an in-house (i) magazine and (ii) website to address welfare issues at training establishments. [26308]

Mr. Touhig: I assume my hon. Friend is referring to the Accommodation, Families and Welfare Policy Steering Group that meets four times a year; and reporting to it a Tri-Service Welfare Working Group which meets three times a year. Their remit does not take into consideration creation of an in-house magazine or website to address welfare issues at training establishments, which remain single service responsibilities.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the terms of reference are of the tri-service review into the provision of welfare support in the armed services; what external bodies have been involved in the compilation of the final report; and if he will place the outcome of the review in the Library. [26286]

Mr. Touhig: The review into the provision of welfare support to the greater Service community was established to identify best practice and the potential for its application across the three Services. The following have been identified as key issues that will receive specific attention:

Welfare Provision to Service personnel and their families who reside away from Service units.

Welfare Provision on Tri-Service Units.

Employment Risk associated with Non-Public Funded Organisations.

Public/Non-Public/Charitable Funding Provision.

Changes to Charities Law and how these will affect the armed forces.

The review has consulted widely, including service charities. I will place a copy of the outcome in the Library of the House

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which further education colleges in West Yorkshire will receive *(a)* a decrease and *(b)* an increase in their funding for adult education, not including for basic skills courses, in 2005–06 compared to 2004–05; [22307]

(2) what assessment she has made of the level of funding provided by the Learning and Skills Council to *(a)* Shipley College and *(b)* other further education colleges in West Yorkshire to meet the non-basic skills needs of adults and employers in the locality; and if she will make a statement; [22308]

(3) when each further education college in West Yorkshire was informed of its funding allocation for 2005–06. [22315]

Bill Rammell: The Government's Skills Strategy, reaffirmed in the White Paper published on the 22 March, sets clear priorities for public funding to support the drive to ensure that employers have the skills they need to be successful, and individuals have the skills they need to be employable and personally fulfilled. Funding for Further Education (FE) increased by 4.4 per cent. in 2005/06. Funding for non-vocational learning opportunities for adults, delivered mainly through local authority adult education services, has also increased. In 2004/05 we provided over £207 million to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in support of this learning. This has risen to £210 million in 2005/06. This funding will enable colleges and other providers to deliver a wide range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of adults in local communities but those who are able to do so will need to pay higher fees in the future. I set out the Government's priorities for the learning and skills sector and the impact on funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08 on the 21 October and full details can be found in "Priorities for Success" on the LSC's website.

The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including adult education, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body. My Department does not hold details of funding figures for FE colleges in West Yorkshire. As the timing and level of funding allocations in local areas relates to the LSC's operational responsibilities, the LSC's Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

A-level Grades

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many sixth form colleges in England achieved A level pass rates of above 99.0 per cent. in the summer 2005 examinations. [25679]

Jacqui Smith: Figures for the academic year 2003/04 show eight of the 101 sixth form colleges in England achieved a GCE A Level pass rate of above 99 per cent. 2003/04 figures have been provided as 2004/05 data are provisional and currently being checked by schools, therefore, cannot be released at school level.

Apprenticeships

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reason the costs of the provider contracts for the apprenticeships introduced by her Department were higher than expected; and if she will make a statement. [27194]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning on 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 528W.

Building Schools for the Future

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the Building Schools for the Future projects which are in progress. [27191]

Jacqui Smith: Information on the Building Schools for the Future projects currently in progress is as follows.

There are 38 projects (39 authorities) currently in progress in Waves 1–3 of Building Schools for the Future:

Pathfinder and Wave 1 Projects

Bradford
Bristol
Greenwich
Knowsley
Lancashire
Leeds
Leicester
Lewisham
Manchester
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Sheffield
Solihull
South Tyneside and Gateshead
Stoke-on-Trent
Sunderland
Waltham Forest

Wave 2
Birmingham
Hackney
Haringey
Islington
Kingston upon Hull
Lambeth
Liverpool
Middlesbrough
Nottingham City
Tower Hamlets
Newham

Wave 3
Barnsley
Bradford
Derbyshire
Durham
Kent
Luton
North Lincolnshire
Salford
Sandwell
Southwark
Tameside
Westminster.

Class Sizes

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size was in each primary school in Cleethorpes in each year since 1997. [24755]

Jacqui Smith: The data requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary schools: average class size taught by one teacher[1], position as at January each year: 1997 to 2005, Cleethorpes parliamentary constituency

LEA	Estab	School name	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
812	2000	Allerton Primary School	n/a	n/a	n/a	27.8	29.5
812	2002	Woodlands Primary School	n/a	n/a	n/a	26.0	24.8
812	2109	William Barcroft Junior School	30.7	29.8	28.6	28.3	29.6
812	2112	Elliston Infants' School	28.9	29.9	32.0	25.5	24.6
812	2113	Queen Mary Avenue Infant School	27.1	26.1	27.1	28.5	27.3
812	2114	Reynolds Junior School	33.9	31.1	30.3	30.8	27.9
813	2116	East Halton Primary School	31.0	29.0	23.0	22.0	24.3
813	2118	Goxhill Primary School	28.1	29.9	25.2	28.6	30.1
812	2124	New Waltham Primary School	32.4	33.4	34.7	36.0	31.6
813	2125	Killinghoime Primary School	28.8	28.3	22.9	22.7	25.5
812	2142	Thrunscoe Infants' School	32.0	25.3	29.6	22.5	24.2
812	2144	Pelham Infants' School	25.8	34.3	30.8	27.2	19.0
812	2145	Enfield (New Waltham) Primary School	25.8	29.3	25.8	22.3	27.8
812	2151	The Leas Junior School	29.6	29.0	28.6	28.8	30.5
812	2153	Thrunscoe Junior School	27.4	32.5	29.7	33.5	28.6
812	2154	Healing Primary School	30.5	34.3	30.0	30.7	31.1
812	2167	Allerton Infants' School	25.2	30.8	31.7	n/a	n/a
812	2175	Signhills Infants' School	30.9	27.4	27.6	25.8	26.1
812	2176	Signhills Junior School	25.5	27.6	28.2	28.5	28.8
812	2177	Allerton Junior School	29.8	29.3	27.5	n/a	n/a
812	2178	Eastfield Junior School	27.0	26.7	25.5	22.2	31.5
812	2179	Eastfield Infants' School	25.2	36.7	30.7	34.7	30.9
812	2181	The Leas Infants' School	27.9	30.1	27.8	29.4	26.3
812	2182	Middlethorpe Primary School	32.9	33.1	31.9	23.8	32.5
812	2183	Reynolds Infants' School	28.6	30.0	28.0	23.1	23.4
812	2184	Elliston Junior School	29.3	31.0	29.9	32.7	30.1
813	2568	Bowmandale Primary School	31.4	26.6	23.1	27.9	27.5
812	2877	Coomb Briggs Primary School	29.9	30.3	30.3	30.1	29.9
812	2917	Bradley Park Infant and Nursery School	22.4	30.9	23.5	n/a	n/a
812	2918	Bradley Park Junior School	35.0	26.9	26.8	n/a	n/a
812	2939	Humberston Cloverfields Primary School	30.6	27.5	26.7	27.1	26.4
813	2940	Castledyke Primary School	26.2	29.0	26.9	29.1	25.7
812	2943	Bursar Primary School	32.0	28.5	29.4	22.7	30.0
813	3056	John Harrison C of E Primary School	29.2	23.4	27.8	25.9	26.4
813	3057	Barton St. Peter's C of E Primary School	28.4	30.3	28.1	28.7	28.3
812	3059	St. Peter's C of E Primary School	28.5	32.4	29.1	28.1	23.5
812	3060	East Ravendale C of E Primary School	27.3	27.0	27.5	27.3	31.0
812	3065	The Humberston C of E Primary School	31.2	30.1	28.7	28.3	24.8
812	3066	Immingham St. Andrew's C of E Junior School	25.9	25.0	23.9	23.4	24.8
813	3067	Kirmington C of E Primary School	20.5	20.5	19.5	10.7	16.0
812	3068	Stanford Junior and Infant School	31.3	31.5	29.9	26.8	27.9
812	3072	Stallingborough C of E Primary School	29.0	27.0	28.0	20.8	13.5
813	3078	New Holland C of E and Methodist Primary School	30.0	27.0	26.5	23.0	22.3
813	3079	Ulceby St. Nicholas C of E Primary School	21.3	23.6	23.4	23.9	23.5
813	3322	Wootton St. Andrew's C of E Primary School	12.5	13.5	8.0	9.0	16.0
812	3514	St. Joseph's RC Primary School	28.5	29.5	29.2	28.0	27.2
812	3516	The Canon Peter Hall C of E Primary School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

LEA	Estab	School name	2002	2003	2004	2005
812	2000	Allerton Primary School	26.6	23.8	23.5	27.5
812	2002	Woodlands Primary School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
812	2109	William Barcroft Junior School	28.8	27.5	26.7	28.2
812	2112	Elliston Infants' School	27.3	29.0	28.0	27.1
812	2113	Queen Mary Avenue Infant School	28.0	27.5	28.0	27.6
812	2114	Reynolds Junior School	27.6	27.5	24.5	23.9
813	2116	East Halton Primary School	19.3	18.3	14.0	16.0
813	2118	Goxhill Primary School	29.9	28.9	28.8	30.5
812	2124	New Waltham Primary School	28.7	29.3	27.3	24.7
813	2125	Killingholme Primary School	23.4	21.8	26.0	28.8
812	2142	Thrunscoe Infants' School	23.6	25.6	26.6	32.3
812	2144	Pelham Infants' School	17.0	23.8	n/a	n/a
812	2145	Enfield (New Waltham) Primary School	28.0	27.0	23.2	33.3
812	2151	The Leas Junior School	26.2	29.7	29.4	31.9
812	2153	Thrunscoe Junior School	28.0	26.8	25.0	26.5
812	2154	Healing Primary School	26.2	26.9	29.3	28.2
812	2167	Allerton Infants' School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
812	2175	Signhills Infants' School	26.9	26.4	27.2	26.9
812	2176	Signhills Junior School	27.6	28.1	29.3	29.0
812	2177	Allerton Junior School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
812	2178	Eastfield Junior School	23.3	29.8	28.5	33.0
812	2179	Eastfield Infants' School	24.2	25.9	28.8	23.6
812	2181	The Leas Infants' School	24.0	23.6	24.3	28.0
812	2182	Middlethorpe Primary School	28.5	23.4	26.3	29.0
812	2183	Reynolds Infants' School	23.0	21.6	21.4	21.0
812	2184	Elliston Junior School	29.3	25.2	30.6	27.1
813	2568	Bowmandale Primary School	26.9	24.8	26.1	27.2
812	2877	Coomb Briggs Primary School	27.9	29.3	26.9	25.7
812	2917	Bradley Park Infant and Nursery School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
812	2918	Bradley Park Junior School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
812	2939	Humberston Cloverfields Primary School	26.9	27.0	26.8	25.1
813	2940	Castledyke Primary School	27.5	30.1	24.8	30.2
812	2943	Bursar Primary School	28.0	28.6	27.0	28.3
813	3056	John Harrison C of E Primary School	25.1	26.0	23.8	25.0
813	3057	Barton St. Peter's C of E Primary School	28.7	29.4	29.1	30.2
812	3059	St. Peter's C of E Primary School	23.8	23.4	25.1	24.8
812	3060	East Ravendale C of E Primary School	22.4	26.7	25.7	24.7
812	3065	The Humberston C of E Primary School	26.9	25.1	25.1	27.5
812	3066	Immingham St. Andrew's C of E Junior School	23.8	22.3	n/a	n/a
813	3067	Kirmington C of E Primary School	15.5	16.0	15.5	15.0
812	3068	Stanford Junior and Infant School	27.5	20.8	25.3	28.6
812	3072	Stallingborough C of E Primary School	17.7	17.7	11.8	18.0
813	3078	New Holland C of E and Methodist Primary School	22.3	20.8	19.0	19.5
813	3079	Ulceby St. Nicholas C of E Primary School	23.7	22.7	24.7	24.7
813	3322	Wootton St. Andrew's C of E Primary School	22.0	22.5	24.0	24.0
812	3514	St. Joseph's RC Primary School	24.9	25.1	24.6	23.8
812	3516	The Canon Peter Hall C of E Primary School	n/a	n/a	20.2	25.3

n/a = Not applicable.
[1] Classes taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools Census.

Education Funding

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary formula spending share per pupil is in each local education authority for 2006–07, listed in descending order of secondary formula allocations. [26968]

Jacqui Smith: We will be implementing new arrangements for school funding from 2006–07, including the introduction of a ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). We will announce details of local authorities' allocations of DSG for 2006–07 later in the autumn.

Education Initiatives

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Vocational Learning Diploma to be introduced in 2008. [27185]

Phil Hope: There will be five lines of specialised diplomas available for teaching from September 2008: in ICT; Health and Social Care; Engineering; Creative and Media; and Construction and the Built Environment. A further five lines will be available from September 2009: in Land Based and Environmental; Manufacturing; Hair and Beauty; Business Administration; and Finance and Hospitality and Catering. The final four lines will be available from September 2010: in Public Services; Sport and Leisure; Retail; and Travel and Tourism.

We have set up multi-agency partnerships, led by Sector Skills Councils, to specify the content of the diplomas within their line of learning. Awarding bodies will subsequently develop the qualification on the basis of this. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been providing advice on the overarching design of the diplomas. My right hon. Friend will announce further details shortly.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of the school improvement partner scheme. [27188]

Jacqui Smith: The role of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) who are mostly headteachers is to challenge and support schools. Their work forms part of the new accountability and support arrangements called the New Relationship with Schools. SIPs will be searching and constructive about the key issues that each school faces without imposing unnecessary bureaucratic burdens. For anybody wishing to become an SIP, there is a demanding national assessment and accreditation process. The process started in the spring and has so far accredited 243 people.

Schools and local authorities are responding positively to becoming involved in the SIP programme. We now have SIPs allocated to secondary schools in 27 local authorities. SIPs will be allocated to the rest of secondary schools in two further waves in April and September 2006. There is a pilot of SIPs in primary schools in six local authorities, to be followed by a phased national roll-out. We are also trialling school improvement partners in special schools in seven local authorities before deciding on a wider roll-out. At the same time, we are developing national arrangements to make sure SIPs are well managed and well supported, and to assure the quality of their work.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes in the Ofsted inspection process are to be introduced as part of the New Relationship with Schools. [27189]

Jacqui Smith: The Education Act 2005 provided the legislative base for changing the school inspection system in line with other aspects of the New Relationship with Schools. The new inspection arrangements, which were tested extensively during the last academic year, came into effect in September.

Inspection is an integral part of the New Relationship, which links to other elements in a number of ways. Inspections will now take place with minimal notice and will be shorter in duration. They will draw on enhanced data and will use schools' own self evaluation as the basis for planning and conducting the inspection. Schools will report on progress to parents through the new School Profile and will be supported and challenged by School Improvement Partners in planning and taking forward their improvement priorities.

The new system will reduce burdens on schools whilst ensuring that parents benefit from more frequent information about the quality and standard of education provided by schools.

Education White Paper

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what account she took of recent findings on the effects of increased choice in a school system on social segregation in drawing up her proposals in the recent White Paper; and if she will make a statement. [26767]

Jacqui Smith: In drawing up the proposals in the recent White Paper the Secretary of State took account of the relevant issues and discussions in the current academic literature on school choice and social segregation.

Our White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All—More choice for parents and pupils" outlines our proposals to extend choice and open up access to schools for more parents, underpinned by a fair admissions system. These proposals will reduce social segregation.

There are a number of approaches that admission authorities can adopt to ensure fair access for children. Some schools use random allocation, while others use banding. The White Paper proposes making it easier to introduce pupil banding. This provides a means of ensuring that a school's intake is representative of the full ability range of either applicants for a particular school, of children in the area as a whole, or of the national ability profile—depending on the type of banding adopted.

Furthermore, all proposals for new schools must set out their proposed admission arrangements, and indicate how these will promote community and social integration and choice. Successful schools will also be allowed to expand if they can show their admission arrangements are in line with the School Admissions code of practice, which recommends that admission arrangements should be, as far as possible, inclusive of all elements of the local community.

We also propose to extend entitlement to free transport for disadvantaged children, so that parental choice is not restricted by concerns about the cost and availability of transport.

Employment Programmes

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to how many regions the entitlement to a platform of employability skills has been extended. [27032]

Phil Hope: The second skills White Paper, "Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work", published in March 2005, reaffirmed our commitment to the Level 2 entitlement. We undertook to use the experience of the Level 2 trials in the North East and South East in 2004/05 to develop the capacity of the further education sector during 2005/06. The White Paper confirmed that we would expand the availability of fully funded first Level 2 qualifications in all regions, using 2005/06 as a transition year, so that a wide range of colleges and training providers could offer the entitlement nationally from 2006/07.

2005/06 transition will allow FE providers time to re-shape their programmes before national roll out in 2006/07. This does not imply that some regions can opt

out of the Level 2 entitlement during 2005/06. We expect that all regions will deliver an increased volume of first full level 2s in 2005/06; however, we anticipate a marked increase in the delivery and achievement of first full level 2s from 2006/07.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 16 to 18-year-olds took part in the entry to employment programme in 2004–05; and what assessment has been made of the results. [27195]

Jacqui Smith: Entry to Employment (E2E) is the main programme for young people not yet ready to enter an apprenticeship, employment or learning opportunities directly. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) guarantees all young people for whom E2E is appropriate a place on the programme. This is in addition to the commitment that every 16 to 18-year-old can have a place in post-16 education and training.

The LSC collects data by academic year. In 2003/04, 10,430 left E2E for employment. In 2004/05, 11,226 left E2E for employment. In 2004/05, 43 per cent. of E2E leavers went into a positive destination (jobs, further education or work based learning). This has risen from 35 per cent. in 2003/04. The number of places made available in England in 2004/05 was 49,523. Of these 47,702 were taken up based on provisional 2004/05 data.

Free School Meals

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will rank English local education authorities according to the percentage of children entitled to receive free school meals. [24231]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Maintained nursery and primary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]—January 2005
Ranked by local authority in England

		Number on roll	Number known to be eligible for free meals	% known to be eligible for free meals
England[3]		4,243,110	717,230	16.9
211	Tower Hamlets	22,697	12,264	54.0
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	10,069	4,488	44.6
352	Manchester	40,941	18,083	44.2
206	Islington	14,684	6,287	42.8
202	Camden	11,576	4,816	41.6
204	Hackney	18,136	7,382	40.7
207	Kensington and Chelsea	7,321	2,962	40.5
213	Westminster	11,228	4,411	39.3
208	Lambeth	20,271	7,684	37.9
210	Southwark	23,608	8,608	36.5
316	Newham	31,519	11,192	35.5
203	Greenwich	21,172	7,475	35.3
309	Haringey	22,096	7,685	34.8
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	20,338	6,832	33.6
341	Liverpool	39,441	13,099	33.2
330	Birmingham	103,899	34,503	33.2
340	Knowsley	16,088	5,100	31.7
201	City of London	224	69	30.8
355	Salford	19,855	6,098	30.7
212	Wandsworth	17,532	5,238	29.9
806	Middlesbrough	14,123	4,197	29.7
304	Brent	23,004	6,778	29.5
892	Nottingham	24,205	7,005	28.9
209	Lewisham	22,136	6,155	27.8
393	South Tyneside	13,418	3,723	27.7
861	Stoke-on-Trent	21,475	5,875	27.4
320	Waltham Forest	21,372	5,755	26.9
856	Leicester	28,537	7,447	26.1
344	Wirral	27,301	7,092	26.0
301	Barking and Dagenham	18,486	4,738	25.6
308	Enfield	27,136	6,793	25.0
307	Ealing	26,550	6,645	25.0
810	Kingston upon Hull, City of	22,984	5,721	24.9
801	Bristol, City of	31,305	7,712	24.6
354	Rochdale	20,419	4,949	24.2
889	Blackburn with Darwen	15,497	3,718	24.0
821	Luton	19,165	4,470	23.3
333	Sandwell	30,221	6,995	23.1
353	Oldham	23,364	5,318	22.8
313	Hounslow	18,856	4,248	22.5
876	Halton	10,772	2,410	22.4
890	Blackpool	12,124	2,709	22.3
807	Redcar and Cleveland	13,729	3,067	22.3
852	Southampton	16,381	3,634	22.2
306	Croydon	30,293	6,638	21.9
390	Gateshead	16,519	3,585	21.7
805	Hartlepool	9,425	2,027	21.5
380	Bradford	51,971	11,154	21.5
336	Wolverhampton	23,567	4,903	20.8
394	Sunderland	25,752	5,224	20.3
331	Coventry	27,376	5,543	20.2
302	Barnet	26,420	5,201	19.7
840	Durham	43,124	8,369	19.4
812	North East Lincolnshire	14,814	2,863	19.3
383	Leeds	62,581	12,075	19.3
335	Walsall	27,010	5,181	19.2
894	Telford and Wrekin	15,625	2,976	19.0
342	St. Helens	15,938	3,016	18.9
831	Derby	22,362	4,182	18.7
373	Sheffield	43,702	8,172	18.7
841	Darlington	9,209	1,715	18.6
371	Doncaster	27,796	5,176	18.6
874	Peterborough	15,538	2,879	18.5
808	Stockton-on-Tees	17,605	3,258	18.5
357	Tameside	20,548	3,802	18.5
921	Isle of Wight	7,183	1,324	18.4
370	Barnsley	20,733	3,815	18.4
879	Plymouth	19,898	3,655	18.4
882	Southend-on-Sea	14,394	2,591	18.0
312	Hillingdon	24,262	4,357	18.0
851	Portsmouth	14,498	2,601	17.9
846	Brighton and Hove	17,408	3,117	17.9
880	Torbay	10,128	1,799	17.8
392	North Tyneside	16,471	2,921	17.7
372	Rotherham	24,457	4,298	17.6
317	Redbridge	23,888	4,130	17.3
871	Slough	12,054	2,065	17.1
350	Bolton	25,918	4,386	16.9
870	Reading	10,752	1,807	16.8
384	Wakefield	29,727	4,993	16.8
343	Sefton	24,060	4,028	16.7
382	Kirklees	36,262	6,049	16.7
310	Harrow	19,513	3,215	16.5
381	Calderdale	18,979	2,996	15.8
359	Wigan	26,958	4,234	15.7
332	Dudley	28,835	4,336	15.0
888	Lancashire	97,142	14,396	14.8
883	Thurrock	13,949	2,025	14.5
813	North Lincolnshire	14,058	2,019	14.4
315	Merton	14,776	2,037	13.8
351	Bury	16,232	2,231	13.7
319	Sutton	15,200	2,060	13.6
909	Cumbria	41,384	5,562	13.4
926	Norfolk	66,405	8,920	13.4
305	Bromley	24,108	3,164	13.1
826	Milton Keynes	22,682	2,929	12.9
929	Northumberland	19,806	2,539	12.8
887	Medway	22,871	2,866	12.5
845	East Sussex	36,982	4,627	12.5

Maintained nursery and primary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]—January 2005
Ranked by local authority in England

		Number on roll	Number known to be eligible for free meals	% known to be eligible for free meals
303	Bexley	20,782	2,573	12.4
886	Kent	111,471	13,750	12.3
830	Derbyshire	64,470	7,778	12.1
311	Havering	19,800	2,384	12.0
356	Stockport	24,502	2,934	12.0
891	Nottinghamshire	65,460	7,761	11.9
358	Trafford	19,447	2,302	11.8
837	Bournemouth	10,758	1,246	11.6
802	North Somerset	14,968	1,692	11.3
935	Suffolk	46,494	5,193	11.2
908	Cornwall	39,796	4,407	11.1
875	Cheshire	55,929	6,186	11.1
878	Devon	54,860	6,065	11.1
866	Swindon	16,857	1,861	11.0
334	Solihull	20,392	2,246	11.0
881	Essex	108,687	11,788	10.8
820	Bedfordshire	25,764	2,746	10.7
860	Staffordshire	65,976	7,007	10.6
916	Gloucestershire	44,450	4,620	10.4
800	Bath and North East Somerset	12,301	1,254	10.2
937	Warwickshire	41,992	4,279	10.2
877	Warrington	17,824	1,753	9.8
816	York	13,756	1,338	9.7
931	Oxfordshire	47,313	4,599	9.7
318	Richmond upon Thames	12,755	1,236	9.7
933	Somerset	37,598	3,599	9.6
928	Northamptonshire	57,745	5,494	9.5
893	Shropshire	22,318	2,041	9.1
850	Hampshire	98,537	8,800	8.9
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	26,705	2,353	8.8
885	Worcestershire	38,799	3,408	8.8
873	Cambridgeshire	44,693	3,896	8.7
919	Hertfordshire	94,409	8,140	8.6
884	Herefordshire	13,358	1,105	8.3
803	South Gloucestershire	22,703	1,814	8.0
936	Surrey	79,145	6,321	8.0
815	North Yorkshire	45,629	3,626	7.9
865	Wiltshire	35,895	2,756	7.7
855	Leicestershire	49,083	3,597	7.3
869	West Berkshire	12,250	894	7.3
314	Kingston upon Thames	11,717	855	7.3
867	Bracknell Forest	8,839	603	6.8
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	8,702	587	6.7
938	West Sussex	58,821	3,436	5.8
925	Lincolnshire	54,290	2,898	5.3
825	Buckinghamshire	40,211	2,135	5.3
835	Dorset	24,672	1,245	5.0
836	Poole	10,548	502	4.8
872	Wokingham	12,462	554	4.4
857	Rutland	2,523	110	4.4
420	Isles of Scilly	251	4	1.6

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[3] National and regional totals have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]—January 2005
Ranked by local authority in England

		Number on roll	Number known to be eligible for free meals	% known to be eligible for free meals
England [3]		3,317,590	465,520	14.0
211	Tower Hamlets	14,193	8,731	61.5
210	Southwark	10,242	4,741	46.3
206	Islington	7,972	3,425	43.0
352	Manchester	23,762	10,197	42.9
316	Newham	18,067	7,563	41.9

Maintained secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]—January 2005
Ranked by local authority in England

		Number on roll	Number known to be eligible for free meals	% known to be eligible for free meals
204	Hackney	7,224	2,791	38.6
208	Lambeth	7,907	3,030	38.3
309	Haringey	11,431	4,241	37.1
340	Knowsley	9,836	3,471	35.3
806	Middlesbrough	5,650	1,872	33.1
213	Westminster	8,564	2,808	32.8
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	7,049	2,307	32.7
330	Birmingham	70,576	22,435	31.8
203	Greenwich	15,171	4,766	31.4
202	Camden	9,775	3,033	31.0
892	Nottingham	13,830	4,201	30.4
341	Liverpool	33,124	9,993	30.2
207	Kensington and Chelsea	3,505	992	28.3
209	Lewisham	11,722	3,238	27.6
301	Barking and Dagenham	12,293	3,301	26.9
307	Ealing	15,017	4,017	26.7
320	Waltham Forest	14,012	3,705	26.4
393	South Tyneside	10,109	2,663	26.3
380	Bradford	34,490	8,836	25.6
212	Wandsworth	10,254	2,589	25.2
355	Salford	12,633	3,161	25.0
889	Blackburn with Darwen	9,540	2,358	24.7
354	Rochdale	14,238	3,433	24.1
810	Kingston upon Hull, City of	15,942	3,819	24.0
821	Luton	12,285	2,905	23.6
344	Wirral	24,365	5,697	23.4
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	17,082	3,813	22.3
856	Leicester	17,883	3,972	22.2
304	Brent	16,148	3,555	22.0
308	Enfield	22,062	4,714	21.4
807	Redcar and Cleveland	10,130	2,157	21.3
370	Barnsley	13,655	2,812	20.6
805	Hartlepool	6,524	1,322	20.3
861	Stoke-on-Trent	14,964	3,012	20.1
353	Oldham	16,739	3,343	20.0
313	Hounslow	16,598	3,253	19.6
876	Halton	8,150	1,589	19.5
310	Harrow	9,020	1,742	19.3
890	Blackpool	8,797	1,692	19.2
306	Croydon	18,749	3,565	19.0
333	Sandwell	19,979	3,773	18.9
336	Wolverhampton	16,897	3,128	18.5
801	Bristol, City of	16,236	2,882	17.8
357	Tameside	15,859	2,799	17.6
383	Leeds	48,090	8,453	17.6
812	North East Lincolnshire	11,263	1,976	17.5
840	Durham	32,694	5,679	17.4
312	Hillingdon	17,419	3,006	17.3
390	Gateshead	11,983	2,066	17.2
808	Stockton-on-Tees	12,747	2,185	17.1
894	Telford and Wrekin	10,537	1,798	17.1
852	Southampton	11,972	2,032	17.0
331	Coventry	21,292	3,571	16.8
342	St. Helens	12,081	2,018	16.7
831	Derby	15,648	2,608	16.7
335	Walsall	21,349	3,552	16.6
373	Sheffield	31,621	5,220	16.5
318	Richmond upon Thames	7,287	1,194	16.4
874	Peterborough	12,918	2,116	16.4
382	Kirklees	26,577	4,323	16.3
315	Merton	8,540	1,377	16.1
846	Brighton and Hove	12,214	1,965	16.1
921	Isle of Wight	12,194	1,942	15.9
350	Bolton	19,812	3,081	15.6
394	Sunderland	19,546	3,038	15.5
343	Sefton	20,919	3,235	15.5
351	Portsmouth	9,942	1,522	15.3
871	Slough	8,538	1,285	15.1
317	Redbridge	20,313	3,052	15.0
372	Rotherham	20,342	3,046	15.0
332	Dudley	20,870	3,117	14.9
841	Darlington	6,293	927	14.7
302	Barnet	19,626	2,878	14.7
384	Wakefield	22,362	3,262	14.6

Maintained secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]— January 2005
Ranked by local authority in England

		Number on roll	Number known to be eligible for free meals	% known to be eligible for free meals
359	Wigan	21,209	3,038	14.3
371	Doncaster	21,961	3,113	14.2
883	Thurrock	8,749	1,189	13.6
351	Bury	11,912	1,606	13.5
880	Torbay	9,183	1,235	13.4
381	Calderdale	15,599	2,068	13.3
888	Lancashire	75,951	9,850	13.0
870	Reading	6,068	769	12.7
882	Southend-on-Sea	12,411	1,506	12.1
813	North Lincolnshire	10,786	1,302	12.1
392	North Tyneside	13,827	1,669	12.1
879	Plymouth	18,922	2,237	11.8
356	Stockport	16,660	1,965	11.8
909	Cumbria	35,478	4,052	11.4
891	Nottinghamshire	54,836	6,155	11.2
845	East Sussex	28,815	3,163	11.0
929	Northumberland	30,393	3,326	10.9
334	Solihull	15,696	1,706	10.9
358	Trafford	16,079	1,732	10.8
837	Bournemouth	9,916	1,064	10.7
305	Bromley	22,329	2,308	10.3
826	Milton Keynes	13,117	1,343	10.2
926	Norfolk	46,524	4,588	9.9
908	Cornwall	33,147	3,252	9.8
311	Havering	16,524	1,603	9.7
830	Derbyshire	50,871	4,797	9.4
820	Bedfordshire	37,784	3,494	9.2
935	Suffolk	54,317	4,884	9.0
303	Bexley	18,288	1,636	8.9
875	Cheshire	47,405	4,233	8.9
886	Kent	98,921	8,739	8.8
887	Medway	20,726	1,800	8.7
881	Essex	90,909	7,772	8.5
314	Kingston upon Thames	9,592	800	8.3
866	Swindon	11,477	952	8.3
885	Worcestershire	41,201	3,403	8.3
878	Devon	42,228	3,485	8.3
877	Warrington	14,086	1,162	8.2
860	Staffordshire	61,382	4,993	8.1
931	Oxfordshire	37,940	3,050	8.0
319	Sutton	15,967	1,276	8.0
933	Somerset	33,282	2,657	8.0
802	North Somerset	12,940	1,004	7.8
884	Herefordshire	10,502	807	7.7
816	York	10,330	787	7.6
873	Cambridgeshire	32,627	2,400	7.4

Maintained secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]— January 2005
Ranked by local authority in England

		Number on roll	Number known to be eligible for free meals	% known to be eligible for free meals
937	Warwickshire	34,293	2,464	7.2
928	Northamptonshire	45,553	3,270	7.2
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	23,581	1,654	7.0
916	Gloucestershire	40,592	2,810	6.9
803	South Gloucestershire	16,986	1,163	6.8
850	Hampshire	72,649	4,942	6.8
925	Lincolnshire	47,898	3,258	6.8
800	Bath and North East Somerset	12,583	849	6.7
919	Hertfordshire	79,638	5,344	6.7
893	Shropshire	18,191	1,218	6.7
938	West Sussex	45,804	2,833	6.2
835	Dorset	30,646	1,836	6.0
815	North Yorkshire	42,078	2,487	5.9
855	Leicestershire	46,994	2,773	5.9
936	Surrey	59,381	3,446	5.8
825	Buckinghamshire	34,817	2,008	5.8
865	Wiltshire	29,187	1,657	5.7
867	Bracknell Forest	6,105	336	5.5
836	Poole	8,559	466	5.4
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	10,481	568	5.4
869	West Berkshire	12,222	601	4.9
872	Wokingham	10,886	529	4.9
857	Rutland	2,357	75	3.2
201	City of London	[4]	[4]	[4]
420	Isles of Scilly	[4]	[4]	[4]

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[3] National and regional totals have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.
[4] Not applicable. No schools of this type
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average percentage of statutory school age children entitled to free school meals was in *(a)* London and *(b)* England in (i) grammar schools, (ii) local authority maintained schools, (iii) denominational schools and (iv) other schools excluding special schools in 2004–05. [24232]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is shown in the tables.

Maintained primary and secondary schools, city technology colleges and academies: number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[1]—January 2005, London Government Office Region and England

	Pupils of compulsory school age[2]					
	London			England		
	Number on roll	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Number on roll	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
Maintained primary[3]	485,710	140,560	28.9	3,396,460	610,020	18.0
Maintained secondary[3]	365,800	94,760	25.9	2,967,980	446,300	15.0
Of which:						
Grammar	14,170	310	2.2	111,780	2,620	2.3
City Technology Colleges	3,880	750	19.4	12,400	1,670	13.5
Academies	6,700	2,900	43.3	13,360	5,360	40.1

[1] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[2] Pupils aged 5 to 15 as at 31 August 2004.
[3] Includes middle schools as deemed.
Notes:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]—January 2005, London Government Office Region and England

Pupils of compulsory school age[3]

London

	Maintained primary			*Maintained secondary*		
	Number on roll	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Number on roll*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
No Religious Character	375,010	119,210	31.8	287,650	80,050	27.8
Church of England	48,210	10,460	21.7	20,800	4,690	22.6
Roman Catholic	57,610	10,600	18.4	52,340	9,560	18.3
Methodist	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
Other Christian Faith[4]	0	0	0.0	1,550	140	9.2
Jewish	4,080	130	3.1	2,830	200	7.2
Muslim	470	140	28.8	0	0	0.0
Sikh	180	20	9.3	360	40	10.8
Other	160	20	9.8	290	70	23.2
All schools	485,710	140,560	28.9	365,800	94,760	25.9

Pupils of compulsory school age[3]

England

	Maintained primary			*Maintained secondary*		
	Number on roll	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Number on roll*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
No Religious Character	2,401,720	483,460	20.1	2,510,510	385,800	15.4
Church of England	647,320	73,230	11.3	148,550	17,270	11.6
Roman Catholic	327,690	51,270	15.6	281,300	41,140	14.6
Methodist	3,770	570	15.2	0	0	0.0
Other Christian Faith[4]	8,140	1,040	12.7	22,070	1,490	6.8
Jewish	6,810	210	3.1	4,200	250	5.9
Muslim	670	210	31.5	700	240	34.1
Sikh	180	20	9.3	360	40	10.8
Other	160	20	9.8	290	70	23.2
All schools	3,396,460	610,020	18.0	2,967,980	446,300	15.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[3] Pupils aged 5 to 15 as at 31 August 2004.
[4] Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schoolchildren in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire are eligible for free school meals; and what the take-up has been in each year since 1997. [25727]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 7 November 2005]*: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: School meal arrangements[2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005—Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency

Maintained nursery and primary

	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals*
1997	8,126	460	5.7	605	7.4
1998	8,406	466	5.5	593	7.1
1999	8,580	441	5.1	593	6.9
2000	8,541	357	4.2	447	5.2
2001	8,467	344	4.1	423	5.0

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: School meal arrangements[2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005—Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency

Maintained nursery and primary

	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals*
2002	8,716	326	3.7	402	4.6
2003	8,581	313	3.6	363	4.2
2004	8,587	316	3.7	405	4.7
2005	8,524	292	3.4	356	4.2

Maintained secondary

	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals*
1997	7,681	778	10.1	1,029	13.4
1998	7,813	717	9.2	1,011	12.9
1999	7,982	779	9.8	1,001	12.5

	Maintained secondary				
	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2000	8,160	742	9.1	903	11.1
2001	8,348	697	8.3	840	10.1
2002	8,463	678	8.0	821	9.7
2003	8,610	677	7.9	758	8.8
2004	8,749	661	7.6	752	8.6
2005	8,819	583	6.6	688	7.8

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.

[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the census in January.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: School meal arrangements[2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005—Lancashire local authority

	Maintained nursery and primary				
	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
1997[4]	138,611	24,728	17.8	31,804	22.9
1998[4]	138,441	23,901	17.3	30,805	22.3
1999	108,733	16,093	14.8	20,995	19.3
2000	106,522	14,586	13.7	18,339	17.2
2001	105,137	13,526	12.9	16,966	16.1
2002	103,296	13,243	12.8	16,218	15.7

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: School meal arrangements[2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005—Lancashire local authority

	Maintained nursery and primary				
	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2003	101,077	13,172	13.0	15,578	15.4
2004	99,100	12,854	13.0	15,545	15.7
2005	97,142	11,979	12.3	14,396	14.8

	Maintained secondary				
	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
1997[4]	87,257	11,777	13.5	17,675	20.3
1998[4]	88,228	11,619	13.2	17,166	19.5
1999	72,793	8,943	12.3	12,572	17.3
2000	74,219	9,431	12.7	11,642	15.7
2001	74,814	8,941	12.0	11,182	14.9
2002	75,387	8,762	11.6	10,921	14.5
2003	76,412	8,819	11.5	10,749	14.1
2004	76,694	8,979	11.7	10,596	13.8
2005	75,951	8,323	11.0	9,850	13.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the census in January.
[4] Before local government reorganisation.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schoolchildren received free school meals in *(a)* Kettering constituency, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. [25951]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The information requested is shown in the tables.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools [1]: School meal arrangements [2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005

	Kettering parliamentary constituency									
	Maintained nursery and primary					Maintained secondary				
	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	% taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	% known to be eligible for free school meals	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	% taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	% known to be eligible for free school meals
1997	9,442	517	5.5	707	7.5	8,315	521	6.3	695	8.4
1998	9,613	550	5.7	691	7.2	8,427	480	5.7	665	7.9
1999	9,771	514	5.3	673	6.9	8,543	468	5.5	735	8.6
2000	9,844	491	5.0	730	7.4	8,944	500	5.6	687	7.7
2001	9,928	464	4.7	675	6.8	9,348	466	5.0	584	6.2
2002	9,931	505	5.1	706	7.1	9,057	374	4.1	495	5.5
2003	9,862	481	4.9	672	6.8	9,347	369	3.9	460	4.9
2004	9,858	425	4.3	651	6.6	9,506	392	4.1	515	5.4
2005	9,713	428	4.4	593	6.1	9,532	359	3.8	498	5.2

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools [1]: school meal arrangements [2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005

Northamptonshire local authority

	Maintained nursery and primary					*Maintained secondary*				
	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*% taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*% known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Number on roll*	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*% taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*% known to be eligible for free school meals*
1997	55,411	4,952	8.9	6,404	11.6	45,934	4,637	10.1	6,294	13.7
1998	55,721	4,666	8.4	5,955	10.7	46,405	4,392	9.5	5,952	12.8
1999	55,733	4,352	7.8	5,761	10.3	47,038	4,351	9.2	5,901	12.5
2000	55,517	4,213	7.6	5,936	10.7	48,020	4,004	8.3	5,630	11.7
2001	55,038	4,052	7.4	5,460	9.9	49,192	3,698	7.5	5,285	10.7
2002	54,867	4,026	7.3	5,406	9.9	49,702	3,666	7.4	5,003	10.1
2003	54,794	3,597	6.6	4,994	9.1	50,704	3,710	7.3	4,952	9.8
2004	57,741	4,083	7.1	5,501	9.5	47,413	3,055	6.4	4,113	8.7
2005	57,745	3,907	6.8	5,494	9.5	45,553	2,512	5.5	3,270	7.2

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools [1]: School meal arrangements [2]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005

England

	Maintained nursery and primary					*Maintained secondary*				
	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*% taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*% known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Number on roll*	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*% taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*% known to be eligible for free school meals*
1997	4,479,450	775,740	17.3	944,590	21.1	3,036,990	381,240	12.6	552,900	18.2
1998	4,508,920	731,580	16.2	891,050	19.8	3,069,030	367,800	12.0	537,070	17.5
1999	4,507,660	690,320	15.3	853,020	18.9	3,118,280	367,800	11.8	527,340	16.9
2000	4,481,680	671,490	15.0	821,520	18.3	3,178,000	368,300	11.6	523,630	16.5
2001	4,451,220	631,640	14.2	783,510	17.6	3,226,970	353,470	11.0	509,680	15.8
2002	4,405,640	616,630	14.0	754,510	17.1	3,260,930	354,260	10.9	486,350	14.9
2003	4,350,260	604,910	13.9	731,610	16.8	3,308,490	349,780	10.6	478,920	14.5
2004	4,293,180	608,760	14.2	741,150	17.3	3,326,800	351,380	10.6	477,290	14.3
2005	4,243,110	568,350	13.4	717,230	16.9	3,317,590	335,140	10.1	465,520	14.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part-time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the Census in January. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Gershon Review

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what she has assessed as being the 10 most successful ways in which individual schools are making efficiency savings as part of the Gershon review; and how much each measure is expected to save. [25528]

Bill Rammell: We expect schools will make efficiency gains in a number of ways. Those will depend on decisions made at school level, but are likely to include improved procurement, more effective use of staff, improved financial management, improved use of ICT, reduced bureaucracy through the New Relationship with Schools and more efficient exams procedures. The amounts realised in each way will depend on schools' own decisions.

The Department is currently considering the best way of disseminating best practice in schools to the wider schools sector.

Holland Park Secondary School

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans there are to support Holland Park Secondary School through the Building Schools for the Future initiative. [27249]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools for the Future is our long-term programme to provide 21st-century facilities for all secondary pupils. We aim to do this in 15 waves of investment from 2005–06, subject to future public spending decisions. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has submitted an expression of interest for its schools, including Holland Park School. We have indicated to the authority that it may join the programme in waves 4 to 6, which we hope to announce in 2007 after the next spending review.

Home-educated Children

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of

2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1179W, what notification arrangements are in place between local authorities when the parents of a home-educated child move from a local education authority which is aware that a child is being home-educated. [26391]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* We expect local authorities to have protocols for transferring information about home educated children who move to another authority, where the local authority is aware that home education is taking place. These protocols should be similar to those covering the transfer of information about children who are on the roll of a maintained school.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 2 November to Question 23237, what consideration she has given to the introduction of a legal requirement for parents or carers to notify their local authority of a decision to home educate. [26392]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* We have no plans to introduce a legal requirement for parents or carers to notify their local authority of a decision to home educate. However, we recommend that parents home educating their children inform their local authority. This will assist local authorities in targeting their resources as efficiently as possible in identifying children missing education.

Juvenile Learning and Skills

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on roll out of the pilot of the new means of service delivery for juvenile learning and skills. [26675]

Phil Hope: New arrangements for delivering learning and skills to offenders were introduced in three development regions, the South West, North West and North East, from 1 August 2005. The new offenders' learning and skills service covers juvenile offenders held in Young Offender Institutions. Action research is being carried out on the new service in order to inform the planned roll-out of the new service across the rest of England from August 2006.

The new arrangements emphasise early, intense focus on assessing the offender learner's needs, formulating them into an individual learning plan and addressing those needs in a joined-up way as the offender moves through the criminal justice system and into mainstream learning and skills. A new curriculum for offender learners is described in the "Offender's Learning Journey", of which there are separate adult and juvenile versions. (See http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning/uploads/docs/05%200111%20Juvenile%20OLJ%20v0.4.doc) This more integrated service is particularly important for juvenile offenders, many of whom will continue their education on release.

The new service is planned and funded by the Learning and Skills Council, working in close collaboration with the National Offender Management Service and, in the case of juvenile offenders, with the Youth Justice Board. These close working arrangements will ensure the learning and skills service commissioned meets the needs of the learners and, for those of working age, the needs of employers in the areas within which they will be resettled.

Learning and Skills Council

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the restructuring of the Learning and Skills Council. [24376]

Bill Rammell: This week the LSC announced more details of its restructuring exercise which will make it a smaller, more dynamic and more customer-focused organisation. This will build upon its existing strengths; further develop its relationships with providers and with its partners, and help push the highest proportion of its funding out through colleges and providers into front line delivery. At local level, the LSC will develop small teams of professional staff who will support the delivery of its priority objectives through strategic relationships with colleges, providers and other key stakeholders and so ensure that the needs of local employers and learners are met.

The LSC are consulting fully with staff and Trades Unions, in line with best industrial relations practice. Redundancy will be offered on a voluntary basis where possible. Where this is not possible, redeployment opportunities should be investigated fully, consistent with Cabinet Office guidelines.

The effects on organisation and staffing are matters for the LSC. I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive, to write to the hon. Lady with further information. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Modern Apprenticeships

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of young people started a modern apprenticeship by the age of 22 years in 2004/05; and if she will make a statement. [26797]

Phil Hope: Learning providers have until the end of November 2005 to register new apprenticeship starts for the 2004/05 academic year with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). As in previous years this is to take account of delays in reporting starts to the council. We will then make an assessment of the percentage of young people entering an apprenticeship by age 22, and make a statement.

Nursery Places

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Cleethorpes constituency attended nursery in each of the past 10 years; and how many have taken up free nursery places since the policy was introduced. [26505]

Beverley Hughes: All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-years-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

The available information on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Cleethorpes parliamentary constituency area and North East Lincolnshire local authority is shown in the tables.

For 2005, information for private and voluntary providers is available for North East Lincolnshire but not currently available for Cleethorpes constituency.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds. Local authority North East Lincolnshire

Position in January each year

	Three-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total three-year-olds*
1997	920	n/a	920
1998	980	n/a	980
1999	1,000	n/a	1,000
2000	1,000	[5]520	1,500
2001	930	[5]550	1,500
2002	940	[5]620	1,600
2003	990	[5]690	1,700
2004	870	[7]730	1,600
2005	900	[7]650	1,500

Position in January each year

	Four-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total four-year-olds*
1997	n/a	n/a	[4]2,100
1998	n/a	n/a	[4]2,000
1999	n/a	n/a	[4]2,000
2000	n/a	n/a	[4]2,000
2001	n/a	n/a	[4]1,900
2002	1,700	[6]230	1,900
2003	1,600	[6]240	1,900
2004	1,700	[6]240	1,900
2005	1,500	[8]220	1,700

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds. Parliamentary constituency Cleethorpes

Position in January each year

	Three-year-olds		*Four-year-olds*	
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*
2004	310	500	900	150
2005	320	n/a	820	n/a

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local authority area and other factors. However, my Department does not publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Part-time Students

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures her Department is taking to increase numbers of part-time students. [25947]

Bill Rammell: This Government were the first to introduce statutory support for students studying on a part-time basis. We are determined to see the vibrant part-time sector sustained. To this end we recently announced an improved package of support for part-time students in 2006/07 that seeks to ensure access for those on lower incomes so that the part-time sector can continue this strong performance. The new package raises the maximum level of grant for fees by 27 per cent. from £885 to £1,125, while maintaining the course grant at £250. Furthermore, resource from the Access to Learning Fund will increase from £3 million to £12 million to provide still greater additional fee support and general hardship support for students in the most challenging financial circumstances.

We have also recently announced, in connection with the Higher Education Funding Council for England, an additional £40 million in institutional funding in 2006/07 to encourage participation and improve provision for part-time students from the most under-represented groups.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her Department's policy to move away from a knowledge-based culture in science

education as set out on page 36 of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's document "Futures: Meeting the Challenge". [23449]

Jacqui Smith: The KS4 science programme of study for 2006 developed with input from the scientific community is based on the science process ("how science works") but the amount of factual knowledge defined in the breadth of study section is only slightly less than at present which allows for the development of skills and understanding. The new programme of study moves away from a predominantly knowledge-based approach to one in which the balance between knowledge and process is more even. Skills, knowledge and understanding of the science process ("how science works") usually become meaningful only when they are set in the context of (factual knowledge) about science.

School Exclusions

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have been excluded permanently from schools in Suffolk in each year since 1997. [25178]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools: number of permanent exclusions, Suffolk local authority

	Primary[1]		Secondary[1]		Special[2]		Total[3]	
	Number of permanent exclusions	Percentage of the school population[4]	Number of permanent exclusions	Percentage of the school population[4]	Number of permanent exclusions	Percentage of the school population[4]	Number of permanent exclusions	Percentage of the school population[4]
1996/97	13	0.03	98	0.20	5	0.59	120	0.12
1997/98	13	0.03	104	0.21	12	1.38	130	0.13
1998/99	18	0.04	106	0.21	0	0.00	120	0.12
1999/2000	23	0.05	77	0.15	0	0.00	100	0.10
2000/01[5]	13	0.03	133	0.25	[6]	[6]	150	0.14
2001/02[5]	26	0.05	135	0.25	0	0.00	160	0.16
2002/03[5]	22	0.05	126	0.23	[6]	[6]	150	0.15
2003/04[5]	32	0.07	161	0.30	[6]	[6]	200	0.19

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
[3] Totals across school types have been rounded to the nearest 10.
[4] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of all pupils (excluding dually registered pupils) in January each year.
[5] From 2000/01 some schools are known to have under reported the number of permanent exclusions in their Annual Schools' Census return, so the Department carried out a separate data checking exercise at local authority level.
[6] Less than 3, or a rate based on less than 3
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

School Meals

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school children in Cleethorpes constituency receive free school meals, broken down by school. [24756]

Jacqui Smith: The data requested are shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2] January 2005—Cleethorpes parliamentary constituency

LEA number	DfES Establishment Number	School name	Number on roll	Number of pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage of pupils taking free school meals[3]	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
812	2000	Allerton Primary School	293	28	9.6	41	14.0
812	2109	William Bancroft Junior School	283	53	18.7	69	24.4
812	2112	Elliston Infants' School	212	39	18.4	53	25.0
812	2113	Queen Mary Avenue Infant School	318	67	21.1	77	24.2
812	2114	Reynolds Junior School	191	19	9.9	30	15.7
813	2116	East Halton Primary School	54	[4]	[4]	3	5.6
813	2118	Goxhill Primary School	244	15	6.1	15	6.1
812	2124	New Waltham Primary School	272	[4]	[4]	6	2.2
813	2125	Killingholme Primary School	125	17	13.6	18	14.4
812	2142	Thrunscoe Infants' School	129	19	14.7	23	17.8
812	2145	Enfield (New Waltham) Primary School	140	[4]	[4]	4	2.9
812	2151	The Leas Junior School	319	6	1.9	10	3.1
812	2153	Thrunscoe Junior School	159	20	12.6	36	22.6
812	2154	Healing Primary School	310	6	1.9	6	1.9
812	2175	Signhills Infants' School	242	5	2.1	5	2.1
812	2176	Signhills Junior School	348	16	4.6	17	4.9
812	2178	Eastfield Junior School	165	25	15.2	35	21.2
812	2179	Eastfield Infants' School	172	18	10.5	29	16.9
812	2181	The Leas Infants' School	196	8	4.1	8	4.1
812	2182	Middlethorpe Primary School	246	5	2.0	16	6.5
812	2183	Reynolds Infants' School	215	12	5.6	13	6.0
812	2184	Elliston Junior School	240	44	18.3	64	26.7
813	2568	Bowmandale Primary School	299	27	9.0	27	9.0
812	2877	Coomb Briggs Primary School	180	5	2.8	8	4.4

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2] January 2005—Cleethorpes parliamentary constituency

LEA number	DfES Establishment Number	School name	Number on roll	Number of pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage of pupils taking free school meals[3]	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
812	2939	Humberston Cloverfields Primary School	289	5	1.7	6	2.1
813	2940	Castledyke Primary School	310	63	20.3	84	27.1
812	2943	Bursar Primary School	198	27	13.6	47	23.7
813	3056	John Harrison CofE Primary School	191	9	4.7	10	5.2
813	3057	Barton St. Peter's CofE Primary School	272	37	13.6	43	15.8
812	3059	St. Peter's CofE Primary School	185	36	19.5	68	36.8
812	3060	East Ravendale CofE Primary School	105	4	3.8	5	4.8
812	3065	The Humberston CofE Primary School	303	[4]—	[4]—	8	2.6
813	3067	Kirmington CofE Primary School	30	[4]—	[4]—	4	13.3
812	3068	Stainford Junior and Infant School	229	5	2.2	9	3.9
812	3072	Stallingborough CofE Primary School	87	3	3.4	3	3.4
813	3078	New Holland Church of England and Methodist Primary School	78	9	11.5	9	11.5
813	3079	Ulceby St Nicholas Church of England Primary School	152	4	2.6	6	3.9
813	3322	Wootton St. Andrew's CofE Primary School	51	0	0.0	0	0.0
812	3514	St. Joseph's RC Primary School	160	14	8.8	18	11.3
812	3516	The Canon Peter Hall CofE Primary School	227	63	27.8	70	30.8
812	4073	The Immingham School	867	87	10.0	158	18.2
812	4078	Tollbar Business and Enterprise College	1,929	73	3.8	90	4.7
812	4084	Healing School, A Specialist Science College	762	31	4.1	33	4.3
812	4086	The Lindsey School and Community Arts College	1,395	85	6.1	169	12.1
812	4092	Humberston Comprehensive School	715	21	2.9	36	5.0
813	4491	Baysgarth School	1,012	112	11.1	131	12.9
812	4503	Matthew Humberstone Church of England School	1,382	236	17.1	279	20.2

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes dually registered and boarding pupils.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.
[4] Less than 3 or a rate based on less than 3.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school children in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire are eligible for free school meals; and what the take-up rate has been in each of the past five years. [24757]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]— North East Lincolnshire local authority

Maintained nursery and primary

Position in January each year: 2001 to 2005	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	16,161	3,039	18.8	3,811	23.6
2002	15,980	2,514	15.7	3,562	22.3
2003	15,657	2,476	15.8	3,349	21.4
2004	15,160	2,227	14.7	3,244	21.4
2005	14,814	2,102	14.2	2,863	19.3

Maintained secondary

Position in January each year: 2001 to 2005	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	11,735	1,649	14.1	2,421	20.6
2002	11,841	1,574	13.3	2,291	19.3
2003	11,826	1,633	13.8	2,222	18.8
2004	11,731	1,456	12.4	2,134	18.2
2005	11,263	1,310	11.6	1,976	17.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part-time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained nursery and primary

Position in January each year: 2001 to 2005	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	14,706	1,979	13.5	2,255	15.3
2002	14,570	1,756	12.1	2,075	14.2
2003	14,378	1,781	12.4	2,026	14.1
2004	14,117	1,708	12.1	2,086	14.8
2005	14,058	1,601	11.4	2,019	14.4

Maintained secondary

	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	10,649	954	9.0	1,435	13.5
2002	10,671	1,007	9.4	1,361	12.8
2003	10,815	1,109	10.3	1,335	12.3
2004	10,922	1,083	9.9	1,367	12.5
2005	10,796	916	8.5	1,302	12.1

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part-time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Schools

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils attend each *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school in (i) Ribble Valley and (ii) Lancashire. [24313]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on counselling services in schools in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire in each of the last five years. [25568]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in the Putney constituency are included in the Building Schools for the Future Programme; which wave of the programme each school will be in; what the agreed funding is for each school; and what stage each project already under way has reached. [27245]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is our long-term programme to provide 21st-century facilities to all secondary pupils. We aim to do this in 15 waves of investment from 2005–06, subject to future public spending decisions. All schools in Putney serving secondary-age pupils will be eligible for investment, as part of the London borough of Wandsworth's single BSF project. We have indicated to Wandsworth that its project may start in waves 4 to 6, which we hope to announce in 2007 after the next spending review. The funding and time scales for individual schools will not be agreed until after the project has started.

Science Teaching

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the syllabus used for the Twentieth Century Science and Science for the Citizen pilots. [27227]

Jacqui Smith: A copy of the Twenty-First Century Science pilot specification is available on request from OCR, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1PB. This pilot has informed the development of OCR's GCSE Science Suite A, which is available on OCR's website. A copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library. The term "science for the citizen" refers to the approach taken through the new specifications and examinations to develop scientific literacy and does not refer to a particular qualification or pilot.

Sure Start

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have benefited from the Sure Start scheme in Morley and Rothwell constituency; and what plans she has to extend such schemes in the constituency. [26170]

Beverley Hughes: There are currently no Sure Start local programmes in Morley and Rothwell. From March 2006 a designated Sure Start Children's Centre will be based at the Seven Hills Primary School and Queen St. Early Years Centre. It will provide services to children and families in the area and is expected to work with around 1,100 children aged under 5 and their families. It will also provide 50 additional full day care places.

Leeds city council is currently consulting key stakeholders as part of the process of planning for further possible children's centres in the second phase of their development from 2006–08.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received on tackling the impact of socio-economic status upon educational performance. [26033]

Beverley Hughes: The Secretary of State regularly meets individuals and representatives of organisations throughout the education system who share the priorities she set out in her speech to IPPR on 26 July 2005. This detailed the Government's commitment to maintaining a genuinely comprehensive education system—a system that meets the needs of all children, whatever their backgrounds, their preferences or their ability.

The White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" sets out our proposals for ensuring that a good education is available to every child in every community. We look forward to continued representations on how these proposals can improve social mobility as we discuss the White Paper and when we introduce the associated legislation.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the provision of extended schooling upon under achievement by children from low socio-economic backgrounds; [26061]

(2) what assessment she has made of the capacity of schools to provide extended schooling; [26062]

(3) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the *(a)* availability and *(b)* accessibility of extra-curricular activities, including sports for children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26046]

Beverley Hughes: Since 2002 my Department has supported three evaluations of extended schools. The reports of these evaluations have shown that it is likely that extended services accessed through schools generate a range of educational benefits for pupils, families and communities in disadvantaged areas. These include: raised pupil attainment; improved pupil attendance, behaviour and attitudes towards learning; and increased parental involvement in their children's

education. Access to extended services at or through schools can reduce barriers to learning through multi-agency working to support vulnerable children and families, help develop learning cultures in deprived communities, and support non-working parents back into work, so reducing child poverty.

The latest of these reports, of the first year of the evaluation of full service extended schools, was published on 29 September 2005. The evaluation involved schools in areas of disadvantage and shows that there is considerable anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes from extended services accessed through schools. Although this does not yet amount to robust evidence of effectiveness it suggests that there will be longer term and wide-ranging outcome for pupils and families from low socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, the schools involved in the evaluation said that the extended schools initiative allowed them to address issues previously beyond their reach, such as drug problems and malnutrition, but which affect their pupils' achievement and other outcomes. This evaluation will continue until 2007 by which time we hope to have more substantial evidence on impacts.

We know, through a base line survey of extended services in schools published in September 2005, that the vast majority of schools, 95 per cent. of secondary and 87 per cent. of primary schools, are already offering after schools activities or childcare. The extended schools agenda is not about increasing the workload of existing school staff or schools providing all these services directly themselves on the school site. The evaluation of extended schools has shown that when managed properly the provision of extended services could free heads and teachers to concentrate on their core business. Schools are being encouraged to work with existing providers from both the private and voluntary sectors, other children's services and other nearby schools to deliver extended services and to make good use of their expertise and skills.

A package of support is in place to support schools develop extended services. We have made available £680 million over the period 2006–08 to local authorities and schools. This is additional to the £160 million we have provided to date. This funding can be used flexibly by local authorities and schools to help overcome barriers to developing extended services. The National Remodelling Team has been appointed to work with local authorities and schools to help them develop extended services and in a way that is consistent with school workforce reform.

By 2010 we want all schools to provide a varied range of study support activities with half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008. Funding for a school's or local authority's study support (out of school hours learning) programme is available through their base budgets, and the School Development Grant. Furthermore, the recently published White Paper: "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All", announced that £335 million has been earmarked for 2007–08 to support the personalised learning agenda, of which study support will form an intrinsic part. Helping children from deprived families is a priority for this funding.

The Government are also implementing the national school sport strategy. The strategy is delivering an ambitious public service agreement target to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and then 85 per cent. by 2008. The long-term ambition, by 2010, is to offer all children at least four hours of sport every week. This will comprise at least two hours of PE and sport at school and at least an additional 2–3 hours of sport beyond the school day (delivered by a range of school, community and club providers). In the five years to 2008 over £1.5 billion is being invested to implement the strategy. The 2004/05 school sport survey results found that overall, 69 per cent. of pupils were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport a week. The results were published on 2 September 2005 and copies have been placed in the House Libraries.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the home literacy environment for children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26092]

Jacqui Smith: With Government funding, Bookstart is now extending to reach all children in England at six to nine months with a baby bag, at 18 to 24 months with a toddler bag, and at three years old with the 'My Bookstart Treasure Chest'. The objective is to encourage parents to read with their children. The scheme promotes the important role libraries play in supporting children's early learning. In addition the Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programme enables parents and their children to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills together. It is funded by the Learning and Skills Council and delivered locally mainly in schools and is focused on the most deprived LEAs in England to help parents and children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Alan John Davies

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the detention of Alan John Davies in a Thai jail. [26131]

Ian Pearson: We are currently supporting Mr. Davies' second Royal Pardon Petition. The outcome of clemency pleas is unpredictable. The Thai authorities have assured our embassy in Bangkok that the petition will be considered as quickly as possible. Our staff in Thailand continue to raise Mr. Davies' case with the Thai authorities at every appropriate opportunity, and visit him regularly to monitor his welfare.

British Nationals (Death Sentences)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals have been convicted and sentenced to death for drug smuggling in *(a)* Thailand and *(b)* Singapore in the last five years. [25207]

Dr. Howells: In the last five years, two British nationals have been convicted and sentenced to death for drug smuggling in Thailand. There have been none in Singapore.

Burma

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on bilateral relations with Burma. [25605]

Ian Pearson: We remain deeply concerned by the situation in Burma.

We regularly raise our concerns with the Burmese authorities. On 26 October, our ambassador in Rangoon drew the attention of the Burmese Home Minister, Colonel Tin Hlaing, to the concerns of both Houses over the situation in Burma and raised human rights again with the Burmese Ministers for Labour and Foreign Affairs on 31 October.

We continue to believe that it is essential for the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to enter into a constructive dialogue with all legitimate representative bodies, including Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, and the ethnic groups to promote national reconciliation.

Human rights violations have been highlighted by successive highly critical UK co-sponsored UN Resolutions on Burma, most recently at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April. These issues remain a focus for the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, whom we urge the SPDC to allow to return to Burma.

Congestion Charge

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to advise diplomatic missions to the UK that the congestion charge does not constitute a form of direct taxation under the Vienna Convention. [25420]

Mr. Straw: We informed all missions by Note Verbale in March 2002 of our sustained view that there were no legal grounds to exempt diplomatic missions from payment of the congestion charge. Since then, in formal and informal exchanges, we have informed missions of our view that the congestion charge does not constitute a form of direct taxation under the Vienna Convention, but is a charge analogous to a motorway toll, and that they are expected to pay.

ECOWAS

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* effectiveness, *(b)* transparency and *(c)* accountability of ECOWAS. [24435]

Ian Pearson: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has shown good leadership on governance and security issues in recent years, evidenced by successful interventions in Guinea Bissau and Togo in 2005. ECOWAS is also making progress in trade related areas, particularly on establishing a common external tariff.

But the institution remains weak, particularly in its financial management and administrative systems. The UK is working with international partners to strengthen the ECOWAS Secretariat, and is providing technical and financial assistance to improve budgetary planning and management. A UK military liaison officer has also been seconded to assist with development of ECOWAS conflict management capability.

Embassy Closures

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria are used when deciding to close an embassy; and in what ways the criteria applied to *(a)* Paraguay, *(b)* Lesotho, *(c)* Swaziland, *(d)* Madagascar, *(e)* Bahamas, *(f)* Kiribati, *(g)* Tonga, *(h)* Vanatu and *(i)* Timor Leste. [26439]

Mr. Straw: In deciding the changes to the network I announced on 15 December 2004, which included the closure of these posts, the key factors I took into account in each case were the contributions of the post towards Foreign and Commonwealth Office priorities, including service delivery, the practicality of cover from elsewhere and the potential savings.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 76W, on the European Court of Human Rights, how many cases have been defended by Government Departments at the European Court of Human Rights since 1997; and which was the lead Department in each case. [25111]

Dr. Howells: The number of cases communicated to the Government by the European Court of Human Rights since 1 November 1998, when a single full-time court was established under Protocol 11, is 789. There are no records of the lead Department for each of these cases.

Holy See

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) pursuant to the answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 954W, on the Holy See, why no advertisement inviting applications for the post of UK Ambassador to the Holy See was published in any national newspaper of Wales; [25532]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 954W, on the Holy See, why no advertisement inviting applications for the post of UK Ambassador to the Holy See was published in any national newspaper of Northern Ireland. [25533]

Mr. Straw: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 171–72W.

India

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he

has held with the government of India about *(a)* sex-selective abortion and *(b)* infanticide; and if he will make a statement. [25740]

Dr. Howells: There has not been any ministerial discussion with any member of the Indian Government on either of these issues.

Officials at our High Commission in New Delhi monitor the situation and raise our concerns regularly, most recently on 5 October at a meeting between our Deputy High Commissioner and the Chairman of the National Commission for Women. We have also supported the work of the Centre for Women's Development Studies to combat pre-natal sex selection in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Iraq

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of expenditure by the coalition provisional authority of *(a)* Iraqi funds and *(b)* US funding since the occupation of Iraq. [25935]

Dr. Howells: United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483 (22 May 2003) established the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) and the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) to oversee it. All revenues from the export of Iraq's oil are transferred into the DFI account, with the exception of 5 per cent. of revenues, which are deposited in a fund used to finance legitimate claims for compensation following Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990. UNSCR 1483 authorised the coalition provisional authority (CPA) to act as the administrator of the DFI. The CPA performed this role until 28 June 2004, when control of the DFI was transferred to the sovereign Government of Iraq. Our information indicates that between July 2003 and June 2004 the CPA allocated approximately $6.9 billion in contract awards.

Media reporting has focused on recent reports by the US Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) and the external auditor KPMG. SIGIR was established under the CPA to provide oversight of CPA operations and programmes.

SIGIR's report on the period 22 May 2003 to 28 June 2004 examines whether the CPA established and implemented adequate controls over disbursements made to Iraqi ministries. SIGIR found 'less than adequate controls' for approximately $8.8 billion funds in the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) allocated to Iraqi ministries by the CPA.

Although procedures did not meet the standards of western Governments, we feel the SIGIR report fails to take account of two important factors.

Firstly, there was an imperative to get ministries up and running quickly against the background of a chaotic bureaucratic legacy bestowed by the Ba'athist regime. This meant relying on the ability of the Iraqi civil service to get ministries functioning and reconstruction projects started. The alternative would have been to institute a system that could have delayed expenditure for months.

Secondly, the SIGIR report fails to take account of the progress made by the CPA to improve financial management in Iraqi ministries and of the budget process. Under the former regime, budgets and economic data were kept secret. In contrast, the CPA published the Iraqi national budgets for 2003 and 2004 and designed a transparent framework for management of the national budget. It also took measures to improve reporting and record keeping.

We and coalition partners continue to work with the Iraqi Government, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to ensure transparency and accountability in Iraqi public finances.

US funding for reconstruction in Iraq is managed by the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO). IRMO was established in May 2004 to co-ordinate the US reconstruction programme in Iraq, in co-operation with the Iraqi Government. Accounting for the financial management of US funds in Iraq is a matter for the US Government.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what approaches have been made to the UK by President Talabani or other representatives of the Iraqi Government to limit UK forces to the guarding of oil pipelines and other strategic installations. [26188]

Dr. Howells: The Government have received no such representations.

Israel/Palestine

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to assist the tackling of terrorism in Israel and Palestine. [25904]

Dr. Howells: We continue to call upon the Palestinian Authority (PA) to take action against those who commit terrorist acts. Following the suicide bombing in Hadera on 26 October we continue to urge the Palestinians to make progress in meeting their commitments on security under the roadmap and the Sharm al-Shaikh agreement. I recently discussed the security situation with the Palestinians during my visit to the region on 27–30 September.

We continue to work closely with the US Security Co-ordinator General Ward to help the PA build its capacity on security. We have taken the lead in the EU Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police (EUCOPPS), which is helping to improve Palestinian police effectiveness in delivering law and order.

Maldives

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings ministers have held with representatives of the Maldive Islands Government in respect of Mohamed Nasheed. [25830]

Dr. Howells: Ministers have not held any meetings with the Government of the Maldives on this subject. The British High Commission in Colombo, accredited to the Maldives, is monitoring Mohamed Nasheed's trial closely. The High Commissioner has raised our concerns about the trial with the Government of the Maldives on several occasions.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to bring pressure on the Government of the Maldives to ensure that Mohammed Nasheed receives a fair trial. [25929]

Dr. Howells: The Government monitors developments in the Maldives closely, and we have a regular dialogue with the Government of the Maldives about their democratic and human rights obligations.

Following the disturbances in August during which Mohammed Nasheed was arrested, the British High Commission in Colombo led an EU fact-finding mission to the Maldives, meeting Government Ministers, officials and detainees, including Mohammed Nasheed. On 2 September, the EU issued a statement that reiterated to the Maldivian authorities their responsibility to uphold the right of political parties to meet freely and to carry out peaceful political activities. It also underlined that it was essential for the fundamental rights of all detainees to be upheld and for the Maldivian authorities to ensure due process in the trial of Nasheed and others. The statement underlined that trials would come under close scrutiny.

The High Commission in Colombo has since raised these issues regularly at a senior level with the Government of the Maldives. The High Commissioner did so on 26 September with President Gayoom and on 31 October with Foreign Minister Dr. Ahmed Shaheed. The Deputy High Commissioner also raised these issues with Foreign Minister Shaheed on 27 October following Mr. Nasheed's first court appearance.

We will continue to monitor events closely and make our concerns known. On 8 November I met with senior colleagues of Mr. Nasheed from the Maldivian Democratic Party to hear their views.

Poland

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has extended his congratulations to the newly elected *(a)* Prime Minister and *(b)* President of Poland. [26069]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No, it is my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister who has congratulated the new Polish Prime Minister and President. I have, however, congratulated the new Polish Foreign Minister and look forward to working with him and the rest of the new Polish Government in developing the excellent relations that exist between our two countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the UK missions in sub-Saharan Africa get their water and sanitation services through *(a)* piped networks and *(b)* tankers or other non-network providers. [25759]

Mr. Straw: Of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 29 posts in sub-Saharan Africa, 17 receive both their water and sewerage services through mains piped networks from local utility companies. Unreliable or non-existent mains water supply at many missions necessitates that tanks are used for storage, and replenished by tankers, or from our own boreholes. Similarly the lack of main sewers requires some posts to use septic tanks or other private arrangements, some of which require emptying by tankers.

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations UK missions in sub-Saharan Africa have made to their host Governments in 2005 on improving water and sanitation services for the population of the country concerned. [25760]

Mr. Straw: Through the Department for International Development, UK missions are actively engaged in policy dialogue with host Governments about improving water and sanitation services for the poor in 12 African countries: Ethiopia; Nigeria; Sudan; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ghana; Sierra Leone; Tanzania; Uganda; Rwanda; Zambia; Mozambique; and Malawi.

In March this year, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) announced a doubling of funding over the next three years for improvements to water and sanitation in Africa: up to at least £95 million in 2007–08.

Sudan

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Darfur. [25319]

Ian Pearson: We remain seriously concerned about the situation in Darfur. In his latest report on Darfur, the UN Secretary-General noted a deterioration in the security situation in September and stated that attacks have increased in cruelty and violence. All parties, except the Justice and Equality Movement, were responsible for ceasefire violations. But banditry remains the greatest cause of insecurity, accompanied by frequent harassment and assaults on humanitarian aid workers. The UN Secretary-General stated that, despite this, a greater number of people requiring humanitarian assistance are being reached by UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, who are increasingly and consistently supporting vulnerable people and remote communities. These agencies are doing an excellent job in difficult and often dangerous circumstances.

This increase in violence, and particularly attacks on humanitarian workers, are entirely unacceptable. We are encouraging anyone with information on the perpetrators to pass it to the relevant bodies for consideration under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1591 and 1593. We continue to press the parties to rein in their fighters and to reach a political agreement in Abuja when talks reconvene on 21 November. We continue to provide practical assistance to the African Union's monitoring mission in Darfur.

Travellers (Advice)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice to travellers to *(a)* the United States, *(b)* Israel and *(c)* Bali was being issued on the Foreign Office website in September. [25741]

Dr. Howells: Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice is constantly updated. In September 2005 the travel advice for the United States was updated 28 times, for Israel and the Occupied Territories three times and for Indonesia three times.

United States

The travel advice was updated 28 times to reflect changes due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. There were no other amendments other than for this reason.

Israel and the Occupied Territories

The travel advice was updated on 6 September to reflect an explosion on 5 September in Gaza City that killed four and injured at least 20 others and an update of the disengagement of settlers from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank. The travel advice was updated again on 7 September to reflect the murder of Mousa Arafat, and to advise that the security situation in Gaza may deteriorate further. The travel advice was updated again on 13 September to advise against all but essential travel to Gaza City and against all travel to Gaza City at night, including overnight stays.

Indonesia

The travel advice was updated on 6 September with minor amendments including one concerning the Indonesian police campaign against illegal drug use. The travel advice was further amended on 21 September with further information about avian influenza, in particular Ragunan Zoo in Jakarta was closed on 19 September after bird flu was detected in caged birds. The travel advice was updated again on 29 September with details of large public demonstrations that were being planned in Jakarta and other cities in Indonesia to protest against fuel shortages and fuel price rises which were to take effect on 1 October.

Uzbekistan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Uzbekistan regarding the treatment in detention of opposition leader Sanjar Umarov. [26770]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Our Ambassador in Tashkent, David Moran, discussed the case of Sanjar Umarov, leader of the opposition group the Sunshine Coalition, on 25 October with First Deputy Foreign Minister Mustafayev and on 2 November with Foreign Minister Ganiev. David Moran raised our concerns at the treatment of Mr. Umarov in detention and requested medical treatment for Mr. Umarov.

As Presidency of the EU, we issued a statement on 25 October seeking clarification of the charges against Mr. Umarov and calling on the Uzbek authorities to treat Mr. Umarov according to international norms and to allow him full access to his lawyers, his family and others concerned about his wellbeing.

West Papua

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to support a UN-sponsored democratic self-determination referendum to be held in West Papua. [26133]

Ian Pearson: The UK supports the territorial integrity of Indonesia. We believe the best solution to the internal differences in Papua is to be found through peaceful dialogue between the Government of Indonesia and representatives of the Papuan people, and the implementation of the Special Autonomy Law of 2001. We welcome President Yudhoyono's recent statement that he is committed to a "just, comprehensive and dignified solution", including through "consistent implementation" of Special Autonomy.

CABINET OFFICE

Political Guidelines

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what guidelines exist for executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies on making public comments on party political matters. [27237]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Staff in executive agencies are civil servants, and are therefore required to conduct themselves in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Service Code.

Staff in non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) are generally not civil servants. However, Cabinet Office guidance on NDPBs requires that they have a staff Code of Conduct, which should include the requirement for staff of public bodies to conduct themselves with impartiality, as well as integrity and honesty.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pensions

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role his Department has played in recent negotiations about the reform of public sector pensions. [24171]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Antrim (Mr. Wilson) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 741W.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Women in Politics

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government is taking to increase women's representation in politics at all levels. [24109]

Meg Munn: In 2002 we introduced the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act allowing positive measures towards women's increased participation.

There are now:

127 women in the House of Commons;

133 female Peers;

6 female Cabinet Ministers;

50 per cent. of the Welsh Assembly are women;

39.5 per cent. of the Scottish Parliament are women.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year. [23298]

Mr. Hanson: No call centres were run by the Northern Ireland Office or its Agencies.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21909]

Mr. Hain: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently. All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in "Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments". The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

Departmental Consultations

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22574]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows:

Title of Consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for response*
Consultation paper on Electoral Registration in Northern Ireland	5 August 2005	14 October 2005
Consultation paper on proposals on the future of donations to political parties in Northern Ireland	5 August 2005	14 October 2005
Amendment to Code D of the Codes of Practice under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 and Part 2 of the Section 99 Code of Practice issued under the Terrorism Act 2000	19 September 2005	12 December 2005
Consultation on Equality Impact Assessment into the terms of the Police Voluntary Severance Scheme	6 May 2005	[1]

[1] Deadline deferred pending the outcome of on-going legal proceedings in respect of the Severance Scheme.

Domestic Violence

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many incidents of domestic violence have been recorded in each of the district command units in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; [24046]

(2) how many incidents of domestic violence reported in Northern Ireland have been violence *(a)* by men against women and *(b)* by women against men in each of the last five years. [24047]

Mr. Hanson: PSNI are the only organisation that record domestic violence incidents and it is believed that the very nature of domestic violence abuse—in that much of the abuse takes place behind closed doors with victims often living in fear—that most of the incidents of this crime go unreported.

The number of domestic violence incidents reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland continues to rise annually. The number of incidents reported rose from 16,926 in 2003–04 to 20,959 in 2004–05 (an increase of 24 per cent.). It is recognised that there is considerable under reporting of incidents of domestic violence and an increase in reports is a welcome indication in confidence in the police to take effective action and support victims. PSNI figures for domestic incidents across District Command Units are available for the last three years only.

PSNI Information is available only on the total number of male and female victims. Figures from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2003–04 indicate that 20 per cent. of all females claim to have been victims of domestic violence at some time in their lives, while the victimisation rate in males is lower at 11 per cent.

PSNI statistics are available in the tables.

The Government have recently launched a new Domestic Violence Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Domestic incidents, crimes by District Command Unit and number of victims for April 2002 to March 2005

	2002–03				
			Total number of:		
	Incidents	*Crimes*	*Male victims*	*Female victims*	*Victims under 17*
Antrim	405	240	50	207	5
Ards	444	212	42	209	4
East Belfast	1,085	457	56	398	3
North Belfast	960	399	33	366	0
South Belfast	520	283	40	288	4
West Belfast	1,089	892	198	806	18

Domestic incidents, crimes by District Command Unit and number of victims for April 2002 to March 2005

	2002–03				
			Total number of:		
	Incidents	*Crimes*	*Male victims*	*Female victims*	*Victims under 17*
Carrickfergus	379	160	15	143	2
Castlereagh	399	191	54	165	1
Larne	354	188	42	143	3
Lisburn	1,198	560	97	460	3
Newtownabbey	641	281	43	235	3
North Down	643	326	72	404	7
Urban Region	8,117	4,189	742	3,824	53
Armagh	308	145	47	256	5
Ballymena	266	174	26	145	3
Ballymoney	146	72	11	61	0
Banbridge	351	199	53	279	18
Coleraine	531	286	68	385	19
Cookstown	329	160	39	115	6
Craigavon	778	348	94	514	26
Down	240	166	16	146	4
Dungannon and South Tyrone	259	194	35	179	0
Fermanagh	440	310	42	263	6
Foyle	1,391	590	69	494	9
Limavady	373	160	22	128	10
Magherafelt	426	153	26	122	6
Moyle	86	37	4	33	0
Newry Mourne	591	310	47	262	7
Omagh	527	302	42	257	9
Strabane	353	166	31	164	7
Rural Region	7,395	3,772	672	3,803	135
Total for Regions	15,512	79,611	1,414	7,627	188

	2003–04				
			Total number of:		
	Incidents	*Crimes*	*Male victims*	*Female victims*	*Victims under 17*
Antrim	537	257	42	207	8
Ards	473	380	68	312	0
East Belfast	1,491	420	45	371	4
North Belfast	1,023	434	52	368	14
South Belfast	553	272	36	227	9
West Belfast	977	681	80	599	2
Carrickfergus	440	186	24	160	2
Castlereagh	512	213	39	165	9
Larne	295	155	31	122	2
Lisburn	1,352	682	121	538	23
Newtownabbey	768	351	66	272	13
North Down	478	263	40	220	3
Urban Region	8,899	4,294	644	3,561	89
Armagh	353	195	29	161	5
Ballymena	289	162	15	146	1
Ballymoney	168	92	16	72	4
Banbridge	352	211	22	184	5
Coleraine	683	358	47	295	16
Cookstown	430	186	44	140	2
Craigavon	912	493	76	402	15
Down	236	162	14	146	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone	258	169	25	144	0
Fermanagh	473	321	33	284	4
Foyle	1,491	685	112	563	10

	2003–04 Total number of:				
	Incidents	*Crimes*	*Male victims*	*Female victims*	*Victims under 17*
Limavady	359	168	22	141	5
Magherafelt	453	208	42	154	12
Moyle	69	40	6	33	1
Newry Mourne	513	250	36	212	2
Omagh	580	330	49	270	11
Strabane	408	241	41	195	5
Rural Region	8,027	4,271	629	3,542	100
Total for Regions	16,926	8,565	1,273	7,103	189

	2004–05 Total number of:					
	Incidents	*Crimes*	*Male victims*	*Female victims*	*Victims under 17*	*Gender/age unknown*
Antrim	628	235	52	164	13	6
Ards	728	345	87	235	21	2
East Belfast	1,246	397	98	272	22	5
North Belfast	1,843	630	113	462	38	17
South Belfast	853	325	78	229	11	7
West Belfast	1,086	522	91	401	18	12
Carrickfergus	364	152	28	115	9	0
Castlereagh	617	187	43	131	11	2
Larne	293	111	21	80	8	2
Lisburn	1,782	819	197	556	48	18
Newtownabbey	863	395	94	273	23	5
North Down	774	294	64	210	16	4
Urban Region	11,077	4,412	966	3128	238	80

	2004–05 Total number of:					
	Incidents	*Crimes*	*Male victims*	*Female victims*	*Victims under 17*	*Gender/age unknown*
Armagh	353	166	44	115	6	1
Ballymena	580	311	62	230	17	2
Ballymoney	255	122	28	84	9	1
Banbridge	346	200	57	127	10	6
Coleraine	824	309	54	228	21	6
Cookstown	446	196	56	118	21	1
Craigavon	1,233	556	129	375	30	22
Down	363	147	32	98	12	5
Dungannon and South Tyrone	323	122	29	88	4	1
Fermanagh	518	151	31	104	12	4
Foyle	1,921	651	126	469	44	12
Limavady	392	204	43	146	13	2
Magherafelt	448	99	22	71	5	1
Moyle	102	52	12	37	2	1
Newry Mourne	617	268	50	199	11	8
Omagh	666	219	48	157	11	3
Strabane	495	323	62	231	22	8
Rural Region	9,882	4,096	885	2,877	250	84
Total for Regions	20,959	8,508	1,851	6,005	488	164

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what strategies the Police Service of Northern Ireland has put in place to deal with incidents of domestic violence. [24048]

Mr. Hanson: The number of domestic violence incidents reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland continues to rise annually. The number of incidents reported rose from 16,926 in 2003–04 to 20,959 in 2004–05 (an increase of 24 per cent.). The number of incidents reported where offences were identified fell slightly from 8,565 in 2003–04 to 8,508 in 2004–05. These figures do not include breaches of non-molestation orders (1,148 breaches are recorded).

The PSNI is represented on the regional steering group on domestic violence and worked in partnership with all the other agencies in the development of the Government strategy 'Tackling Violence at Home'. The strategy was launched in October 2005 and aims to develop and implement a multi-agency co-ordinated response to domestic violence across Northern Ireland. The Police Service is also represented at various regional and local domestic violence forums and has been

involved in training provided to probation officers, participants in the men overcoming domestic violence programme, and to staff in the Northern Ireland Court Service.

In September 2004 the Police Service introduced a new domestic violence policy. The policy aims to:

record, respond and investigate effectively all reported incidents of domestic violence in a consistent, robust and proactive manner;

maintain specialist domestic violence investigators in every police district;

ensure that every reported domestic violence investigation is appropriately supervised;

ensure that, where a power of arrest exists, then only in exceptional circumstances will that power not be used;

ensure that every reported victim of domestic violence is offered the services of a Police Service domestic violence officer and provided with information relating to local statutory and voluntary support agencies;

take adequate steps to protect children (including unborn children) who may be at risk from domestic violence by engaging with the appropriate authority;

remove access to all licensed and personal protection firearms where domestic violence has been reported or identified; and

identify and meet the needs of members of minority and vulnerable groups who report domestic violence.

This policy is currently the subject of an annual review.

To date the Police Service have trained 61 specialist domestic violence investigators with a further course being planned for the new year. These officers in addition to supporting victims will investigate serious physical assaults and repeat offences. In addition to the existing corporate literature the Service has published a small pocket information booklet, which provides extensive information on safety advice, Police Service policy and details of support agencies. To date over 40,000 pocket booklets have been circulated to police districts, health trusts, solicitors, voluntary and statutory support agencies. Further work is ongoing to develop risk assessment procedures and guidance.

It is recognised that there is considerable under reporting of incidents of domestic violence and an increase in reports is a welcome indication in confidence in the police to take effective action and support victims.

Education Opt-outs

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of *(a)* males and *(b)* females in the Province opted out of both education and training at 16 years of age in each of the last five years. [25772]

Angela E. Smith: The proportion of 16-year-olds not in education or training in Northern Ireland is set out as follows (N.I. census data 2001):

Proportion of 16-year-olds not in education and training in 2001

	Percentage
Males	9.6
Female	4.7
Total	7.2

Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether *(a)* the Department and *(b)* the Housing Executive maintains a (i) mandatory and (ii) voluntary register of landlords of privately rented residential property in Northern Ireland. [25347]

Mr. Hanson: The Housing Executive maintains the rent register, which contains prescribed information in relation to registered tenancies under the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and a register of the names and addresses of persons who are managers of houses in multiple occupation.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend the licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupancy to the whole of the private rented residential sector in Northern Ireland. [25348]

Mr. Hanson: There are no plans at this time to extend the current licensing system for houses in multiple occupancy (HMD's) to the rest of the private rented sector in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Housing Executive properties there are in each Northern Ireland housing district. [25151]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested, as at October 2005, is as follows:

NIHE district	*Total stock*
Belfast 1	2,209
Belfast 2	3,728
Belfast 3	3,283
Belfast 4	3,676
Belfast 5	3,813
Belfast 6	3,315
Belfast 7	4,155
Bangor	2,936
Newtownards	4,191
Castlereagh	3,955
Lisburn Antrim Street	4,652
Lisburn Dairyfarm	2,026
Downpatrick	2,536
Banbridge	1,879
Newry	3,318
Armagh	2,087
Lurgan/Brownlow	2,882
Portadown	1,707
Dungannon	1,897
Fermanagh	2,200
Ballymena	3,087
Antrim	2,701
Newtownabbey 1	2,448
Newtownabbey 2	2,334
Carrickfergus	2,086
Larne	1,693
Ballycastle	888
Ballymoney	1,556
Coleraine	3,270
Waterloo Place	2,501
Waterside	2,611
Collon Terrace	2,580

NIHE district	Total stock
Limavady	1,545
Magherafelt	1,413
Strabane	2,362
Omagh	1,970
Cookstown	1,123
NI total	96,613

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Housing Executive properties have been sold to *(a)* tenants, *(b)* property developers and *(c)* others in each Northern Ireland housing district in each of the last 10 years. [25152]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the format requested, However, the following table provides information at district council level, showing all sales of Housing Executive properties over the last 10 years.

Sales of NEHE dwellings

District council area	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Antrim	177	154	163	146	128	191	141	168	173	121
Ards	178	138	119	136	151	162	202	172	232	130
Armagh	185	129	164	180	154	155	177	135	151	58
Ballymena	165	158	147	103	134	224	96	147	167	141
Ballymoney	117	116	123	88	58	91	93	73	79	54
Banbridge	128	155	139	137	134	106	145	124	117	75
Belfast	514	667	849	732	1,024	1,079	858	1,605	1,079	539
Carrickfergus	91	72	107	77	77	138	133	176	156	74
Castlereagh	179	146	142	177	140	228	196	215	205	125
Coleraine	203	161	204	138	106	157	131	133	108	85
Cookstown	54	64	81	71	77	106	61	92	96	55
Craigavon	251	279	287	210	193	178	194	173	252	131
Derry	454	483	473	409	383	376	406	576	584	309
Down	172	156	152	108	141	191	242	193	202	104
Dungannon	126	145	135	138	122	109	151	141	119	59
Fermanagh	160	202	170	138	136	157	143	166	135	88
Larne	79	76	56	73	61	91	44	66	82	36
Limavady	131	115	129	102	113	123	87	111	96	56
Lisburn	309	252	259	256	265	477	503	505	498	230
Magherafelt	135	137	131	109	136	131	92	119	103	51
Moyle	57	62	86	56	27	63	38	39	54	34
Newry and Mourne	298	236	302	340	269	328	287	266	312	131
Newtownabbey	138	172	141	173	133	284	247	240	245	159
North Down	122	102	84	80	78	121	115	127	170	66
Omagh	130	138	122	117	118	140	115	111	84	60
Strabane	212	140	162	101	168	149	114	181	153	82
Total	4,765	4,665	4,927	4,395	4,526	5,555	5,011	6,054	5,652	3,053

Illegal Fuel

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been responsible for testing for illegal fuel in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and where they were based. [25222]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

In each of the last four financial years the total number of staff responsible for testing illegal fuel in Northern Ireland was:

	Number
2001–02	116
2002–03	[1]144
2003–04	126
2004–05	116

[1] Includes 18 fixed term contract staff and 10 strike force staff specifically used for oils work.

All of the above staff were based in Belfast and were deployed across Northern Ireland. In addition to these officers testing illegal fuel, officers were also deployed in intelligence, criminal investigation and assurance activity in relation to the supply and use of illegal fuel.

Justice (Northern Ireland) Act

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to amend section 57 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. [24408]

Mr. Hanson: Section 57 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 inserts provision for youth conferences and youth conference plans in the Criminal Justice (Children)(Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

I have no plans to amend this provision.

Property Valuations

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to conduct a new valuation of properties in Northern Ireland for *(a)* domestic local taxation purposes and *(b)* water rates. [24591]

Angela E. Smith: A revaluation of domestic property in Northern Ireland on a capital value basis is currently under way. The capital values will be published in April 2006 and will be used to determine household rates bills and the variable element of water charges from April 2007.

Race Crimes

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland will include in its annual report statistics on the number of *(a)* reported race crimes, *(b)* cases prosecuted, *(c)* cases securing convictions and *(d)* cases not prosecuted. [24735]

Mr. Hanson: The Government take racially motivated crime very seriously. The Racial Equality Strategy, published on 19 July 2005, sets a framework to allow the Government to tackle the issues of racial inequality in Northern Ireland and to eradicate racism and hate crime. In addition, The Criminal Justice (No. 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 made provisions for increased penalties for offences motivated by hostility towards a person's race.

The Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) is currently in the process of developing a recording and monitoring mechanism in cases where, in the judgment of a Public Prosecutor, there was a racial motivation behind offences. Statistics will however not be available for the 2005–06 PPS Annual Report.

Special Schools

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many special schools have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in the Province since 1997. [25787]

Angela E. Smith: One new special school opened in June 2005 and 15 units attached to mainstream schools have also been established over the period since 1997.

Three school amalgamations (involving 7 special schools) have also been announced. There have been two special school closures since 1997. The following tables contain detail of this information.

Special school closures

Education and Library Board area	*School*	*Date of closure*
Belfast	Jaffe Centre	31 August 2001
Southern	Fe"owfield Special	31 August 2002

New schools

Education and Library Board area	*Schools*	*Date of opening*
Western	Strabane—multi-functional: moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, speech and language	June 2005

Special school amalgamations

Education and Library Board area	*Schools*	*Date of amalgamation*
Western	Heatherbank and Cranny	1 September 2003
Western	Limegrove and Glasvey	When new school is completed—estimated 2008
North-Eastern	Beechgrove, Dunfane and Loughan	Recently published proposal—objection period ends on 8 December 2005

Special units

Education and Library Board area	*Schools*	*Type of unit*	*Date opened*
Southern	St. Patrick's HS, Keady	Unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties	1 September 1998
Belfast	Taughmonagh PS	Speech and Language Unit	1 September 1999
South-Eastern	Clandeboye PS, Bangor	Unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties	1 September 1999
Belfast	Belvoir Park PS	Speech and Language Unit	1 September 1999
North-Eastern	Ballymoney Model PS	Partial Hearing Unit closed, Speech and Language Unit opened	1 September 2001
Southern	St. Patrick's PS, Keady	Speech and Language Unit	1 September 2001
Southern	St. Patrick's PS, Dungannon	Speech and Language Unit	1 September 2002
South-Eastern	Clough PS	Speech and Language Unit	1 September 2002
South-Eastern	St. Mary's PS, Kircubbin	Unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties	1 September 2002
Western	Gibson PS	I Can Pre-school Unit	1 September 2003
North-Eastern	Moyle PS	Transfer of MLD Unit from former Antiville PS	1 September 2005
Southern	Christian Bros. PS, Armagh	Unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder	1 September 2005
Southern	St. Mary's PS, Banbridge	Unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder	1 September 2005
Southern	Primate Dixon, Coalisland	Unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder	1 September 2005
Southern	St. Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	Conversion to a unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder plus new unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties	1 September 2005

Spiked Drinks

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he collects on the prevalence of spiking drinks in the Province. [24923]

Mr. Hanson: A range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations work together to raise awareness of the dangers of drink spiking. This has included beer mat and poster campaigns in pubs and clubs funded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Health Promotion Agency.

It is difficult to estimate the prevalence of drink spiking in Northern Ireland. Spiking drinks can take many forms and includes the addition of alcohol, prescription drugs and illegal drugs (eg Ecstasy) as well as the so called date rape drugs such as Rohypnol. Victims may not realise their drink was spiked, and even when a more serious offence has occurred the victim may not be aware until some time after the incident. In some cases the victim may not tell anyone what has happened to them.

Drink spiking may constitute an offence under the Offences Against The Persons Act 1861 (Section 22, administering poison to endanger life; and Section 23, administering poison to aggrieve). In 2004–05 a total of six cases were recorded under these Sections of the Act. However it is not possible to easily differentiate between cases of drink spiking and other poisonings. Drink spiking is difficult to prove and is often connected with more serious offences such as sexual assaults. Consequently in many cases the more serious offence will be recorded rather than those offences under Sections 22 and 23 of the Act.

Substitute Teachers

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the spending by each education and library board in the Province on substitute teachers in each of the last five years. [25771]

Angela E. Smith: The amount spent by each of the education and library boards and grant maintained integrated schools on substitute teachers in the last five years is in the following table.

£

Board area	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
BELB	6,824,662	7,182,863	8,053,759	8,242,900	7,594,513
NEELB	8,247,465	8,891,204	9,851,452	10,064,914	9,328,754
SEELB	7,160,509	7,910,645	8,583,079	9,106,492	8,393,759
SELB	7,922,653	8,719,900	9,110,143	9,617,584	9,650,490
WELB	6,335,935	6,864,352	7,704,919	8,164,700	8,114,576
GMI	1,255,746	1,392,574	1,457,037	1,481,661	1,629,538
Total	37,746,970	40,961,538	44,760,389	46,678,251	44,711,630

Women Sector (Funding)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes he plans to make to the funding arrangements for the Northern Ireland women'sector. [26685]

Mr. Hanson: The Government has provided initial financial support and established a cross Departmental Review Group to consider longer term support to women's organisations delivering services following the end of previous funding streams in the first financial year.

Following consideration of the report of the review group I extended the short term programme and with ministerial colleagues have set in motion potential longer term support for these organisations. This means that we have been able to provide an additional £1,850,000 in the current financial year to protect these key organisations.

With regard to the future women's centres will have to demonstrate and provide supporting evidence of need for these services and will have to compete with others that may want to deliver the same services, however given the capacity of the centres I am confident that they will continue to serve those in most need for many years to come.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many households received funding from the Warm Homes Scheme in the last 12 months in each district council area in the Province. [24890]

Mr. Hanson: Under the Warm Homes Scheme, eligible applicants are provided with insulation measures. The Warm Homes Plus scheme provides heating and insulation measures for all eligible pensioners.

The information is as follows:

District council	*Number of households in receipt of insulation measures*[1]	*Number of households in receipt of heating measures*[1]
Antrim	160	100
Ards	239	85
Armagh	320	166
Ballymena	236	93
Ballymoney	85	53
Banbridge	224	79
Belfast	1,285	553
Carrickfergus	89	55
Castlereagh	238	105
Coleraine	155	106
Cookstown	308	140
Craigavon	467	217
Derry	628	232
Down	259	139
Dungannon and South Tyrone	370	232
Fermanagh	240	186
Larne	100	50
Limavady	175	74
Lisburn	342	146
Magherafelt	140	86
Moyle	77	46
Newry and Mourne	643	286
Newtownabbey	359	201
North Down	363	131
Omagh	316	120
Strabane	183	90

[1] These columns include those households which received both heating and insulation measures.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 11 November 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Electoral Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the percentage of electoral registration rate for each local authority in the UK is in descending order; and if she will make a statement. [26409]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The Information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 11 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question concerning the percentage electoral registration rate in each Local Authority area. (26409)

The Office for National Statistics is not able to calculate percentage electoral registration rates: the resident population aged 18 and over is not the same as the number of people eligible to vote. However, the Office for National Statistics does on occasion publish comparisons of the resident population of voting age (aged 18 and over) and the number of people who are registered to vote. These comparisons provide the closest available approximations to the information you requested.

The tables, which will be placed in the House of Commons Library, give comparisons between the number of registered electors and the estimated mid-2004 population for local authorities in the UK. Table 1 shows a comparison against parliamentary electorate and Table 2 against local/European electorate. Please note Table 1 refers to Great Britain only as Northern Ireland are unable to provide Parliamentary electorates for local authority areas. In order to give an estimate of the number of electors at the mid-year point, 30 June 2003, a weighted average is taken of the 1 December 2002 and 1 December 2003 electoral data.

The local/European electorate gives a better comparison than parliamentary electorate to resident population as EU citizens are included and UK citizens resident abroad are excluded from the local/European electorate. However, a number of other difficulties remain when comparing these sources. For example not everyone who is usually resident is entitled to vote (foreign citizens from outside of the EU and Commonwealth, prisoners, etc. are not eligible) and people who have more than one address may register in more than one place. These factors may have a different impact from place to place.

There is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate (both parliamentary and local/European) as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. This is the main reason some areas show apparent rates in excess of one hundred per cent.

Any comparison of these data with figures for previous years should be made carefully as electoral legislation and other changes (such as EU expansion) can change the size of the electorate.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Sponsorship

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list guidelines she has issued on how her Department interacts with public bodies sponsored by her Department. [22599]

Tessa Jowell: My Department's relationship with each of its executive non-departmental public bodies is set out in a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum. That standing document is complemented by a funding agreement, for each Spending Review period, that explains how the Department and the sponsored body will work together and what will be delivered with public expenditure during the period.

Apart from those key control documents, the Department has issued the following guidance bearing on how it interacts with its sponsored bodies:

Serving on the Boards of DCMS Public Bodies (April 2005) this sets out, for Board members, the respective roles of the Department and the body's Board and executive;

Guidance on Key Appointments Stages for making a Public Appointment (June 2004) this explains the division of responsibilities between Department and sponsored body during the process of making Board appointments.

Digital Switchover

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the progress towards digital switchover. [25943]

Tessa Jowell: Good progress continues to be made. The Government has confirmed the regional timetable for the switchover to digital television and announced support schemes to help the most vulnerable households to make the switch.

Digital UK, an independent, not-for-profit company set up by the broadcasters, commercial multiplex operators and involving the supply chain digital switchover has been launched to co-ordinate the implementation of digital switchover and ensure that consumers have timely and accurate information about switchover.

Intellectual Property Forum

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the remit of the Intellectual Property Forum project announced by the Minister for Creative Industries on 16 June includes consideration of the extension of the term for sound copyright. [21579]

Alan Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The remit of the intellectual property forum project does not include consideration of the extension of the term for sound copyright. This will be considered separately, and how it will be done will be announced shortly.

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment has been made of the impact of financing the Olympic Games on the amount of lottery money available for sports other than Olympic sports in the years to 2012. [25025]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* We have allowed for up to £1.5 billion to be raised from the lottery, some of which will be raised by new lottery games solely for this purpose. We expect the non-Olympic good causes to receive up to 5 per cent. less in income, as a result of sales diversion, over the eight-year period from 2005 to 2013. In addition, up to £410 million will be redirected from the proceeds of non-Olympic lottery games after 2009.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what costs will be met of those businesses relocating from the Marshgate Lane area to make way for Olympic development; and what criteria will be applied to determine reasonable costs. [25651]

Tessa Jowell: The businesses or parties with an interest in the land to be acquired under a confirmed Compulsory Purchase Order are compensated under the statutory Compensation Code.

They receive the market value of their premises or other land interests. In addition they are entitled to a disturbance payment for either the business' relocation or extinguishment and the reasonable costs of their legal advisors and surveyors. A statutory loss payment can be made to commercial and residential owners/occupiers based on a percentage of market value of their property or interests.

Each party with a compensateable interest is entitled to appoint a chartered surveyor to negotiate the compensation on their behalf with the acquiring authority.

Disputes as to the level of compensation payable are referred to the Lands Tribunal.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of the operating profit from the 2012 Olympic Games will go to the British Paralympic Association. [25655]

Tessa Jowell: In accordance with the Host City Contract, any surplus from the 2012 Olympic Games will be divided between the National Olympic Committee (20 per cent.), the International Olympic Committee (20 per cent.), and will be used for the general benefit of sport in the host country as may be determined by the Organising Committee for the Games in consultation with the NOC (60 per cent.). This could include funding for disability or Paralympic sport.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans the Government has for public transport in London to accommodate the increased number of passengers during the London Olympics in 2012. [25866]

Tessa Jowell: The Olympic Park will be extremely well connected, and will be served by 10 railway lines which will collectively carry up to 240,000 passengers an hour into and out of the Olympic Park. During the games, one train every 15 seconds, or 240 trains an hour, will serve the Olympic Park.

Beyond this, there will be significant investment in London's transport infrastructure in the lead up to 2012. This investment will bring improvements to London's roads, buses, rail and underground networks, giving added resilience and reliability to the system. Planned improvements include the new £5.2 billion Channel Tunnel Rail Link between St. Pancras and Stratford which will open in 2007 and will take passengers into the heart of the Olympic zone in under seven minutes, and over £1 billion a year until 2010 invested in the tube resulting in real improvements—including a 45 per cent. increase in Jubilee line capacity.

Also it should be noted that the games will be held at a time when many Londoners take their summer holidays and use of public transport drops significantly as a result.

Olympic Lottery Games

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to publicise the new Olympic lottery games. [26476]

Tessa Jowell: Camelot Group plc, the national lottery operator, is responsible for publicising the new Olympic lottery games in line with the terms of its licence. My Department supports this at appropriate opportunities.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with the national lottery regarding the new Olympic scratchcard. [26477]

Tessa Jowell: Licensing of specific national lottery games is the responsibility of the National Lottery Commission (NLC). The Department fully supported efforts by the NLC and Camelot Group plc, the national lottery operator, to make the necessary preparations for a prompt launch of the first Olympic lottery game, the Go for Gold scratchcard, as soon as possible after the IOC decision to award the 2012 Games to London.

TV Licences

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the likely cost of the television licence in the period covered by the next BBC Charter; and if she will make a statement. [21468]

Tessa Jowell: In line with our commitment set out in the Green Paper: A strong BBC, Independent of Government, we are currently conducting a review of BBC funding to determine the future level of the licence fee. We will announce the outcome in due course.

CABINET OFFICE

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department from May 1997 up to and including April 2005, broken down by Act. [27589]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No offences have been created by primary legislation introduced by the Cabinet Office.

SCOTLAND

Asylum Seekers

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish First Minister about the use of dawn raids in asylum cases. [25313]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the First Minister on a range of subjects, including issues which come under the responsibility of the Home Office.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23304]

Alan Johnson: The Department of Trade and Industry has one call centre (defined as an operation where 10 or more people work in a structured telephone environment) which was operational in 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–2006.

	How many calls handled	*How many calls received but abandoned*	*How many callers received an engaged tone*
2003–04	227,023	27,447	[1]
2004–05	210,455	8,419	[1]
2005–06	165,276	7,665	[1]

[1] Information not available.

Company Accounts

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on his proposals that a named individual should sign off a company's accounts. [27001]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* This proposal reflects widespread agreement following consultation. The European Commission's draft Audit Directive (latest text 2004/0065(COD)) contains a provision requiring the signature of a named individual auditor on each audit report. The Department consulted on this directive in September 2004 and published the results of the consultation in February 2005 (available on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-1370.html).

Separately in early 2005, the Audit Quality Forum, which involves UK auditors, their clients and investors, recommended that the lead audit partner should sign his or her own name on each audit report. The March 2005 White Paper "Company Law Reform" contained proposals to this effect, and in July the Department published draft clauses for consultation.

About a dozen consultees commented specifically on this proposal. Most supported it in principle and made suggestions for improvements to clarify the draft clauses. Some of these suggestions have been incorporated in the Company Law Reform Bill that was introduced to Parliament last week.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23861]

Alan Johnson: Copies of the Skills Development Plan for Department of Trade and Industry will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Doha Trade Talks

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the prospects for progress in the Doha trade talks. [26974]

Ian Pearson: The Government is committed to achieving an ambitious, pro-development outcome at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December, which will allow conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda by the end of 2006. While meetings in London and Geneva this week have shown the distance that remains between several WTO Members, there remains a shared commitment to an ambitious result from the round. Hong Kong still has the potential to mark a significant step forward towards an early conclusion of the round.

ECJ Judgment

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on ECJ case C-127/05, 2005/C 143/26, with particular reference to *(a)* assessed liabilities ensuing for business and *(b)* the principle of proportionality in UK legislation. [16661]

Mrs. McGuire: I have been asked to reply.

The European Commission has brought infraction proceedings against the United Kingdom for allegedly failing to fulfil its obligations under article 5(1) and (4) of Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (the framework directive on health and safety) in its implementation of these provisions.

The Government have lodged a defence of our implementation of the directive with the European Court of Justice as being in full compliance with our community law obligations.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23440]

Alan Johnson: The Skills for Life Programme and National Testing information is made available to employees that have identified need. We offer the chance to pursue the Skills for Life Numeracy and Literacy programme at an independent educational establishment such as 'LearnDirect' on day release for employees if they so choose.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23769]

Alan Johnson: Recruitment to my Department is competence based and there may not be a specific requirement for new recruits to hold a particular type of qualification. This type of data is not therefore collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23793]

Alan Johnson: Recruitment to my Department is competency based. Where literacy and numeracy skills are required, processes are in place to assess these skills through the application process. These include verification of formal qualifications, skills based questions and skills based tasks.

Mobile Communications

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will assess the contribution to the City of London's productivity of mobile communications; and if he will make a statement. [27262]

Alun Michael: I have no information for the City of London that would allow the assessment of the contribution mobile communications has made to its productivity. The mobile network operator, O2 commissioned a study from the Centre for Economic and Business Research in July 2004 to assess how the contribution of mobile phones to the UK economy was likely to change over the next 10 years. A final report on the regional contribution of mobile communications, provided figures broken down by region. For the South East it found that mobile communications contributes 3.23 per cent. of GDP, which is £1,573 per household per year. It also found that mobile communications accounts for 1.15 per cent. of all jobs in the South East.

We have no plans to undertake a further assessment specific to the City of London.

The mobile phone sector contributes to both the UK GDP and Government finances. According to research by the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR), mobile contributed £22.9 billion to UK GDP in 2003, 2.3 per cent. of total GDP. Mobile network operator, O2 commissioned a study from CEBR in July 2004 that assessed how the contribution of mobile phones to the UK economy was likely to change over the next 10 years. The report shows how the mobile phone sector now contributes as much to GDP as the total oil and gas extraction industry.

The research shows that the mobile sector is making a major contribution to national productivity both through sustaining a high level of productivity in the sector itself and through enabling higher productivity in the rest of the economy but no specific figures are available specifically for the City of London, although the City probably has the highest concentration of mobile telecommunications use in the country.

Work and Families Bill

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills concerning the Work and Families Bill. [25094]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly speaks to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on a variety of subjects. There have been no specific meetings to discuss the Work and Families Bill.

TREASURY

Birth Rates

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many births there were to women resident in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area at *(a)* individual maternity hospitals, *(b)* midwife-led units, *(c)* home and *(d)* other locations in each year since 2000. [26373]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Rosie Cooper, dated 11 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your request for the number of births to women resident in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority at *(a)* individual maternity hospitals, *(b)* midwife-led units, *(c)* home and *(d)* other locations in each year since 2000. (26373)

The table below relates to babies born in England and Wales to women usually resident in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area at the time of the birth. Figures are presented for categories *(a)* and *(b)* combined, *(c)* and *(d)*. Information is not available centrally on which of these institutions are mid-wife led units, so these are not listed separately.

Hospitals where more than 30 live births took place over the period 2000 to 2004 have been shown individually; the remaining ones have been aggregated in the 'Other hospitals' sub-total. Births in the 'Elsewhere' category are mainly those occurring on the way to hospital or at a private residence which is not that of the mother.

Live births by place of occurrence for women resident in Cheshire and Merseyside SHA area 2000–04

Place of occurrence	Year of occurrence 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
(a) and (b) Maternity hospital/unit					
Liverpool Women's Hospital	5,894	5,793	5,808	6,111	7,674
Arrowe Park Hospital	3,158	3,076	3,012	3,252	3,273
Warrington Hospital	3,055	2,828	2,871	2,948	3,015
Whiston Hospital	2,696	2,549	2,424	2,548	2,730
Leighton Hospital	2,365	2,513	2,351	2,490	2,646
Countess of Chester Hospital	2,371	2,371	2,349	2,388	2,495
Macclesfield District General	1,422	1,367	1,387	1,431	1,525
Ormskirk District General Hospital	167	177	184	733	1,328
Fazakerley Hospital	2,565	2,252	2,228	2,189	322
Wythenshawe Hospital	220	227	220	238	213
Stepping Hill Hospital	152	137	114	106	137
Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital, Southport	909	894	876	420	134
Billinge Hospital	260	249	235	249	132
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan	0	0	0	0	83
North Staffordshire Maternity Hospital	92	85	82	77	82
St. Marys Hospital, Whitworth Park	48	58	56	60	68
Ysbyty Maelor, Wrexham	26	31	38	43	26
Hope Hospital	13	23	15	20	18
Trafford General Hospital	16	25	16	19	14
Other hospitals[1]	53	60	52	64	67
(c) At home	252	217	254	266	299
(d) Elsewhere	23	26	30	38	30
Total	25,734	24,932	24,572	25,652	26,281

[1] There were 115 hospitals/units in the 'Other' category where there was at least one birth in the period 2000 to 2004.

Duty Free Allowance

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of carrying goods above the duty free allowance in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [26361]

John Healey: HMRC records do not differentiate between criminal offences concerned with duty-free and duty-paid goods, nor do they distinguish between men and women. However, the consolidated figures for all prosecutions for smuggling of alcohol or tobacco for the years between 1993 and 2000 are:

	Number
1993–94	44
1994–95	515
1995–96	438
1996–97	502
1997–98	531
1998–99	575
1999–2000	645
2000–01[1,2]	884
2001–02[1,2]	431
2002–03[2]	429
2003–04[2]	484

[1] Figures relate to those sentenced for tobacco offence only.
[2] Figures include those sentenced or convicted for fraudulent evasion as well as those guilty of smuggling.

The figures for 2004–05 will be published later this year in the HMRC Annual Report.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many items confiscated by customs officers as a result of the driver carrying goods above the duty free allowance are disposed of; and if he will make a statement. [26363]

John Healey: Vehicles seized by HM Revenue and Customs when the duty-free allowances are exceeded (or when alcohol and tobacco products are seized from travellers from elsewhere in the European Community) are either sold or, if in poor condition, scrapped in accordance with current environmental requirements. The proceeds from sale are passed to the Treasury. Confiscated alcohol is separated out from packaging and converted into fertilizer or animal feed. Tobacco is shredded and converted into fuel pellets.

Wherever possible, all packaging is recycled.

EC Directives

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions he has had with HM Revenue and Customs concerning policy changes for the repayment of VAT under the 8th and 13th EC directives; [27003]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* inward investment into the UK and *(b)* the UK hotel industry of changes to VAT collection under the 8th and 13th EC directives; [27004]

(3) if he will make a statement on the proposed policy changes for repayment under the 8th and 13th EC directives that will come into effect on 1 January 2006; and what assessment his Department has made of the likely effects of these changes on *(a)* UK companies and *(b)* non-EU companies. [27053]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have been receiving an increasing number of claims for repayment of VAT under the 8th and 13th EC VAT Directives which have not been supported by all the required documentation, including valid VAT invoices. HMRC have found that the previous controls for dealing with such claims are not sufficiently robust and are being abused. HMRC have therefore decided that they must tighten their procedures and have recently reminded businesses that claims must be supported by all the required documentation, and about what details a valid VAT invoice must contain. These rules apply equally to all businesses and are no different to the rules that apply domestically for businesses seeking to recover VAT incurred on their purchases.

Film Industry

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the Government's tax policy on film production in England. [26341]

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the Government's tax policy on film production; and if he will make a statement. [25970]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government recognises the cultural and economic contribution that the film industry makes and the role that tax incentives play in encouraging the production of culturally British films. The Government launched a consultation, "Reform of

Film Tax Incentives" in July 2005, which closed in October 2005. The responses that we received are being carefully considered.

Inland Revenue/Customs and Excise

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress with the merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. [26340]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to my answer on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 54W to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning).

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the spare capacity in the Inland Revenue's computer systems. [26596]

Dawn Primarolo: As part of the normal course of their business both former Departments (Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise) together with their IT Partners conducted on-going reviews of their IT systems' capacity. These reviews have continued following the integration of the two Departments in April 2005 to create HMRC. HMRC is using the opportunity of the integration to conduct a widespread review of the capacity of the IT systems, to identify opportunities for rationalisation and efficiency savings; taking into account past trends and known future work.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26598]

John Healey: None of the following IT projects costing over £1 million is believed to have been scrutinised by the PAC (Public Accounts Committee). The projects are:

Delivery (past and imminent)	*Projects*
2001	Updating the Treasury's desktop to incorporate MS Windows and Office 2000 products (includes: Oasis Build 6 implementation)
2001	Provision of IT services in support of HMT Business Continuity Plan (BCP)
2002	Move and provision of new IT facilities in new HMT building, 1 Horse Guards Road
2005	Integration of three government financial data systems to form a single data system in HMT. "COINS"
2005	Enhancing document and records management in HM Treasury. "Jigsaw"

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26599]

John Healey: Five IT projects which cost over £1 million have been undertaken by the Treasury since 1997; three are IT systems software and two provide IT service infrastructure. All five are still in use.

Pensions

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the public sector pension deficit is if calculated using a discount rate based on index linked gilts; and what rate was used for the calculation. [26224]

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) pursuant to the Answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 36W on pensions, what discount rate was used to calculate the deficit; what the estimate of the deficit would be if a discount rate of 2.5 per cent. were used; and what assumptions underlay the calculation of the deficit with particular reference to life expectancy; [27117]

(2) pursuant to the Answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 360W, on pensions, what the public sector pension deficit would be if the discount rate used was equivalent to that of a 25-year gilt. [27118]

Mr. Des Browne: The deficits and surpluses of funded statutory public service pension schemes such as the local government pension scheme, and those of funded pension schemes in the wider public sector, are not calculated centrally. Discount rates within the range specified by FRS 17 will be used for their individual accounts according to the circumstances of the scheme. To recalculate the liabilities of individual funds would involve disproportionate costs.

Most public service pensions schemes are unfunded and funding deficits do not arise. However, information on the liabilities of unfunded schemes is collected and held centrally. The total liabilities of unfunded pension schemes as at 31 March 2004 are estimated to be £460 billion.

This figure is based largely on pension scheme resource accounts for 2003–04, which used a discount rate of 3.5 per cent. real for that year. Assumptions used were consistent with those the latest actuarial analysis of each scheme's experience. Significant allowance was made for future improvement in mortality, drawing on national population projections and mortality studies undertaken by the actuarial profession.

Government do not as a matter of course re-calculate liabilities published in audited accounts to show what they would have been had discounting assumptions been different from those that were in fact used. However, for the purposes of this question, based on the information held on the liabilities of unfunded public service schemes, the Government Actuary's Department have estimated:

(a) Using a discount rate of 2.5 per cent. per annum net of price inflation, the total liabilities of unfunded schemes would have been around £560 billion as at 31 March 2004.

(b) Using a discount rate of 1.9 per cent. per annum net of price inflation, which was the market yield on the FTSE index of longer-dated index linked gilts as at 31 March 2004, the total liabilities of unfunded public service schemes would have been around £630 billion as at 31 March 2004.

(c) Using a discount rate of 1.7 per cent. per annum net of price inflation, the yield published by the Debt Management Office for the index-linked gilt in issue on 31 March 2004 with duration to redemption closest to 25 years, the total liabilities of unfunded schemes would have been around £650 billion as at 31 March 2004.

The discount rate used to express the net present value of public service pension liabilities does not affect future government cash expenditure on pension payments to former public servants and their dependants.

Projections of cash expenditure on unfunded public service pensions as a proportion of GDP are published alongside the pre-Budget report in the Long-term Public Finance Report as part of Government strategy to monitor the long-term sustainability of public expenditure.

PFI Contracts

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list private finance initiative (PFI) contracts which were originally off-balance sheet, but which the Government has taken on-balance sheet at a later date; and how much new public debt each contract represents. [26228]

John Healey: The specific balance sheet treatment of private finance initiative contracts is not determined by the Government, but through the application of established independent accounting standards by the respective independent audit bodies for the public authority—the National Audit Office, the Audit Commission or the audit bodies of the devolved administrations. The balance sheet treatment of private finance initiative contracts, including any changes, is reflected in the audited accounts of the procuring authority.

Public Service Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the projected savings over the next 50 years from *(a)* the December 2004 proposed reforms of public service pensions and *(b)* the revised proposals for public service pensions announced on 18 October. [27050]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 313–14W.

Shellfishing (Morecambe Bay)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the tax revenue was from shellfishing in Morecambe Bay in each year since 2000–01. [27396]

Dawn Primarolo: Statistical information on tax revenue at this level of detail is not available.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which specialist teams working on complicated tax credit cases at the Tax Credit Office, were referred to in correspondence of 4 October between the Tax Credit Office and the hon. Member for Birkenhead regarding the tax credits of his constituent of Corporation Road, Birkenhead; and what the size of each is. [21147]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The specialist team referred to in the Tax Credit Office's letter to the right hon. Gentleman is a technical advice team. Team members provide technical advice and support to TCO staff. The team consists of around 12 full-time equivalent staff.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by the Valuation Office Agency in each year since 1997; and what the estimated established staff for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 is. [26931]

Dawn Primarolo: The numbers of full-time equivalent staff, employed by the Valuation Office Agency, in each year since 1997, are shown in the table. Staff numbers rose to a peak of 5,416 in August 2005 to support the council tax revaluation. The estimate of established staff for *(a)* 2005 to 2006 is 4,800 and although the final figure is yet to be determined for *(b)* 2006 to 2007 it is expected to be approximately 4,300.

	Number of staff
1996–97	4,563
1997–98	4,346
1998–99	4,063
1999–2000	4,016
2000–01	3,948
2001–02	3,814
2002–03	3,843
2003–04	4,436
2004–05	4,955

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Valuation Office Agency has spent in total on its computer assisted mass appraisal system. [26932]

Dawn Primarolo: Approximately £10 million has been spent on procuring and developing the automated valuation model, which is a key component of a computer assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) system.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what powers *(a)* staff and *(b)* contractors of the Valuation Office Agency have to forcibly inspect a property for a council tax valuation in circumstances where the resident refuses entry to the (i) inside of the premises and (ii) land surrounding the property. [26933]

Dawn Primarolo: None.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of the vehicle excise duty was in each year since 1976. [26295]

John Healey: DVLA publish a leaflet (V149) each year detailing current vehicle excise duty rates. I have arranged for copies of these leaflets going back to 1976 to be placed in the Library of the House.

TRANSPORT

A Road Improvements

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has spent on improvements to A roads in the UK since 1997; and if he will list the transport budgets for each region for 2005–06. [27686]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not retain records of how much the Highways Agency or local authorities have spent specifically on 'A' roads in the UK since 1992.

Our allocations for local transport capital investment for 2005–06 to regions (excluding London) are set out in the following table. This covers expenditure on local authority major transport schemes, integrated transport block and local road capital maintenance funding.

2005–06: Local authority

£ million

Region	*Major schemes*[1]	*Integrated transport block allocation*[2]	*Local road capital maintenance*
Eastern	33,999	64,950	91,119
South West	32,315	57,815	107,685
East Midlands	18,102	47,100	65,178
Yorkshire and the Humber	49,921	79,635	76,588
West Midlands	62,271	72,600	82,105
North West	26,653	112,848	88,144
North East	27,989	33,400	44,170
South East	51,661	84,580	105,008

[1] Schemes costing more than £5 million which have been fully approved for funding.
[2] Improvement schemes costing less than £5 million.

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to consult people in East Sussex affected by the proposed A21 upgrade. [27687]

Dr. Ladyman: Public consultation on the proposed upgrade of the A21 from Pembury to Hastings was carried out in 2002–03. The consultation included specific proposals for the Flimwell to Robertsbridge section. The Highways Agency and East Sussex county council held further consultation during February/March 2004 for the A21 Baldslow Link at Hastings, which included proposals for the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road. There are no immediate plans to carry out public consultation on specific proposals for the section between Robertsbridge and Baldslow.

Air Links

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to improve air links in the South West of England. [26460]

Ms Buck: The Air Transport White Paper supports the growth of regional airports to serve local and regional demand, and includes a range of measures designed to facilitate their development.

Airports throughout the South West are engaging with airlines with a view to building on the significant increase in scheduled services from the region that has taken place in recent years.

Banned Aircraft

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what types of aircraft used by civilian airlines are banned from UK airspace. [26449]

Ms Buck: There are no aircraft types currently banned from UK airspace.

Any airline from outside the EU, Iceland, Norway or Switzerland which wishes to pick up or put down passengers or cargo in the UK requires a permit from the Secretary of State for Transport. It is a condition of the permit that the airline's aircraft should be operated in accordance with international safety standards. Any individual aircraft that does not meet those standards would be refused a permit.

In addition, it is a condition of the permit that aircraft meet the environmental standards in Annex 16 to the Chicago Convention. Aircraft unable to meet the current ICAO noise certification requirements (Chapter 3 of Annex 16, Volume 1 or better) are not permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Channel Tunnel

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he is satisfied that the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority has a sufficient number of qualified safety experts among its managerial staff; [24084]

(2) how many safety experts were employed by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004. [24085]

Derek Twigg: The Channel Tunnel Safety Authority (CTSA) is not a body that directly employs safety experts. It has, however, access to safety experts employed by the Health and Safety Executive and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service, some of whom spend a significant proportion of their time on CTSA work, and from similar organisations in France.

It also has access to safety expertise in other British and French organisations. The Channel Tunnel Safety Authority's Annual Report indicates the bodies that have provided advice during the year covered by the report.

The time spent by safety experts on CTSA work in any year will depend on the needs of the Authority for advice and assistance in that year. I am satisfied that the CTSA has adequate access to qualified safety experts.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the results were of bi-national exercises to test emergency procedures held on *(a)* 15 April 2004 at Folkestone Fire Station (UK COMEX), *(b)* 30 June 2004 on the French side of service tunnel (VALEX) and *(c)* 19 September 2004 in the UK led annual exercise BINAT 15; and if he will place reports of these results in the Library. [24089]

Derek Twigg: The results of these exercises, which are to test emergency procedures, are summarised in the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority Annual Report 2004–05 at paragraph 53. Given that the full reports, which are agreed between the French and British emergency response organisations and Eurotunnel, detail the preparedness of the organisations concerned in respect of emergency situations including those arising from terrorist attack, it is not proposed to make them public.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of whether the reliability rate of the crossover doors in the channel tunnel is at levels deemed reasonable by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority; [24090]

(2) if he will make a statement on the instances of the monthly target failure rate of 5 per cent. of crossover doors in the channel tunnel being exceeded. [24091]

Derek Twigg: In the year from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, the reliability rates of the crossover doors have been better than the figure regarded as acceptable by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority (a 5 per cent. probability that the doors would fail when required to operate). The failure rates have been, on average, lower than this, at 3.7 per cent. on the UK side and 4.7 per cent. on the French side of the tunnel. A programme of modification of the doors, which is under way, is leading to a further improvement in the situation.

The Channel Tunnel Safety Authority's Annual Report for 2004–05 notes that there have been occasions when the target monthly failure rate has been exceeded, but points out the limited number of operations and the fact that overall, the failure rate is lower than the target and is decreasing.

Crossrail (Train Running Times)

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the running times of trains from Twyford, Maidenhead and Slough to Paddington before and after the Crossrail construction. [23121]

Derek Twigg: The following estimated table describes journey times to Paddington. Many passengers who travel beyond Paddington will have shorter overall journey times as Crossrail will run directly to central London interchange stations avoiding the need for some people to change trains at all, and providing others with alternative interchange opportunities.

	Twyford	*Maidenhead*	*Slough*
Current services			
Average journey time (mins)	47	38	26.5
Services after Crossrail opens			
Crossrail normal times (mins)	[1]—	40	31
Residual slow line services average (mins)	[2]40	[2]32	[2]24

[1] Crossrail does not run as far as Twyford

[2] The residual services are planned to be complementary to Crossrail services and also run on the slow lines. The figures exclude services that, as at present, operate on the fast lines. A comparison including fast line services cannot be made at this stage not least because of the current franchise-letting process for the Great Western line.

Cycling

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the effectiveness of the cycling demonstration towns. [26522]

Derek Twigg: The Department is working closely with our expert advisory body, Cycling England, to agree a robust monitoring framework in each of the six cycling demonstration towns.

In partnership with Department of Health, we are investigating how we can fully measure the resulting health benefits of increasing cycling levels in these towns.

A finalised monitoring programme will be agreed with each cycling town by 31 March 2006.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions have taken place with cyclists on the making of public transport accessible to those using bicycles. [26528]

Derek Twigg: My predecessor, the hon. Member for Staffordshire Moorlands (Charlotte Atkins) met with the CTC (Cyclist Touring Club) in December 2004 and discussed a range of cycling issues including bike and rail; and I was delighted to present the Association of Train Operating Companies Rail Cycle Awards on 8 November which recognises integrated bike and rail innovations.

In August 2004 the Department and the Countryside Agency published "Bike and Rail: a good practice guide" highlighting good practice and encouraging a partnership approach between train operators, local authorities and cycle groups. The Strategic Rail Authority published their Cycling Policy in November last year. Copies of both these publications have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Foreign Lorries (Road Wear)

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates his Department has made of the cost of road wear by foreign lorries operating in England; and if he will make a statement. [27524]

Mr. Darling: The Department has not made an estimate of this cost in recent years.

Light Rail Schemes

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the usage figures have been for each light rail scheme currently in operation in each year since they commenced operation. [27505]

Mr. Darling: The following tables show the figures requested.

Passenger journeys per year for modern light rail systems in England

Million

System	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Tyne and Wear Metro	59.1	46.4	44.9	45.4	45.5	43.6	40.6	38.9	38.3	37.0
Docklands Light Rail	—	—	—	6.6	8.5	8.0	7.9	6.9	8.3	11.3
Manchester Metrolink	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8.1	11.3	12.3
Sheffield Supertram	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.2
West Midlands Metro	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Croydon Tramlink	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nottingham Tram	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Million

System	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Tyne and Wear Metro	35.9	35.4	35.0	33.8	32.7	32.5	33.4	36.6	37.9	36.8
Docklands Light Rail	14.5	16.7	21.0	27.6	31.3	38.4	41.3	45.7	48.5	50.1
Manchester Metrolink	12.6	13.4	13.8	13.2	14.2	17.2	18.2	18.8	18.9	19.7
Sheffield Supertram	5.3	7.8	9.2	10.4	10.9	11.1	11.4	11.5	12.3	12.8
West Midlands Metro	—	—	—	—	4.8	5.4	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.0
Croydon Tramlink	—	—	—	—	—	15.0	18.2	18.7	19.8	22.0
Nottingham Tram	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.4	8.5

M3 (Junctions 6 and 7)

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the need to increase vehicle capacity of junctions 6 and 7 of the M3. [27503]

Dr. Ladyman: As part of their ongoing Local Plan Review process, Basingstoke and Deane borough council assessed the capacity of the M3 in the Basingstoke area, including junctions 6 and 7. This assessment was discussed with Hampshire county council and the Highways Agency. Agreement was reached in principle on the need to accommodate traffic resulting from the Local Plan proposals by a combination of management measures and capacity increases.

The Highways Agency will review the situation when the outcome of the Local Plan Review becomes clearer.

Quiet Tyres

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when directive 2001/43/EC on quiet tyres will be transposed into UK law. [27587]

Dr. Ladyman: The directive was transposed into UK law by Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 1835, made on 12 July 2002.

Railways

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average percentage change in annual rail fares over the previous year was in each year between 1997 and 2004; and if he will make a statement. [26945]

Derek Twigg: Regulated fares were limited to an average annual increase equal to inflation until 1998, 1 per cent. less than inflation from 1999 until 2003, and by 1 per cent. above inflation from 2004 onwards. Information on both regulated and unregulated fares levels is collated by the Office of Rail Regulation and published in their publication "National Rail Trends".

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* Network Rail and *(b)* the British Transport Police in preventing trespassing onto railway lines (i) in England and (ii) in the Kettering constituency; and what further steps are planned. [23189]

Derek Twigg: No assessments have been made by the Secretary of State. The primary responsibility for preventing trespass on the national rail network lies with Network Rail, who work closely with the British Transport Police, others in the rail industry and the wider community.

Network Rail will write directly to my hon. Friend about work to prevent trespassing on the network in Kettering.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what elements of the European Railway Safety Directive (2004/49/EC) remain to be implemented by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority. [24083]

Derek Twigg: The requirements of the European Railway Safety Directive (2004/49/EC) on the independent investigation of accidents and incidents, including their application to the UK section of the Channel Tunnel, have been transposed in the UK by The Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005.

The remaining elements of the Directive cover the development and management of safety, safety certification of railway undertakings and safety authorisation of infrastructure managers, and the appointment and functions of Safety Authorities. These are being transposed to the Channel Tunnel by a binational Regulation of the Channel Tunnel Intergovernmental Commission (which will be given effect in the UK by Statutory Instrument). The Intergovernmental Commission aims to complete its transposition by the Directive's deadline of 30 April 2006.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the implications for safety of over-crowding on trains along *(a)* the Hastings to London Victoria and *(b)* Brighton to London Victoria lines; and what steps he plans to take to reduce the impact of overcrowding on train services; [25437]

(2) what estimate he has made of the volume of passengers using peak time train services along the *(a)* Brighton to London Victoria and *(b)* Hastings to London Victoria line in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement; [25441]

(3) what assessment he has made of the over-crowding on trains along *(a)* the Hastings to London Victoria and *(b)* Brighton to London Victoria lines; and if he will make a statement. [25472]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Crowding on all London passenger services, including between Hastings-London Victoria and Brighton-London Victoria are measured against Passengers in Excess of Capacity Rules (PIXC) rules. This is against the number of seats on longer-distance services and against total capacity (seats plus, standing) for services where the first stop where passengers alight (or last stop where passengers [illegible]) is not more than 20 minutes from the terminal station. This allows for the scheduled stops within the 20 minute threshold at Clapham Junction and East Croydon in both directions.

The latest available count data (2004) show that all morning and evening peak Brighton to Victoria and Hastings to Victoria services are within their official passenger capacities, except for the 1632 Victoria to Brighton service. The Train Operating Company has allocated less carriages to the 1632 Victoria to Brighton train in order to provide longer trains to meet the greater passenger demand in the high peak period after 1700. However, an alternative service between Victoria and Brighton is scheduled shortly after this service at 1636, and this does provide spare capacity.

Ultimately the responsibility for the day-to-day safety and welfare of passengers using the railway rests with the Train Operating Companies. Focus is being given to improve timetabling, infrastructure maintenance and renewals and other factors that can impact on reliable delivery of train services, which will in turn impact on crowding levels.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what procedures are in place to assess the level of investment required in the infrastructure of the railways to ensure its safe operation against the commercial requirements of those operating the franchises. [26515]

Derek Twigg: Under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974 it is for Network Rail and the train operators to ensure that they operate their undertakings to reduce risks "so far as is reasonably practicable" and to ensure that safety benefits are taker into account in their investment plans. The Health and Safety Executive is responsible for ensuring that train operators comply with appropriate health and safety law.

Road Accidents

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect on the number of additional deaths and serious injuries on roads each year of turning back the clocks in October. [27094]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 514W.

Road Resurfacing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the use of stone mastic asphalt materials for road resurfacing; and if he will make a statement. [28029]

Dr. Ladyman: The use of stone mastic asphalt materials (SMA) for road resurfacing was assessed by the Highways Agency in the 1990s. As a result of concern regarding the loss of surface texture required for high-speed skid resistance, its use was prohibited as a surfacing on trunk roads including motorways in England. Proprietary materials based on SMA, known as 'thin surfacings', have been developed to address the surface texture concern and these are now widely used on the trunk road and motorway network. The Department, on behalf of the UK Roads Board has commissioned best practice guidance for local authorities on how and where thin surfacings and SMA can be applied. The results of this research will be available early next year.

Train and Bus Services

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average frequency of *(a)* train and *(b)* bus services in England was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [25652]

Ms Buck: Data are not available in the form requested.

The National Travel Survey asks respondents about the frequency of services from their nearest railway station and their nearest bus stop. Results for households in England in 2004 are given in the table.

Frequency of train and bus services from nearest railway station or bus stop—England, 2004

	Percentage of households
Frequency of train service	
Frequent services[1] throughout the day	88
Frequent services[1] only during rush hours	5
Less frequent service	7
Frequency of bus service	
At least one every quarter of an hour	37
At least one ever half hour (but less than one every quarter of an hour)	37
At least one an hour (but less than one every half hour)	19
At least one a day (but less than one an hour)	6
Less than one a day	1

[1] Frequent services are defined as at least one train per hour.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Asbestos Contractors

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many licensed asbestos contractors have had their licences revoked in each year since 2000. [23577]

Mrs. McGuire: Since 2000 one licensed asbestos contractor has had their licence revoked. The revocation took place in February 2005.

Although only one licence has been revoked since 2000, revocation proceedings have been initiated on several occasions. The revocation process was not concluded previously as the licences expired before the revocation decision was reached and the applicants either did not reapply for a licence or their licence renewal application was refused.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many field inspectors employed by the Health and Safety Executive are *(a)* trained, *(b)* equipped and *(c)* authorised to inspect on-site enclosures during asbestos removal work. [23578]

Mrs. McGuire: As at 28 October 2005, 40 personnel employed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Health and Safety Laboratory (i.e. inspectors, specialists and scientists) are trained, equipped and authorised to inspect and enter live asbestos enclosures during asbestos removal work. Of these 40, 33 are general and specialist field inspectors, and seven are scientific personnel.

The majority of asbestos work is inspected by operational inspectors in the Construction Division (CD) of HSE's Field Operations Directorate. Most inspections do not require enclosure entry as the work activity can be observed through viewing panels incorporated into the structure of the enclosure. The majority of CD's 124 operational inspectors have been trained to inspect asbestos removal work without entering enclosures. Of these 124, 18 are currently nominated, trained, equipped and authorised to enter enclosures, but only when necessary to secure compliance or collect evidence.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many premises the Health and Safety Executive estimates will be covered by the requirements in the Management of Asbestos in Building Regulations. [23579]

Mrs. McGuire: Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 places duties on those responsible for maintenance and repair of non-domestic premises to manage the risk from any asbestos in those premises.

The Health and Safety Executive estimates that 500,000 commercial, industrial and public buildings, plus the common areas of some 4 million rented residential premises, are likely to contain asbestos.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many licensed asbestos contractors have had enforcement action taken against them for dry stripping in each year since 2000. [23583]

Mrs. McGuire: Due to the way in which this information is stored, it is not possible to identify easily the enforcement action for uncontrolled dry stripping taken against licensed asbestos contractors. The following table indicates the level of enforcement activity since 2000 against licensed contractors and the number of occasions uncontrolled dry stripping was identified as a matter of concern by inspectors. The Health and Safety Executive's policy is to consider enforcement action when uncontrolled dry stripping is encountered. As such, either prohibition notices, or consideration of prosecution, would have occurred in the majority of these occasions.

	Notices	*Prosecutions*	*Uncontrolled dry stripping incidents*
2004-05	40	5	8
2003-04	57	6	5
2002-03	63	6	9
2001-02	40	7	2
2000-01	40	5	10

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Health and Safety Executive has taken to ensure that client organisations understand the requirement to wet strip asbestos-containing materials. [23585]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has provided guidance to client organisations on the need for wet stripping of asbestos-containing materials in its 2002 publication 'A comprehensive guide to Managing Asbestos in premises' (HSG 227)—ISBN 0717623815, which is available in the Library.

This guidance, together with other advice for clients, is promoted through HSE's on-going asbestos campaign.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Health and Safety Executive has taken to ensure that licensed asbestos contractors *(a)* understand and *(b)* comply with the requirement to wet strip asbestos-containing materials. [23586]

Mrs. McGuire: Before contractors are granted a licence to work with asbestos, they must demonstrate to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that they have sound knowledge of the relevant legislation and related guidance and that they have the necessary competence to do the work safely, so that the health of their employees, or others who may be affected by the work, is not endangered. The applicant's knowledge includes their having an understanding of and the competence to apply controlled asbestos removal techniques.

Having granted a licence, HSE expects the licence holder to comply with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 and the Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 as amended. In order to monitor the performance of licence holders, inspectors carry out a programme of site visits. If, during these visits, inspectors encounter work being carried out without using proper controls, such as wet injection, then they will take appropriate action to achieve compliance.

Benefit Expenditure

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measure of council tax inflation the Department uses for its long-term projections of benefit expenditure. [22405]

Mr. Plaskitt: HM Treasury's long-term assumption for council tax inflation is that it is rising in line with average earnings.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he plans to take to measure fraud and error in those benefits that are not regularly monitored. [23180]

Mr. Plaskitt: Measurement of fraud and error in benefits is complex and expensive, therefore the Department concentrates on those benefits with the highest level of risk. We carry out continuous measurement of loss through fraud and error in jobseeker's allowance, income support, pension credit and housing benefit and we conduct reviews of other benefits. For example a national benefit review of disability living allowance was conducted in 2004 and the results published in July 2005 as "Fraud, Error and other Incorrectness in disability living allowance", which is available in the Library.

We are committed to continuing these reviews, and over the next few years we will be carrying out a series on other benefits which have a high level of expenditure and potential risk of loss. We envisage that this will enable us to publish a more accurate figure for loss through fraud and error.

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many inspectors the Department has employed for the investigation of benefit fraud in each of the last 10 years. [27638]

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many fraud investigators are in post; and what the equivalent figures were in the previous two years. [16588]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the table.

DWP fraud investigators

	Full time equivalents
June 2004	1,900.1
June 2005	1,870.1

Note:
Information is not available in the above format prior to 2004.
Source:
Fraud Business Report (latest figure available from quarter ending June 2005).

Benefit Receipt (Kingston and Surbiton)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* received the disability living allowance in each year since 1997. [23886]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance and attendance allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Edward Davey, dated 11 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, to reply to your question concerning how many people in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* received the disability living allowance in each year since 1997.

The information requested at part *(a)* of your question is unavailable. This information is not retained at any geographical level other than for Great Britain and therefore cannot be produced.

The information requested at part *(b)* of your question is as follows:

Disability living allowance for Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency as at May in each year from 1997 to 2005

Thousand

	Cases in Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency
2005	2.4
2004	2.2
2003	2.1
2002	2.0
2001	1.6
2000	1.6
1999	1.5
1998	1.7
1997	1.5

Notes:
1. Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital or abroad for prolonged periods.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
4. "-" Nil or negligible.
5. ".." Not applicable.
6. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 5 per cent. samples for detail long time series.

I hope this is helpful.

Benefits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the quarterly off-flows from *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability allowance for each quarter from February 2003 to the latest available date, broken down by (i) Jobcentre Plus district and (ii) reason for termination. [24327]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The information has been placed in the Library.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many carbon monoxide poisoning incidents have occurred in public places in each of the last 10 years. [14788]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has responsibility for the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas systems in domestic and commercial premises. It maintains statistics on gas-related carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning only in domestic premises. It also maintains statistics on work related poisonings reported to it, which may arise from exposure to substances including CO.

However, HSE has no responsibility for other domestic use of fossil fuels, such as coal, wood or oil, which can also be sources of CO poisoning. It also has no responsibility for air quality in public places.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions payments have been made under the authority of the Chief Executive or the Deputy Chief Executive of the Child Support Agency but without their personal written authorisation; how much these payments have amounted to; for what reasons they were made; and if he will make a statement. [2009]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member separately.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on how many occasions payments have been made under the authority of the Chief Executive or the Deputy Chief Executive of the Child Support Agency but without their personal written authorisation; how much these payments have amounted to; for what reasons they were made.

All payments made by officers of the Child Support Agency are made under the authority of the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer for the Agency. There are delegated authority levels and controls in place throughout the Agency to support these arrangements. In certain exceptional circumstances, the personal written authorisation of the Chief Executive or his Deputy is required before payment of redress can be made.

I hope you find this useful.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many formal complaints his Department has received from West Lancashire about the Child Support Agency. [27667]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Members for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Michael Moore) and for Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone) on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 279W.

Construction Industry

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Government are taking to ensure that health and safety measures are properly enforced in relation to agency workers in the construction industry; and who bears the responsibility of ensuring that health and safety laws are observed in cases where such workers are employed by composite companies rather than directly by the company carrying out the construction work. [16546]

Mrs. McGuire: The Government, through the Health and Safety Executive, enforces health and safety legislation through a combination of enforcement and advisory techniques such as site inspection and the publication of guidance. Health and safety legislation affords protection to both direct employees and those employed through agencies.

A construction company employing agency workers is subject to the general duties contained in sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA). Section 2 HSWA places a general duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees. Where a worker is not employed directly by the company carrying out work on site, section 3 HSWA imposes a duty on employers such as that company to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of those other than his employees, such as that worker. Responsibilities regarding the sharing of information about risks and their control between hirers, employment agencies and workers are clarified in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Additionally, in construction, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 impose duties on principal contractors to manage and co-ordinate all construction activity whether undertaken by their employees, subcontractors, the self-employed or agency workers. The Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations) 1996 also imposes a duty to safeguard construction site health and safety on any person, whether they are the employer or not, who is in control of workers.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from members of the public; [21917]

(2) what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21908]

Mrs. McGuire: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently. All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns. 137–40WS.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22580]

Mrs. McGuire: Current formal consultations are listed as follows.

Title of consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Pensions: disclosure of information consultation on draft regulations—the Occupational Pensions Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2006	9 September 2005	2 December 2005
British Coal Staff and Mineworkers' Pensions (The Occupational Pensions Schemes (Transfer values, Pension Credit Benefit and Pension Sharing Valuation) (Amendment) Regulations 2005)	13 October 2005	25 November 2005
The Occupational Pension Schemes (Modification of Subsisting Rights) Regulations 2006	19 October 2005	16 December 2005
The Occupational Pension Schemes (Exemption) Regulations 2006	26 October 2005	16 December 2005

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Kettering constituency *(a)* applied for and *(b)* received the disability living allowance in each year since 1997. [22604]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The administration of disability living allowance and attendance allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Philip Hollobone, dated 11 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, to reply to your question concerning how many people in the Kettering constituency have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* received the Disability Living Allowance in each year since 1997.

The information requested at part *(a)* of your question is unavailable. This information is not retained at any geographical level other than for Great Britain and therefore cannot be produced.

The information requested at part *(b)* of your question is as follows:

Disability living allowance for Kettering Parliamentary Constituency as at May in each year from 1997 to 2005

	Cases in Kettering Parliamentary Constituency
May 2005	3.6
May 2004	3.4
May 2003	3.3
May 2002	3.1
May 2001	3.2
May 2000	2.9
May 1999	2.8
May 1998	2.6
May 1997	2.5

Notes:

1. Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital or abroad for prolonged periods.
2. Parliamentary Constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
4. "-" Nil or Negligible.
5. "." Not applicable.
6. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 5% samples for detail/long time series.

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people under the age of 60 years were receiving *(a)* the middle rate of the care component, *(b)* higher rate of the care component and *(c)* the higher rate of the mobility component of disability living allowance stopped receiving these benefits due to death in each month of the last five years. [24471]

Mrs. McGuire: Information is not available in the form requested. The information that is available is in the table.

Disability living allowance: number of awards in Great Britain which included a higher rate care component, or a middle rate care component, or a higher rate mobility component in which payment was terminated by the death of recipients under 60 years of age at the time of their death in the 12 month periods ending on 31 May in each year from 2001 to 2005.

Disability living allowance component	*Number of awards (thousands) terminated by the death of recipients under 60 years of age*				
	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	2.9	3.3	2.8	3.7	3.7
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	[1]0.1	[1]0.1	[1]0.1	[1]0.1	[1]0.2
Higher rate care only	[1]0.2	[1]0.2	[1]0.1	[1]0.1	[1]0.2
Middle rate care and higher rate mobility	[1]0.5	[1]0.4	0.7	[1]0.5	[1]0.5
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	[1]0.3	[1]0.1	[1]0.2	[1]0.3	[1]0.3
Middle rate care only	—	—	—	—	—
Lower rate care and higher rate mobility	[1]0.3	[1]0.2	[1]0.2	[1]0.3	[1]0.2
Higher rate mobility only	[1]0.3	[1]0.3	[1]0.2	[1]0.2	[1]0.3
Total	4.7	4.7	4.4	5.3	5.4

'—'denotes nil or negligible.

[1] Less than 500 and subject to a high degree of sampling variation.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and expressed in thousands. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 5 per cent. samples for detail/longtime series.

Document Terminology

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his policy is on the use of the word spouse in official documents; if he will encourage the use of the term spouse/partner; and if he will make a statement. [24777]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department currently applies the word 'spouse' or 'partner' according to the existing eligibility criteria for the benefit in question. From 5 December 2005, the Civil Partnership Act comes into force and terminology used in documentation will be expanded where appropriate. The existing use of 'spouse' and 'partner' will continue, but the definition of partner will be expanded to include reference to 'civil partner'.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many meetings of the *(a)* EU Committee of senior labour inspectors, *(b)* EU Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits to chemical agents, *(c)* EU Confidentiality of Statistics Committee and *(d)* EU Committee on the harmonisation of the compilation of gross national product at market prices are planned for the UK presidency of the EU; who will be presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives will be present; what provision is in place for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [16459]

Mrs. McGuire: The Senior Labour Inspectors Committee will be meeting once during the UK presidency of the European Union between 9 and 10 November 2005. A senior official from the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities will be presiding over the meeting. Senior operational officials from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will attend the meeting. Health and safety is a matter for central UK Government and is not a devolved responsibility.

The European Commission's Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) has held one meeting during the period 1 July to 31 December 2005, on 21 and 22 September. A second meeting, originally planned for December, has been postponed to late January 2006. The Chair of SCOEL is chosen from among the membership and does not reflect the presidency. The current chair is Professor Vito Foá, who is Italian. SCOEL members act as independent scientific experts, not as representatives of national Governments. HSE currently nominates two members to SCOEL on behalf of the UK Government. The current UK nominees are a senior toxicologist at the Medical Research Council Institute for Environment and Health, and the head of the Health and Safety Executive's Industrial Chemicals Unit. There is no provision for representation of devolved Governments on SCOEL.

The Commission (EUROSTAT) presides over both the Committee on Statistical Confidentiality (CSC) and the Committee on the harmonisation of the compilation of gross national product (GNI). During the term of the UK presidency of the Council of the European Union the CSC plans to meet on 2 December 2005. The GNI met on 5–6 July 2005 and plans to meet again on 27 October 2005. Meetings will be attended by appropriate UK officials who will consult with Devolved Administrations as appropriate.

Howell Opinion

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of the Howell Opinion in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland. [27641]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Howell Opinion prevents local authorities prosecuting cases involving DWP administered benefits. Local authorities and this Department may conduct a joint investigation. Such cases would require an element of duplicated working within the local authority and the Department. Alternatively, if it is not possible to conduct a joint investigation there is a risk that the Department and the local authority might investigate or prosecute the same individual twice for a similar offence.

We intend to introduce at the earliest opportunity, amendments to primary legislation to enable local authorities to investigate and prosecute national benefits alongside housing or council tax benefit.

Income Support

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of income support recipients receiving a disability premium have been on the benefit for *(a)* less than one year, *(b)* less than two years, *(c)* less than five years and *(d)* less than eight years. [25259]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the table.

Income support claimants with a disability premium by duration: Great Britain, May 2005

Duration	*Income support claimants with a disability premium*	*Percentage*
All	1,115,700	100.0
Up to 1 year	89,800	8.0
1 year and up to 2 years	140,300	12.6
2 years and up to 5 years	306,500	27.5
5 years and up to 8 years	202,400	18.1
8 years and over	376,600	33.8

Notes:
1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Percentages are given to one decimal place.
3. For comparison purposes, the 1997 figure excludes pensioners. Pensioners have not been able to claim income support since October 2003.
4. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study(WPLS).

In-work Credit (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in Kettering constituency have received the in-work credit; [22232]

(2) how many people in Kettering constituency have received the lone parent work search premium. [22233]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The lone parent in work credit and work search premium are not available in Kettering.

The in work credit is designed to help lone parents cope with the financial aspects of moving from welfare to work, and ensure they are better off in work. It is being piloted in 23 Jobcentre Plus districts and has been rolled out in four phases from April 2004 to October 2005.

The areas covered are: Bradford; North London; South East London; Cardiff; Central London; Dudley and Sandwell; Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders; Lancashire West; Leeds; Leicestershire; Staffordshire; West London; Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon; City and East; Lambeth; Southwark and Wandsworth; South London; Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire; Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire; Essex; Hampshire; Kent; and Surrey and Sussex.

The work search premium helps remove the disincentive for lone parents in the costs of looking for work. It is being piloted in eight Jobcentre Plus districts: Bradford, Cardiff and Vale, Dudley and Sandwell, Edinburgh, Lancashire West, Leicestershire, South East London, and West London.

An interim evaluation of the pilots is being conducted and we expect to publish a report in autumn 2006.

Jobcentre Plus (Staffordshire)

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what additional facilities are proposed to assist those using the Job Centre in Burslem. [21833]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Ms Joan Walley, dated 11 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about what additional facilities are proposed to assist those currently using the Jobcentre in Burslem. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

As you will be aware, Burslem Jobcentre is scheduled to close in March 2007. Those customers currently claiming jobseeker's allowance through Burslem Jobcentre will have access to services provided by the new, purpose-built premises, planned for Hanley, only three miles away from the current Burslem Jobcentre location. Burslem customers claiming Incapacity Benefit and Income Support already use the Hanley site for all their dealings with Jobcentre Plus.

A feasibility study of alternative local locations options has been undertaken and negotiations are currently under way with the local authority over the introduction of telephone facilities in Burslem library to allow our customers to access our services direct, free of charge.

Consideration is also being given to the possibility of routing the Staffordshire JobsBus through Burslem. The JobsBus is a mobile unit offering customers access to vacancy information, telephone and fax facilities and also an employment information computer package. Specialist advisers often join the regular JobsBus staff to offer specific advice, for example to lone parents, people returning to work after ill health or people who have health problems that affect the work that they can do. I have asked Julie Carruthers, the District Manager for Jobcentre Plus in Staffordshire, to contact you when a decision on this is reached.

I hope this information is helpful.

Myasthenia Gravis

Mr. Flello: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the benefit entitlements for people diagnosed with myasthenia gravis. [25746]

Mrs. McGuire: We do not pay benefits solely based on a particular medical diagnosis.

Incapacity benefit is intended to provide a source of income for sick and disabled people of working age who are unable to work.

Entitlement to disability living allowance is based on mobility difficulties and/or the need for personal care which results from severe disability. Attendance allowance is available to those disabled after the age of 65. The customer's medical condition is not, necessarily, the key factor; rather it is the disablement that results from it and the effects of that disablement.

New Deal

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the Jobcentre Plus districts identified for the pilot the Building on New Deal programme; which of the districts have since been dropped from the pilot programme; and what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the changes in the number of pilots. [17405]

Margaret Hodge: Since the original announcement of 11 Building on New Deal (BoND) pilot districts in November 2004, we have undertaken a detailed planning and impact analysis to ensure that the measures detailed in the BoND strategy paper can be tested as originally envisaged, and that the design is affordable. Given this and our proposals to reduce the number of Jobcentre Plus districts, we have decided that seven areas are sufficient to test the effectiveness of BoND. This allows for the robust evaluation needed to inform decisions on national implementation.

The seven chosen areas allow us to test BoND in different types of labour markets across the country, including urban and rural locations, and areas with a greater concentration of people from black and minority ethnic communities. Seven comparator areas have been chosen using the same criteria, enabling a clear comparison of performance between BoND and comparator areas.

The Jobcentre Plus districts identified to pilot BoND from October 2006 are: Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde; Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire; Cardiff and Vale; Cheshire and Warrington; Cornwall; Northamptonshire; and North East London.

The BoND comparator areas are: Highlands, Islands and Clyde Coast; Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire; Staffordshire; Kent; Cumbria ; Hampshire and Isle of Wight; and South East London.

Calderdale and Kirklees; Gateshead and South Tyneside; Norfolk; and The Marches have now been removed from the pilots. This change will not affect the validity of the evaluation.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress on Building on New Deal for Work, with particular reference to *(a)* decentralisation of decision making, *(b)* specialist programmes for individual needs and *(c)* the establishment of pilot areas. [21572]

Margaret Hodge: We have achieved significant success in our new deal programmes, helping over a million people in to work. We are determined to build on this achievement to deliver more support for those people who face the most difficult barriers to work.

Building on new deal will give personal advisers and local managers greater flexibility, allowing them to provide tailored support to better meet the needs of individuals and of local labour markets. It will also give them more scope to work in partnership with employers and other agencies to tackle local problems that prevent more people moving from benefit dependency to work.

Personal advisers will be able to select from a range of programme provision to address the individual needs of our customers. This will include specialist provision, such as Access to Work, offering a grant to disabled people and those with health conditions to help them overcome the particular barriers they face in the workplace, and progress2work and progress2work LinkUP, which have been developed to provide further support for those facing the greatest disadvantages in the labour market, including recovering alcohol misusers, ex-offenders and homeless people.

The seven Jobcentre Plus districts identified to pilot BoND from October 2006 are: Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde; Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire; Cardiff and Vale; Cheshire and Warrington; Cornwall; Northamptonshire, and North East London.

Seven comparator areas have been chosen using the same criteria, enabling a clear comparison of performance between BoND and comparator areas. The BoND comparator areas are: Highlands, Islands and Clyde Coast; Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire; Staffordshire; Kent; Cumbria; Hampshire and Isle of Wight, and South East London.

The seven chosen areas will allow us to test BoND in different types of labour market across the country, including urban and rural locations, and areas of high ethnicity.

Office for Disability Issues

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the level of publicity for his Department's recent consultation on the establishment of the Office for Disability Issues; and whether this process was compatible with the Cabinet Office code of practice for public consultations. [22185]

Mrs. McGuire: The consultation referred to was an informal exercise, and was publicised in the disability press and on a number of disability related websites. In addition I wrote to over 60 leading disability organisations notifying them of the exercise, and issued a press release. We contacted a range of interested organisations and individuals using contact details held by this Department, and Central Office of Information, passing on information about the consultation, and asking them to cascade the information further.

Officials are currently analysing the results of this consultation exercise; and once this analysis is complete, the results will be published. I am confident that the publicity for this exercise was compatible with the Cabinet Office code of practice for public consultations, although it was not a formal consultation exercise, and therefore was not subject to the code.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoptions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adoptions of *(a)* children under three years and *(b)* all children have been completed in each of the last five years. [18842]

Maria Eagle: The number of adoption orders made for all children in England and Wales for 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2003 (latest figures available) is set out in the following table. A breakdown of these figures by age could be provided at only disproportionate cost.

	Number
1999	4,987
2000	5,086
2001	5,384
2002	5,485
2003	5,354

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Statistical information on the total number of adoptions is included in the Statistics Series "Marriage, divorce and adoptions", Volume FM2, published by the Office for National Statistics. A copy of this publication is available in the House of Commons Library and on the Office for National Statistics' website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=581&Pos=1&ColRank=2&Rank=192

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adoptions were completed in the last 12 months in each local authority area. [18843]

Maria Eagle: Information on all adoptions that were completed in the last 12 months by local authority area is not collected centrally.

However, information is available on the number of looked after children, by local authority area, adopted in 2003–04. This information may be found in table 18 of "Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2004" available on the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000569/vweb01-2005_2.pdf.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which individual is responsible for developing and implementing her Department's Skills Development Plan. [23847]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W. In the Department of Education and Skills, the Human Resources Director is responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the DfES Skills Development Plan.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many full-time equivalent employee reductions as a result of the Gershon review have been made; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* total value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [23992]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 2 November 2005]:* As at September 2005 my Department had made 774 full-time equivalent employee reductions. Further progress will be reported in the Department's Autumn Performance Report.

In 2004–05 my Department realised efficiencies of some £30.56 million in procurement of ICT related goods and services. My Department has an efficiency target for 2007–08 but no intermediate targets.

We do however expect to realise significant efficiencies through our IT related programmes. Progress will be reported in the Department's Autumn Performance Report. The Department has an efficiency target for 2007–08 but no intermediate target for 2005–06.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list in ascending order the percentage change in 16 to 18 years participation budgets for education in Learning and Skills Council sub-regions between 2003–04 and 2004–05. [20290]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Department allocates funds for further education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including 16 to 18 years participation, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government.

In 2003–04 the LSC spent £2,073 million on 16 to 18 years provision nationally. In 2004–05 this increased to £2,342 million—an increase of 9 per cent.

My Department does not hold figures at local or regional levels. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive has responded to you with further details about the specific issues you have raised. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. John Grogan, dated 9 November 2005:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Questions to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills referred to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) by Bill Rammell regarding the percentage change in 16 to 18 years and adult participation

budgets for education in local Learning and Skills Councils and Regions between 2003–04 and 2004–05.

The LSC allocates funds for further education through the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils. The funds are allocated on an academic year basis.

The attached spreadsheets show the distribution of the FE funding in ascending order by local Council and at regional level showing the cash and percentage variance between 2003/04 and 2004/05.

I hope you find this helpful.

Local council level

Local council	*Region*	*2003/04 16–18 allocation*	*2004/06 16–18 allocation*	*2003/04–2004/05 16–18 cash variance*	*2003/04–2004/05 16–18 % variance*
Northumberland	North East	4,149,134	4,346,485	197,351	4.76
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	West Midlands	30,164,075	32,805,210	2,641,135	8.76
Black Country	West Midlands	49,511,303	53,918,189	4,406,886	8.90
Coventry and Warwickshire	West Midlands	34,128,247	37,212,976	3,084,729	9.04
Wiltshire and Swindon	South West	24,629,000	26,964,435	2,335,435	9.48
Shropshire	West Midlands	20,910,762	22,911,860	2,001,098	9.57
Somerset	South West	28,585,480	31,328,688	2,743,208	9.60
South Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	50,961,859	55,910,624	4,948,765	9.71
Essex	East of England	69,871,857	76,693,961	6,822,104	9.76
Birmingham and Solihull	West Midlands	64,710,412	71,256,201	6,545,789	10.12
North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	27,099,782	29,852,000	2,752,218	10.16
Bedfordshire and Luton	East of England	23,081,000	25,431,000	2,350,000	10.18
Cumbria	North West	14,037,453	15,469,417	1,431,964	10.20
Cheshire and Warrington	North West	35,508,800	39,131,079	3,622,279	10.20
Staffordshire	West Midlands	40,115,108	44,282,477	4,167,369	10.39
County Durham	North East	16,279,252	17,973,450	1,694,198	10.41
Lincolnshire and Rutland	East Midlands	19,287,552	21,341,237	2,053,685	10.65
Greater Manchester	North West	151,547,000	167,886,674	16,339,674	10.78
Gloucestershire	South West	21,121,473	23,413,352	2,291,879	10.85
London South	London	65,809,153	73,407,987	7,598,834	11.55
Leicestershire	East Midlands	35,954,804	40,124,809	4,170,00	11.60
Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	South East	34,065,272	38,030,891	3,965,619	11.64
Tees Valley	North East	50,361,276	56,303,066	5,941,790	11.80
Nottinghamshire	East Midlands	40,560,418	45,353,801	4,793,383	11.82
Humberside	Yorkshire and Humberside	50,383,173	56,528,970	6,145,797	12.20
West Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	76,342,462	85,665,482	9,323,020	12.21
Lancashire	North West	77,185,872	86,726,000	9,540,128	12.36
Tyne and Wear	North East	48,098,648	54,122,464	6,023,816	12.52
London East	London	83,536,737	94,260,009	10,723,272	12.84
Hertfordshire	East of England	29, 927,000	33,769,515	3, 842,515	12.84
West of England	South West	37,375,423	42,248,021	4,872,598	13.04
Greater Merseyside	North West	62,769,780	71,173,871	8,404,091	13.39
London Central	London	60,281,227	68,615,179	8,333,952	13.83
Derbyshire	East Midlands	26,968,993	30,864,603	3,895,610	14.44
Surrey	South East	55,096,612	63,251,852	8,155,240	14.80
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	South West	17,584,069	20,226,960	2,642,891	15.03
London West	London	49,624,216	57,426,107	7,801,891	15.72
Devon and Cornwall	South West	61,558,736	71,420,289	9,861,553	16.02
Sussex	South East	64,940,000	75,669,591	10,729,591	16.52
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	South East	116,079,531	136,064,913	19,985,382	17.22
London North	London	46,370,518	54,400,121	8,029,603	17.32
Cambridgeshire	East of England	29,206,758	34,265,301	5,058,543	17.32
Berkshire	South East	21,102, 970	24,758,140	3,655,170	17.32
Norfolk	East of England	27,796,306	32,724,879	4,928,573	17.73
Northamptonshire	East Midlands	19,252,000	23,314,158	4,062,158	21.10
Kent and Medway	South East	43,698,000	55,240,992	11,542,992	26.42
Suffolk	East of England	15,124,859	19,991,757	4,866,898	32.18

Regional level

Region	*2003/04 16–18 allocation*	*2004/06 16–18 allocation*	*2003/04–2004/05 16–18 cash variance*	*2003/04–2004/05 16–18 % variance*
West Midlands	239,539,907	262,386,913	22,847,006	9.54
Yorkshire and Humberside	204,787,276	227,957,076	23,169,800	11.31
North West	341,048,905	380,387,041	39,338,136	11.53
North East	118,888,310	132,745,465	13,857,155	11.66
South West	190,854,181	215,601,745	24,747,564	12.97
East Midlands	142,023,767	160,998,608	18,974,841	13.36
London	305,621,851	348,109,403	42,487,552	13.90
East of England	195,007,780	222,876,413	27,868,633	14.29
South East	334,982,385	393,016,379	58,033,994	17.32
	2,072,754,362	2,344,079,043	271,324,681	13.09

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list in ascending order the percentage change in the adult participation in further education budgets for each Learning and Skills Council sub-region between 2003–04 and 2004–05. [20291]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Department allocates funds for further education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including adult participation, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government.

In 2003–04 the LSC spent £1,756 million on adult participation nationally. In 2004–05 this increased to £1,847 million—an increase of 10 per cent.

My Department does not hold figures at local or regional levels. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive has responded to you with further details about the specific issues you have raised. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. John Grogan, dated 9 November 2005:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Questions to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills referred to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) by Bill Rammell regarding the percentage change in 16 to 18 years and adult participation budgets for education in local Learning and Skills Councils and Regions between 2003–04 and 2004–05.

The LSC allocates funds for further education through the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils. The funds are allocated on an academic year basis.

The attached spreadsheets show the distribution of the FE funding in ascending order by local Council and at regional level showing the cash and percentage variance between 2003/04 and 2004/05.

I hope you find this helpful.

Local council level

£

		16–18			
Local council	*Region*	*2003/04 Allocation*	*2004/05 Allocation*	*2003/04 to 2004/05 Cash variance*	*2003/04 to 2004/05 Percentage variance*
Northumberland	North East	4,149,134	4,346,485	197,351	4.76
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	West Midlands	30,164,075	32,805,210	2,641,135	8.76
Black Country	West Midlands	49,511,303	53,918,189	4,406,886	8.90
Coventry and Warwickshire	West Midlands	34,128,247	37,212,976	3,084,729	9.04
Wiltshire and Swindon	South West	24,629,000	26,964,435	2,335,435	9.48
Shropshire	West Midlands	20,910,762	22,911,860	2,001,098	9.57
Somerset	South West	28,585,480	31,328,688	2,743,208	9.60
South Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	50,961,859	55,910,624	4,948,765	9.71
Essex	East of England	69,871,857	76,693,961	6,822,104	9.76
Birmingham and Solihull	West Midlands	64,710,412	71,256,201	6,545,789	10.12
North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	27,099,782	29,852,000	2,752,218	10.16
Bedfordshire and Luton	East of England	23,081,000	25,431,000	2,350,000	10.18
Cumbria	North West	14,037,453	15,469,417	1,431,964	10.20
Cheshire and Warrington	North West	35,508,800	39,131,079	3,622,279	10.20
Staffordshire	West Midlands	40,115,108	44,282,477	4,167,369	10.39
County Durham	North East	16,279,252	17,973,450	1,694,198	10.41
Lincolnshire and Rutland	East Midlands	19,287,552	21,341,237	2,053,685	10.65
Greater Manchester	North West	151,547,000	167,886,674	16,339,674	10.78
Gloucestershire	South West	21,121,473	23,413,352	2,291,879	10.85
London South	London	65,809,153	73,407,987	7,598,834	11.55
Leicestershire	East Midlands	35,954,804	40,124,809	4,170,005	11.60
Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire	South East	34,065,272	38,030,891	3,965,619	11.64
Tees Valley	North East	50,361,276	56,303,066	5,941,790	11.80
Nottinghamshire	East Midlands	40,560,418	45,353,801	4,793,383	11.82
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West Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humberside	76,342,462	85,665,482	9,323,020	12.21
Lancashire	North West	77,185,872	86,726,000	9,540,128	12.36
Tyne and Wear	North East	48,098,648	54,122,464	6,023,816	12.52
London East	London	83,536,737	94,260,009	10,723,272	12.84
Hertfordshire	East of England	29,927,000	33,769,515	3,842,515	12.84
West of England	South West	37,375,423	42,248,021	4,872,598	13.04
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Norfolk	East of England	27,796,306	32,724,879	4,928,573	17.73
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Suffolk	East of England	15,124,859	19,991,757	4,866,898	32.18
		2,072,754,362	2,344,079,043	271,324,681	13.09

Regional level

£

Region	16–18 2003/04 Allocation	2004/05 Allocation	2003/04 to 2004/05 Cash variance	2003/04 to 2004/05 Percentage variance
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North West	341,048,905	380,387,041	39,338,136	11.53
North East	118,888,310	132,745,465	13,857,155	11.66
South West	190,854,181	215,601,745	24,747,564	12.97
East Midlands	142,023,767	160,998,608	18,974,841	13.36
London	305,621,851	348,109,403	42,487,552	13.90
East of England	195,007,780	222,876,413	27,868,633	14.29
South East	334,982,385	393,016,379	58,033,994	17.32
	2,072,754,362	2,344,079,043	271,324,681	13.09

Looked-after Children

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure the target is met on the proportion of looked-after children placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision that adoption is in the child's best interests. [26781]

Maria Eagle: Performance on this measure remained stable between 2002–03 and 2003–04. Statistics for 2004–05 will be published on 24 November 2005. We will be reviewing factors that influence performance on this measure in light of the full implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. The Act and its associated regulations and statutory guidance will come into effect on 30 December 2005.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to reduce the percentage of looked-after children subject to a final warning or reprimand. [26782]

Maria Eagle: The percentage of looked-after children convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand fell from 10.3 per cent. in 2001 to 9.3 per cent. in 2004. Our work to raise educational achievement and improve placement stability will contribute towards continued reductions in offending and improvements in other outcomes for looked after children. Funded by the Government, MACRO have recently published a good practice guide on reducing offending by looked-after children, which reinforces the message that looked-after children must be provided with constructive supervision and guidance to reduce the risk of offending, and that those who have offended must be offered appropriate services to minimise the likelihood of re-offending. This publication has been distributed to all Directors of Children's Services and all YOT managers. We intend to consult early in 2006 on further wide ranging proposals for transforming outcomes for looked-after children.

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in her Department were relocated in 2004–05 as a result of Sir Michael Lyons' independent review of public sector relocation, broken down by location; to which location they have been relocated; how many are expected to be relocated in 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [23691]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* My Department and sponsored organisations are implementing the Lyons Review recommendations to relocate around 800 posts from the Department and its non-department public bodies out of London and the South East by 2010.

In 2004–05, 58 posts in DfES itself were relocated from London to our existing offices in Runcorn, Sheffield and Darlington. So far in 2005–06, 21 posts have been relocated and up to a further nine posts will have relocated by the end of period. The breakdown of posts relocated by location is: 43 to Runcorn, 32 to Sheffield and four to Darlington. A further four posts will move to Runcorn and two posts to Sheffield. The locations of the remaining three posts have not been confirmed.

There have been no transfers of DfES staff out of London to fill these posts.

Public Service Agreements

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will assess progress on the Public Service Agreement target to narrow the gap in educational achievement between looke' after children and their peers. [26790]

Maria Eagle: Progress towards the achievement of the Department's Public Service Agreement Targets is reported in our Spring Departmental Report and our Autumn Performance Report. The Spring Departmental Report was published on 20 June 2005 and the Autumn Performance Report is due to be published on or before 19 December 2005.

Copies of Departmental Reports and Autumn Performance Reports are available from the House of Commons Library.

Schools (Putney)

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Putney will receive funding as part of the Schools Access Initiative; and how much has been allocated to each school in *(a)* 2004–05 *(b)* 2005–06 *(c)* 2006–07 and *(d)* 2007–08. [27263]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 10 November]:* The Schools Access Initiative provides resources to local authorities to help make mainstream schools accessible to pupils with disabilities. £300 million has been made

available for the first access planning period under Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2003–2006), with a further £100 million per annum announced for both 2006–07 and 2007–08. The funding is allocated to local authorities and it is for each authority to decide its priority schemes in light of the local needs and circumstances detailed in their accessibility strategy. They are not required to provide us with information detailing how they have spent their allocation of the School Access Initiative on the schools they are responsible for.

Special Educational Needs

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what level of *(a)* qualifications and *(b)* experience is required to be a school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator; and if she will make a statement. [27072]

Maria Eagle: The Department's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, published in November 2001, makes it clear that the SEN co-ordinator should be closely involved with the head teacher, senior management and teachers, in the strategic development of a school's SEN policy. Once it has been agreed, the SENCO should have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the policy and for co-ordinating provision for pupils with SEN, particularly through "School Action" and "School Action Plus".

SENCOs are selected and appointed by head teachers. There are no specific qualifications which a SENCO has to have, although we would normally expect a head to appoint someone with a proven track record of successful working with children with SEN and disabilities.

Working in collaboration with the National Association for Special Educational Needs, the Department has recently arranged a series of discussion sessions for primary and secondary SENCOs designed to identify aspects of good practice in relation to the SENCO role, for dissemination through NASEN publications and otherwise.

Trust Schools

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 132W, on trust schools, how many schools have *(a)* applied for, *(b)* received and *(c)* been refused permission to borrow against their assets in each year since 1997; and what the current total amount is of such borrowing, broken down by category of maintained school. [27359]

Jacqui Smith: We have not received any applications for permission to borrow. Guidance to schools sets out our policy that we think such borrowing will rarely represent value for money. This is because the cost of a commercial loan, which includes an element of profit and an allowance for risk, will always tend to be more expensive than the alternative of direct funding by Government. A small number of schools and local authorities have made inquiries, but we do not keep records of this.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the capacity of schools to provide mentoring for pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26060]

Beverley Hughes: The Excellence in Cities Programme introduced Learning Mentor support to schools and colleges, with the funding targeted towards disadvantaged groups and areas of under-achievement (through around 60 full partnerships and 78 smaller clusters).

The Excellence in Cities programme was specifically introduced to tackle years of under-achievement in our most socially and economically disadvantaged areas. The additional support and funding provided by the Excellence in Cities programme has significantly increased the capacity of schools in deprived areas to address the socio economic factors of under attainment. Partnership working has allowed schools to target resources and strategies to raise attainment across whole communities. Strands such as Gifted and Talented, Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units, City Learning Centres, Aimhigher and Study Support have, among other things, pioneered personalised learning programmes; tackled barriers to learning; extended study opportunities for pupils, providing access to state of the art ICT; enabled ICT led innovation in the delivery of the curriculum; fostered new approaches to teaching and learning; kept at risk pupils in school and engaged in the curriculum; and enhanced continuing professional development for teachers.

This funding will become part of mainstream provision from 1 April 2006 as an element of the ring fenced and index linked Dedicated Schools Grant. The Dedicated Schools Grant will be available to all schools and will enable Learning Mentor and other related provision to spread more broadly, reflecting local need.

It is important to bear in mind that there are additional forms of mentoring provided within schools which are not provided by school learning mentors (employed by the school/local authority) e.g. peer and voluntary mentoring. There is also the work carried out by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation http.www.mandbf.org.uk/.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many alcohol-related admissions there were to Darent Valley hospital and its predecessor hospitals that served the Gravesham constituency in each year since 1997. [24135]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected at hospital level. However, the following table shows the number of finished admission episodes for alcohol-related diseases for residents of Gravesham local authority, for which the Dartford and Gravesham national health service trust was the treatment provider.

Counts of finished admission episodes where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol-related diseases[1]. Local authority district of residence: Gravesham. Provider of treatment: RN7 Dartford and Gravesham NHS trust. NHS hospitals England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished admission episodes
1997–98	19
1998–99	23
1999–2000	26
2000–01	16
2001–02	35
2002–03	39
2003–04	43

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:
F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.
K70: Alcoholic liver disease.
T51: Toxic effect of alcohol.
Notes:
1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14, seven prior to 2002–03, diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.
Source:
HES, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Alzheimer's Disease

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the benefits of *(a)* Donepezil, *(b)* Galantamine, *(c)* Memantine and *(d)* Rivastigamine for people with Alzheimer's disease. [26395]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently assessing the clinical and cost-effectiveness of Donepezil, Galantamine, Memantine and Rivastigamine for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Information about NICE'S current work programme is available on the NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk.

Asthma

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Government's plan is for phasing out CFC asthma inhalers; and what the timetable is for that phase-out. [21521]

Jane Kennedy: The Government's plan for phasing out chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) asthma inhalers is set out in the "UK Transition Strategy for CFC-based MDIs", which was published by the Department and the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions in 1999. The strategy states that when an adequate number and range of CFC-free metered dose inhalers (MDIs) to meet patient needs are available for an individual drug, the use of CFCs will no longer be considered essential for that drug product.

Manufacturers are developing CFC-free alternatives for other products, and, in accordance with the transition strategy, the availability of these will determine the timescale for the phase out. The European Commission, with member states, is currently reviewing the scope for further declarations of non-essentiality in relation to a number of other drug products used in inhalers.

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions the Government have had with the Chinese authorities regarding the human health implications of recently reported outbreaks of avian influenza in central Hunan, Inner Mongolia and Anhui provinces. [23275]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The United Kingdom Government have not had any specific discussions with the Chinese authorities regarding the avian influenza outbreaks in central Hunan, Inner Mongolia and Anhui provinces. The World Health Organisation has been taking the lead on the worldwide response to avian influenza including discussion with affected countries.

I recently attended an international meeting of health ministers in Ottowa, which discussed avian and pandemic influenza issues. The Chinese Health Minister was also present.

Cancer

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department plans to monitor the uptake of Herceptin among women with *(a)* advanced breast cancer and *(b)* early-stage breast cancer. [23971]

Jane Kennedy: The National Cancer Director, Professor Mike Richards, will be publishing a report in the new year on the uptake of National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) approved cancer drugs. This report will cover Herceptin for women with advanced breast cancer.

Herceptin for early breast cancer has not been approved by NICE so will not be covered by Professor Richard's report. However, if Herceptin for early breast cancer is approved by NICE, progress on its uptake will then be assessed by the Healthcare Commission who have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of NICE guidance.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information her Department holds on the United Kingdom morbidity and mortality rates for skin cancer in each year since 1979; and if she will make a statement. [20784]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The latest available figures for the incidence and mortality of melanoma skin cancer in England and Wales are for the year 2003. Age-standardised incidence and mortality rates by sex for the years 1979 to 2003 are shown in the table.

Age-standardised rates[1] of melanoma skin cancer[2] in England and Wales, by sex, 1979–2003

Rates per 100,000

	Incidence		*Mortality[3]*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
1979	2.8	4.8	1.6	1.6
1980	3.0	5.0	1.6	1.6
1981	3.2	5.4	1.7	1.6
1982	3.3	5.7	1.7	1.8
1983	3.6	6.1	1.7	1.5

Age-standardised rates[1] of melanoma skin cancer[2] in England and Wales, by sex, 1979–2003

Rates per 100,000

	Incidence		*Mortality[3]*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
1984	3.5	6.1	1.9	1.7
1985	4.6	7.6	1.9	1.7
1986	4.7	7.4	1.8	1.9
1987	5.4	8.4	1.9	1.8
1988	6.3	9.0	1.9	1.9
1989	5.7	8.4	2.0	1.9
1990	6.0	7.5	2.2	1.9
1991	5.9	7.7	2.3	1.8
1992	6.5	8.4	2.2	1.7
1993	7.5	9.6	2.6	2.2
1994	7.4	9.4	2.4	2.2
1995	7.3	9.6	2.6	2.0
1996	7.3	9.2	2.5	2.0
1997	7.8	9.3	2.5	2.0
1998	8.4	9.8	2.6	2.1
1999	8.1	9.6	2.7	2.0
2000	9.7	11.1	2.8	2.1
2001	10.1	11.7	2.6	2.0
2002	10.6	12.2	2.7	1.9
2003	11.0	12.5	2.8	2.0

[1] Directly age standardised using the European standard population.

[2] Melanoma skin cancer is defined as code 172 in the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD9) and as code C43 in the Tenth Revision (ICD10).

[3] Data is for registrations of death per calendar year from 1979 to 1992 and for occurrences of death per calendar year from 1993 onwards.

Sources:

Office for National Statistics

Welsh cancer intelligence and surveillance unit.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on *(a)* prevention, *(b)* diagnosis and *(c)* treatment of skin cancer; [20810]

(2) what *(a)* guidance her Department has issued and *(b)* campaigns her Department is undertaking to raise awareness of skin cancer. [20814]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the other United Kingdom health Departments have commissioned Cancer Research UK to run SunSmart, which was launched in 2003, as the national skin cancer prevention and sun protection campaign. The SunSmart campaign includes raising both public and professional awareness of skin cancer through providing information about it and guidance on preventative measures to reduce the risks associated with skin cancer and exposure to sunlight. The campaign raises awareness through support for health promotion events, the provision of printed resources, media briefings and through the SunSmart website at http://cancerresearchuk.org/sunsmart/. SunSmart also supports schools in developing their own sun protection policies through school guidelines and curriculum resources.

SunSmart's printed resources and the website contain prevention messages on avoiding excess sunlight and ultraviolet rays and using protective screening methods including covering up in the sunlight and the use of effective sunscreen products. The campaign also provides information to help recognise the symptoms of the different types of skin cancer and on seeking medical advice if necessary.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has recently issued updated referral guidelines for suspected cancer to assist general practitioners in determining those patients who need to be referred urgently to see a specialist within two weeks. The guidance addresses skin cancers.

The Department and the Welsh Assembly have also commissioned NICE to produce service guidance for skin tumours including melanoma. This guidance is due for publication in January 2006 and will address area such as diagnosis, treatment and follow up.

Coenzynme Q

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has commissioned on the effects of the supplement coenzyme Q on those suffering from schizophrenia. [24317]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not commissioned research on the effects of the supplement coenzyme Q on those suffering from schizophrenia.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23470]

Jane Kennedy: The Department did not purchase any items of art in 2004–05.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed in her Department on 30 September; and if she will make a statement. [24830]

Jane Kennedy: The number of staff employed by the Department on 30 September 2005 is shown in the table. This figure includes staff on loan into the Department. It does not include staff on a career break who are not currently paid by the Department. The figure also includes staff who are designated to transfer out of the Department and staff who are on secondment to other organisations; these staff remain on the Department's payroll, although in most cases, the Department is reimbursed for their salary.

Staff employed by the Department of Health, September 2005

	Total
Employee	
Headcount	2,450
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	2,361.1
Fixed term appointment	
Headcount	62
FTE	58.6
Total headcount	2,512
Total FTE	2,419.8

Easyway (International) Ltd

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department has received a request for a meeting from Allen Carr's Easyway (International) Ltd. [24210]

Caroline Flint: The Department has received several requests to meet the Allen Carr Easyway (International) Ltd.

The Department regularly receives approaches about smoking cessation techniques and recognises that there are a number of methods that may help smokers to quit. In terms of national policy, the focus is on those methods with accumulated independent evidence of efficacy.

The Department, following guidance from the National Institute for Health Clinical Excellence (NICE), endorsed the use on the national health service of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and bupropion (Zyban) as effective stop smoking aids. Used in conjunction with trained support through the NHS stop smoking service, smokers are up to four times more likely to quit successfully than using willpower alone.

I am aware that Allen Carr's Easyway (International) Ltd is in contact with NICE to make their case and I am sure that, in deciding what should be available on the NHS, this is the appropriate route.

Emergency Preparedness

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to institute a national chemical biological radiation network alerting system; and if she will make a statement. [22687]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department works together with the Home Office and other Government Departments in responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents or events. The Department has instituted protocols for receiving alerts on a wide range of emergency situations. These alerts may arise from surveillance systems in operation, principally on infectious diseases and dangerous pathogens, or from other organisations that operate surveillance systems or from responders to incidents. Standard operating procedures are in place to ensure onward alerting to Government Departments and agencies and to others who need to know.

Surveillance systems operate on a local, regional and national level and based on 24/7 service. The national network system is connected to the European Union alerting mechanisms and, through the World Health Organisation, to global alerts.

Eye Prescription Vouchers

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Government will increase the value of eye prescription vouchers for those on incapacity benefit. [26112]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Financial help towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses, via an optical voucher, is available to children under 16, those aged under 19 in full-time education and those on a low income. The voucher value varies according to the individual's prescription. There are currently eight voucher bands ranging from £32.90 to £181.40.

Individuals are not entitled by virtue of incapacity benefit on its own to help towards the cost of glasses, as incapacity benefit is not an income related benefit. Individuals in receipt of incapacity benefit may, however, be entitled to help via the national health service low income scheme.

Optical voucher values are reviewed annually and any increases take effect from 1 April.

Fraud

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2690W, on fraud, when she expects an estimate of the outstanding amount of fraud in all areas of NHS spending to be available. [18888]

Jane Kennedy: The Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) risk measurement methodology is applied to accurately measure losses to fraud in areas of national health service spending in order to identify the scale of the problem and take firm action to prevent this from occurring. CFSMS is currently working on measuring losses in major areas of the NHS budget and has for example been actively involved in seeking to fraud-proof the new general practitioner contract. Continued measurements of losses to fraud will take place as weaknesses are identified and substantive budgets affected. This is and must be an ongoing process as spending areas and budget allocations will continue to change. As such, there can be no accurate overall estimate of the outstanding amount of fraud in the NHS, only a continuous effort to identify weaknesses as budgets and policies change and evolve.

Gas/Electricity Supplies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals have interruptible contracts for gas and electricity supply; and if she will make a statement. [25545]

Jane Kennedy: In 2003, the total number of national health service interruptible sites stood at around 130 for England. In 2005, the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency arranged contracts for 109 interruptible sites.

There are a further 15 to 20 interruptible sites which are not contracted for centrally but via the local facilities management or private finance initiative provider.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2695W, on mandatory surveillance, how many incidents of *(a)* the glycopeptide resistant enterococci, *(b)* orthopaedic surgical site infections and *(c)* serious untoward incidents associated with infection there have been in (i) England, (ii) each region, (iii) each strategic health authority and (iv) each NHS trust. [20751]

Jane Kennedy: Mandatory reporting of glycopeptide resistant enterococcal blood stream infections (bacteraemias) was introduced in October 2003 and a total of 620 bacteraemias were reported in the year from October 2003 to September 2004. Data for England and its regions was published in the "Communicable Disease Report (CDR) Weekly" on 25 August 2005[1] and information on individual trusts was published on the Department's website[2]. Data for individual strategic health authorities (SHAs) have not been published.

Mandatory reporting of orthopaedic surgical site infections was introduced in April 2004 and in the first year of reporting data on 41,242 orthopaedic operations were analysed and 593 infections reported. Data for individual trusts were published on the Department's website on 28 October 2005[3] and a fuller report has been published by the Health Protection Agency[4]. Data are not available by region or SHA.

Reporting of serious untoward incidents associated with hospital infections was introduced in September 2003 and a report will be published later this year.

[1] Results of the first year of mandatory glycopeptide resistant enterococci (GRE) reporting: October 2003 to September 2004. "Communicable Disease Report (CDR) Weekly" 2005; 15 (34) 25 August 2005:www.hpa.org.uk/cdr/archives/2005/BAct_GRE_3405.pdf.

[2] Department of Health mandatory GRE bacteraemia surveillance scheme. GRE reports by national health service acute trust in England October 2003 to September 2004:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/83/59/04118359.pdf.

[3] Surveillance of surgical site infection in orthopaedic surgery: mandatory surveillance of surgical site infection in orthopaedic surgery: Report of data collected between April 2004 and March 2005:

www.dh.org.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/PublicationsStatisticsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4122133&chk=5Wg/Y5.

[4] Mandatory surveillance of surgical site infection in orthopaedic surgery, April 2004 to March 2005:

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hai/SSI_mandatory_0405report.pdf.

Infection Control

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will summarise the results of the *(a)* national observational study of the effectiveness of the cleanyourhands campaign and *(b)* cluster-randomised controlled trial of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of feedback in intensive care units and acute general medical wards; and what plans she has to commission further research on compliance with hand hygiene in the NHS. [23033]

Jane Kennedy: The research projects to which the hon. Member refers began earlier this year. The results of the national observational study will become available in 2006, and final results from the randomised controlled trial in 2008.

The Department does not at present have plans for further research on compliance with hand hygiene.

Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Herefordshire, *(b)* Worcestershire and *(c)* England have received a free influenza vaccine. [24939]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The first monitoring uptake data for Staffordshire and England will be available on 14 November.

Information (South Asian Patients)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the quality of information provided to patients, with particular reference to patients of South Asian origin. [23108]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Standards are the main drivers for continuous improvement in quality in health care. Independent inspections by the Healthcare Commission are designed to drive up standards by identifying areas for improvement.

Last year, the Department published "National Standards, Local Action". This sets out that primary care trusts should ensure that adequate patient information and support processes are set up and, particularly, provide targeted support that addresses the needs of individuals and communities, including black and minority ethnic groups.

The Department also published "Better information, better choices, better health" at the end of last year; a three-year strategy to enhance accessibility and quality of health care information for everyone. The strategy contains measures to improve the information available, as well as support to access and use it, in particular focusing on groups that have difficulty accessing health care information, including patients of South Asian origin.

Kettering General Hospital

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* in-patients and *(b)* out-patients have been treated at Kettering general hospital in each year since 1997. [24750]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Number of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) and patients at the Kettering general hospital national health service trust for each year between 1997–98 and 2003–04

	FCEs	*Patient counts*
1997–98	59,793	34,983
1998–99	62,318	36,976
1999–2000	63,485	37,414
2000–01	64,701	38,685
2001–02	64,101	39,724
2002–03	60,141	37,168
2003–04	65,229	39,888

Notes:
1. A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HESID. This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an

agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.
3. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data—that is, the data are ungrossed. Hospital episode statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds have been available at Kettering general hospital in each year since 1997, broken down by major category. [24751]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Average daily number of available beds by sector, Kettering general hospital national health service trust, 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Total	*General and acute*	*Acute*	*Geriatric*	*Mental illness*	*Learning disability*	*Maternity*
1997–98	481	446	446	0	0	0	35
1998–99	482	440	440	0	0	0	42
1999–2000	482	435	435	0	0	0	47
2000–01	496	445	445	0	0	0	51
2001–02	517	452	452	0	0	0	65
2002–03	533	468	468	0	0	0	65
2003–04	527	470	470	0	0	0	57
2004–05	512	456	456	0	0	0	56

Source:
Department of Health form KH03.

Market Research

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been paid to *(a)* Opinion Leader Research and *(b)* market research companies by her Department in each of the last three years. [24315]

Jane Kennedy: A list of expenditure on market research in each of the last three years could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

The Department is committed to consulting and involving the public to help inform both policy formulation and the delivery of better quality public services. Responsive public services are an important part of the Modernising Government initiative.

The Department only conducts or commissions market research when it is justified by the needs of the policy programme and is the most economical, efficient and effective way to achieve the purpose.

Mental Health

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which recommendations of the Government's working group on the Mental Health Act 1983 were *(a)* adopted and *(b)* rejected; and if she will list the members of the working group. [22202]

Ms Rosie Winterton: An expert committee was appointed in October 1998 to review the Mental Health Act 1983. This was chaired by Professor Genevra Richardson and the committee is generally referred to as the Richardson Committee.

The Richardson Committee produced its Report in July 1999, which was published along with the November 1999 Green Paper, "Reform of the Mental Health Act 1983", which sought views on the various recommendations of the Richardson Committee. The Green Paper was followed by the White Paper, "Reforming the Mental Health Act 1983" and a draft Bill for consultation in 2002.

The responses from this consultation and further work resulted in a revised draft Mental Health Bill, which was published in September 2004. This was the subject of pre-legislative scrutiny, which resulted in a report in March 2005, a response to which was published in July 2005. The recommendations from the Richardson Committee have, therefore, been subject to considerable discussion and development over the course of the last five years and it is not possible to assess each of the recommendations in terms of whether they have been adopted or rejected.

The Richardson Report lists all members. This is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/06/26/14/04062614.pdf

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people likely to be eligible for placement under community treatment orders under proposals in the draft Mental Health Bill. [23152]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government's modelling assumption is that around 10 per cent. of treatment orders will be community-based in the early years of the new Mental Health Act. Ensuring that professionals use involuntary community-based treatment appropriately is more critical than arbitrarily specifying the number of people who will be subject to community treatment orders.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her Department's press release dated 20 October, on capital investment in mental health services, whether capital investment will be made available to NHS mental health trusts which are anticipating year-end financial deficits on their income and expenditure account. [25302]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We expect the £130 million capital investment in mental health services announced on 20 October to be distributed to national health service mental health trusts in 2006–07 and 2007–08, based on need and investment plans. Until this allocation process is under way, we cannot say which trusts will receive this funding.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken by the Government to improve the standards of mental health hospitals. [26473]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We published the national service framework for mental health (NSF) in 1999, which sets out a comprehensive vision for transforming mental health care in England to 2009. Since 1999, we have increased spending on mental health services by more than £1 billion, from £4.07 billion in 1999–2000 to £5.09 billion in 2003–04. On 20 October, we announced a £130 million capital investment programme, which will be allocated to strategic health authorities from 2006.

This funding will help to update acute in-patient wards and psychiatric intensive care units (PICUs). Standard five of the NSF, "Hospital and Crises Accommodation", is dedicated to mental health hospitals and it signals our determination to improve the experience of service users who require hospital or PICU admission. This has been followed by departmental guidance, "National Minimum Standards for General Adult Services in PICUs and Low Secure Environments" (2002). The National Institute of Mental Health in England is implementing this guidance as one of its core programmes.

Methylphenidate

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the annual percentage change was in prescriptions of methylphenidate to children since 1995. [24026]

Jane Kennedy: The Department do not hold information on who receives medication and so does not have information by age. However we do have data, which are sample based, for exemption categories not required to pay a charge. This is shown in the table.

Estimates of annual percentage increase in prescriptions of methylphenidate to children since 2000

	Percentage
2000	18.2
2001	21.4
2002	19.7
2003	22.6
2004	12.6

The data include children under 16 years and young people in full-time education aged 16 to 18. Information is not available for the earlier period requested.

Ministerial Visits

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at what time she *(a)* arrived at and *(b)* left the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say event in Birmingham on 29 October. [25538]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I arrived at the 'Your Health, Your Care, Your Say' citizens' summit in Birmingham before 9 am on Saturday 29 October and left at 4.45 pm. I opened the event at 9.30 am with some introductory remarks and ended the day with reflections on what was heard.

MMR Vaccines

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which countries United Kingdom registered companies that provide MMR vaccines to the NHS source their products. [24316]

Caroline Flint: Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines are supplied to the national health service by GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur MSD. GlaxoSmithKline's MMR vaccine is manufactured in Belgium. Sanofi Pasteur MSD manufactured their MMR vaccine in the United States of America and the Netherlands.

NHS Dentistry

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent per capita on NHS dentistry in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [21045]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The estimated spend per capita on the general dental service (GDS) in Jarrow constituency in the year ending 31 March 2001 was £23.38. Figures for other years are not available because population estimates for other years are not available.

Estimates of spend per capita on the GDS in South Tyneside, the North East Government office region (GOR), Northumberland, Tyne and Wear strategic health authority (SHA) and in England for the years ending as at 31 March for 1998 to 2004 are shown in the table.

These estimates do not include expenditure on national health service dental services for pilot personal dental services agreements or the community (salaried) dental service.

Estimated spend per capita on GDS dentistry in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA area, North East GOR and England as at year end 31 March for each year

£

	South Tyneside local authority area	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	North East GOR	England
1998	22.18	18.98	19.31	18.07
1999	23.85	20.28	20.58	19.00
2000	25.15	20.88	21.26	19.54
2001	26.99	21.38	22.00	20.23
2002	27.26	23.22	23.84	21.66
2003	28.21	24.25	24.64	22.19
2004	28.76	25.46	26.09	23.42

Notes:

1. Figures have been provided by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre. The data sources are the Dental Practice Board and the Office of National Statistics.

2. South Tyneside local authority area includes Jarrow and South Shields constituency areas.

3. Spend per capita was calculated by taking the total fees plus commitment payments less revenue from patient charges divided by the population.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has spent per capita on NHS dentistry in *(a)* the Tamworth constituency, *(b)* Staffordshire, *(c)* the West Midlands and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [22474]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The estimated spend per capita on the general dental service (GDS) in Tamworth constituency in the year ending 31 March 2001 was £11.83. Figures for other years are not available because population estimates for other years are not available.

Estimates of spend per capita on the GDS in Staffordshire, the West Midlands Government office region (GOR), Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority (SHA) and in England for the years ending as at 31 March for 1998 to 2004 are shown in the table.

These estimates do not include expenditure on national health service dental services for pilot personal dental services agreements or the community (salaried) dental service.

Estimated spend per capita on GDS dentistry in Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA area, West Midlands GOR and England as at year end 31 March for each year

£

	Staffordshire local authority area	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	West Midlands GOR	England
1998	14.44	13.72	16.66	18.07
1999	14.99	14.24	17.64	19.00
2000	15.39	14.71	18.35	19.54
2001	15.93	15.36	18.86	20.23
2002	16.52	16.58	20.37	21.66
2003	16.89	16.99	21.31	22.19
2004	17.41	17.87	22.86	23.42

Notes:

1. Figures have been provided by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre. The data source is the Dental Practice Board and the Office of National Statistics.

2. Staffordshire local authority area includes Burton, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent North, Stone and Tamworth constituency areas.

3. Spend per capita was calculated by taking the total fees plus commitment payments less revenue from patient charges divided by population.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists have been practising in the Gravesham constituency in each year since 1997. [24134]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of dentists in the Gravesham parliamentary constituency area as at 30 September each year are shown in the table.

General dental services and personal dental services dentists practising in Gravesham, 1997 to 2005

	Number
1997	40
1998	40
1999	36
2000	35
2001	32
2002	31
2003	35
2004	34
2005	41

Source:

National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 13 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1139W, on dentistry, how many NHS dentists were in place in each of the primary care trusts covering *(a)* the Isle of Wight, *(b)* Milton Keynes, *(c)* South West Devon, *(d)* Torbay, *(e)* Plymouth, Devonport, *(f)* Teignbridge, *(g)* Romsey, *(h)* West Hampshire, *(i)* Broxbourne and *(j)* Hitchin and Harpenden constituency at the most recent date for which information is available; and what proportion of the resident (i) under 18 and (ii) over 18 years population was known to be registered with an NHS dentist at the most recent date for which information is available in each case. [25710]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The information requested on the number of dentists in the primary care trusts (PCTs), broken down by geographical area, as at September 2005, is shown in table 1.

Information on the number of patients under and over the age of 18 registered with a national health service dentist, as at September 2005, is shown in table 2.

Table 1: General dental services (CDS) and personal dental services (PDS): number of dentists in the specified geographical areas as at 30 September 2005

	PCT	Number
5CQ	Milton Keynes PCT	116
5CV	South Hams and West Devon PCT	49
5CW	Torbay PCT	74
5DG	Isle of Wight PCT	56
5F1	Plymouth Teaching PCT	126
5GG	Welwyn Hatfield PCT	68
5GH	North Hertfordshire and Stevenage PCT	97
5GJ	South East Hertfordshire PCT	99
5GX	St. Albans and Harpenden PCT	97
5FY	Teignbridge PCT	54
5LY	Eastleigh and Test Valley South PCT	88
5DF	North Hampshire PCT	96
	Hitchin and Harpenden Parliamentary constituency	63

Notes:

1. The dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts are excluded from the data.

2. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographical areas. Parliamentary constituency and PCT areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Table 2: NHS dentistry registrations and estimated registrations rate in specific geographical areas, by adult and child, as at 30 September 2005

		CDS and PDS registration[1]			Estimated registration rates[2] (percentage)		
		Adult	Child	All	Adult	Child	All
5CQ	Milton Keynes	58,983	31,976	90,959	36	59	41
5CV	South Hams and West Devon	18,625	13,290	31,915	21	57	29
5CW	Torbay	41,496	16,078	57,574	40	61	44
5DG	Isle of Wight	24,432	13,888	38,320	22	51	28
5FI	Plymouth	89,943	42,343	132,286	47	81	55
5GG	Welwyn Hatfield	35,215	14,792	50,007	46	68	51
5GH	North Hertfordshire and Stevenage	67,121	30,146	97,267	48	71	54
5GJ	South East Hertfordshire	66,915	25,425	92,340	53	68	56
5GX	St. Albans and Harpenden	53,004	23,314	76,318	52	77	58
5FY	Teignbridge	28,712	11,468	40,180	34	52	38
SLY	Eastleigh and Test Valley South	48,148	24,341	72,489	39	65	45
5DF	North Hampshire	48,570	26,994	75,564	30	55	36

Notes:
1. Registration data include personal dental service counts of patients seen in the past 15 months as a proxy for registrations for some schemes. This is to give greater consistency with registrations data for the GDS, which has a 15 month re-registration period. Many PDS schemes use longer periods and some, such as dental access centres, do not require patients to register.
2. Registration rates (the percentage of the population registered with a dentist) have been estimated by including registrations in the area of the dentist, that is according to the postcode of the dental surgery and not the patient's address. So the registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live. The figures were calculated using population estimates for the primary care trust areas for the nearest year for which data is available.
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were per 1,000 people in *(a)* Oxfordshire and *(b)* Wantage constituency in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2005. [25356]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested on the number of dentists in Oxfordshire and Wantage is shown in the following table.

General dental services and personal dental services: numbers of dentists and dentists per 1,000 population

	Number of dentists		Number of dentists per 1,000 population	
	1997	2005	1997	2005[1]
Oxfordshire County	221	343	0.4	0.6
Wantage parliamentary constituency	31	50	[2]n/a	[2]n/a

[1] 2005 data has been calculated on 2004 population data, as this is the latest available.
[2] Population data at parliamentary constituency area is not available.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many dentists serve the Shropshire Primary Care Trust; [25333]

(2) how many dentists in Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency *(a)* operate fully within the NHS and *(b)* only offer NHS treatment for children. [25336]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 30 September 2005, there were 153 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within Shropshire County Primary Care Trust (PCT).

As at 30 September 2005, there were 80 NHS dentists with either a GDS or PDS contract within Shrewsbury and Atcham parliamentary constituency.

The data source is the Dental Practice Board. A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with the relevant PCT. The Dental Practice Board has no information concerning the amount of time dedicated to private or NHS work by individual dentists.

Information about who dentists offer to treat is not collected centrally. However, an analysis of NHS patient registrations data as at 1 June 2005 shows that within Shropshire County PCT there were six dentists having only children registered. This analysis is not available at parliamentary constituency area.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budgets for *(a)* recurrent operating costs, excluding capital charges but including income from other sources, and *(b)* all operating costs, including both revenue and capital, of the (i) Health Protection Agency, (ii) National Radiological Protection Board and (iii) Public Health Laboratory Service have been in each year since 1997–98 in (A) nominal and (B) real terms. [23110]

Caroline Flint: The published accounts of each body give details of its operating costs, including revenue and capital, as well as income from other sources. The relevant accounts, which are available in the Library, are as follows:

Health Protection Agency (special health authority) 2003–04, 2004–05.

Public Health Laboratory Service: 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04. The 2004–05 accounts will be available shortly.

National Radiological Protection Board: 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05.

Expressing the data in real terms would be likely to be misleading, owing to changes in functions over the extended periods involved.

NHS Services

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much of the £250 million efficiency savings planned for the NHS will be re-directed to front-line services; what proportion will be allocated to Gloucestershire; and if she will make a statement. [24931]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The £250 million savings in management and administration costs will be re-directed in total to front-line services. The required savings have been apportioned over the 28 strategic health authorities (SHAs). The total apportioned required savings for the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA is £10 million. It is for each SHA to determine with its primary care trust (PCT) how the required savings should be apportioned over the SHA and each PCT in the area and this will depend on the configuration of the SHA and PCTs which is subject to public consultation over the coming weeks.

Parliamentary Question

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer the question on *Clostridium difficile*, reference 9380, tabled by the hon. Member for Northavon on 29 June. [20131]

Jane Kennedy: I replied to the hon. Member on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 763W.

Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will delay the standard branded generics review until the completion of the Office of Fair Trading market study into the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme; [25351]

(2) when a decision is expected on the current standard branded generics; and whether the Office of Fair Trading inquiry into the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme has an impact on its outcome; [25352]

(3) what discussions she has had with the Office of Fair Trading regarding its inquiry into the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme; [25353]

(4) whether standard branded generics are covered by the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme. [25360]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Standard branded generics are covered by the provisions of the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme (PPRS), subject to the outcome of a public consultation on proposals to transfer them to arrangements for the reimbursement for generic medicines. The Department is currently reviewing the responses to proposals that a specified list of oral solid dose standard branded generics should be removed from the PPRS. These responses require, and will be given, careful consideration. The Department will not rush to a conclusion or set any deadline that may constrain its deliberations.

Departmental officials have held preliminary discussions with the Office of Fair Trading on its market study into the PPRS.

Primary Care Trusts (Oxfordshire)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) who will be responsible for the drafting of contracts between the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority and private sector providers of management services for the Primary Care Trust in Oxfordshire; who will take responsibility for ensuring that such contracts comply with existing NHS rules on consultation and patient and public involvement; and if she will make a statement; [20398]

(2) what discussions she has had with the *(a)* chairman and *(b)* chief executive of the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority on proposals to transfer the management of primary care trusts in Oxfordshire to the private sector; and if she will make a statement; [20406]

(3) under what statutory provision the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority will appoint a board of non-executive directors to the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust to oversee the awarding of a contract for the procurement of the management of primary care trust services in Oxfordshire; [20407]

(4) whether contracts for the commissioning of the management of primary care trust services in Oxfordshire will be *(a)* available for public scrutiny and *(b)* treated as commercial in confidence. [20408]

(5) what discussions her Department has had with the Royal College of Nursing on putting the management of the proposed new Oxfordshire primary care trust out to tender to the private sector. [20896]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No decision has yet been taken on the possibility of any strategic health authority (SHA) tendering for the private sector provision of management services for future primary care trusts (PCTs). Accordingly, no moves to facilitate this option, such as creating frameworks for drawing up tendering contracts or appointing non-executive directors have been taken, either.

SHAs, not the Department, are to lead discussions locally with stakeholder groups regarding options for the reconfiguration of PCTs, as they can give greater consideration to local contexts and nuances when developing proposals. As such, no discussions have been held with either the Royal College of Nursing or the chair and chief executive of Thames Valley SHA on the content of their proposals. All proposals will shortly be assessed by an independent panel representing a wide range of stakeholders, against the criteria identified in the document, "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS". If proposals are adjudged to have met these criteria, they will be subject to a full, three month public consultation. Decisions on the suitability of any proposal will not be taken until this process has been completed.

Public Opinion Surveys

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many public opinion surveys were conducted by her Department and its arm's length bodies in the last six months; what the *(a)* subject matter, *(b)* date, *(c)* cost and *(d)* company used to conduct the research was in each case; and if she will place copies of the results of each survey in the Library. [26548]

Jane Kennedy: The Department commissions public opinion surveys on various subjects when this is the most effective and appropriate means of building up an evidence base on which to take policy development forward. The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Department does not monitor the number, cost or subject matter of public opinion surveys commissioned by its arm's length bodies.

Rehabilitation (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average number of specialist rehabilitation beds per 1,000 people in North East Milton Keynes in the latest year for which figures are available. [22714]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information about the number of specialist rehabilitation beds is not collected or held centrally by the Department. All data relating to bed provision which are collected by the Department are shown on its website at:

www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/beds_open_overnight.htm

SARS

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with Havering council regarding contingency plans in the event of a SARS or tuberculosis epidemic in that area. [22968]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not had any direct contact with Havering council to discuss contingency plans for an epidemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) or tuberculosis (TB).

The Department's emergency preparedness division has regular liaisons and discussions with the strategic health authorities' (SHAs) emergency planning leads. The SHAs have responsibility for ensuring that all national health service trusts have major incident plans in place and are prepared to deal with a range of incidents that include SARS and other infectious diseases. These plans are developed with multi-agency input and are regularly tested and reviewed.

With regard to TB, the Chief Medical Officer launched the TB action plan in October 2004. The plan is a commitment to tackle rising rates of TB through 10 key areas of work, and identifies some of the underlying reasons for the rise in TB rates. This is a national plan for England and local TB services are expected to develop their own plans reflecting local conditions.

Local TB outbreaks are managed in accordance with standard procedures by local health protection units, which are part of the Health Protection Agency. In the event of a TB outbreak, the local consultant in communicable disease control would trace contacts of people who had significant exposure to someone with TB. Those contacts would be screened for disease and treated as appropriate.

The plan is available on the Department's website at

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4090417&chk=DsgbSP

SARS is not currently regarded as being a world-wide problem. The last cases were in China in 2004. However, the possibility of SARS re-emerging remains and there is a need for continuing vigilance. Clinicians and other healthcare professionals have been asked to remain vigilant to the possibility of SARS, even though the threat to the United Kingdom remains low at this time.

Information on SARS and guidance documents are available on the Health Protection Agency's website at

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/SARS/menu.htm

and also on the Department's website at

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/SevereAcuteRespiratorySyndrome/SARSGeneralInformation/fs/en

Smoking

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence was used to inform paragraph 45 of the individual regulatory impact assessment on the smoke free aspects of the Health Bill, presented on 27 October 2005, with particular reference to the statement that the Department does not consider these measures will disadvantage any group; and if she will make a statement. [25268]

Caroline Flint: The assessment in the "Equity and Fairness including race equality assessment" section of the partial regulatory impact assessment reflects issues raised during the development of choosing health. The particular issue of hookah pipes has been highlighted in response to concerns raised previously. Any additional evidence brought forward will be included in informing the final regulatory impact assessment.

Staff Dismissals

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff employed in her Department in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* in the six months to 30 September have been dismissed, or have had their employment contract otherwise terminated, for failure to perform to the standard expected; and if she will make a statement. [24720]

Jane Kennedy: The numbers of staff who have been dismissed by the Department through either reasons of inefficiency or discipline are shown in the following table.

Year dismissed	*Total*
April 2003 to March 2004	5
April 2004 to March 2005	2
April 2005 to September 2005	1
Grand total	8

Sun Beds

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what regulations apply to the operation of *(a)* sun bed tanning retail outlets with staff and *(b)* coin-operated outlets with no staff; and if she will make a statement; [20809]

(2) what guidance is given to local authorities on the operation of sun tanning beds in council-owned leisure and sports centres. [20812]

Caroline Flint: There are no specific regulations that apply to sun bed establishments with or without staff. The Health and Safety Executive however issued guidelines in 1995 on the use of sun beds for both operators and customers, including those operated in facilities owned by local authorities. The guidance was developed in consultation with the Department and leading experts. Cancer Research UK is in discussions with the sun bed industry to review industry practices and self-regulation. This involves improving information for both staff and customers, including the displaying of information about the use of sun beds and their risks to health.

Swale Primary Care Trust

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Kent and Medway strategic health authority was first informed of the deficit at Swale primary care trust; what action it took; and how many meetings it has since held of non-executive directors of the board to discuss the matter. [24621]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Kent and Medway strategic health authority (SHA) was aware toward the end of financial year 2004–05 that Swale primary care trust (PCT) had underlying financial problems. The PCT reported an audited year-end position of £0.45 million overspent.

The SHA therefore required the PCT to develop a robust financial recovery plan to deliver financial balance this year (2005–06).

Delivery of the financial recovery plan has been monitored and performance managed through formal monthly performance meetings, and through individual meetings between officers of the SHA and the PCT, including the direct engagement of the SHA's chief executive. Meetings have also taken place between the SHA's chair and both the current and former chairs of Swale PCT.

This is a local matter. Responsibility for decisions about funding and the provision of local health services now rest with PCTs. It is for PCTs, in conjunction with SHAs to plan and develop services according to the needs of local people.

National health service bodies must live within their means. It is the responsibility of SHAs to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance.

Uterine Fibroids

Jessica Morden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has conducted into the long-term economic and social effects of minimally invasive technologies for the treatment of uterine fibroids. [24365]

Jane Kennedy: None.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the UK Government has spent on preventing Avian influenza being brought into the UK in each year from 1998 to 2005. [22861]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no dedicated funding spent on preventing Avian influenza from entering the UK. Guarding against Avian influenza is part of a wider disease prevention programme (including border controls and quarantine procedures). To enhance emergency preparedness against Avian influenza, Defra is planning to spend over £6 million in 2005–06.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department has issued to the public concerning *(a)* the Government's policy on Avian influenza, *(b)* the length of the ban on poultry at markets, shows and fairs determined by Decision 2005/745/EC, *(c)* the provisions under which the ban as determined by Decision 2005/745/EC can be (i) renewed and (ii) revoked, *(d)* which species of birds are affected, *(e)* the circumstances under which events such as market, shows and fairs can proceed subject to a veterinary risk assessment and *(f)* the details of how a veterinary risk assessment can be obtained; for what reasons this information is not available on her Department's website; and if she will make a statement. [24843]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Department has distributed guidance materials on Avian influenza to our partners in the industry—including the British Poultry Council, the British Egg Industry Council and the National Farmers Union—who are helping to distribute this material to their members, who cover the majority of birds. A simple one-page leaflet on biosecurity and surveillance for smaller concerns and back yard keepers has also been produced and is being distributed widely including to all veterinary practices and placed in trade and specialist press targeting the same audience. All this information is available on my Department's website and I am placing copies in the Library of the House.

(b) Commission Decision 2005/734 amended by 2005/745 prevent the gathering of birds and is in place until 30 November, but in view of the current disease situation is likely to be rolled forward. These decisions are implemented in the UK by The Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005 and is not time limited.

(c) The Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) together with member states will consider whether the decision should be reviewed or revoked based on their assessment of the veterinary risk.

(d) The legislation covers all species of birds.

(e) The Department, on veterinary advice, has carried out a preliminary risk assessment which takes a precautionary approach to the risk of transmission of highly pathogenic Avian influenza attached to

gatherings of birds. This has shown that gathering of specified types of birds may be permitted under certain conditions.

At present low risk gatherings can be licensed. This means the gathering can only consist of budgerigars, canaries, zebra finches, Bengalese finches and birds classed by fanciers as "British" birds (i.e. captive bred birds of species native to the British Isles, not including pigeons, poultry and waterfowl). The show organiser must agree to meet a number of conditions such as record keeping and biosecurity measures before a licence is granted. Sales from licensed gatherings are not permitted.

Gatherings of other birds including poultry, waterfowl, pigeons and exotic species are considered to be higher risk. Conditions under which shows of higher risk birds might be permitted to take place are still under consideration. Such gatherings will not be licensed until we are confident that they can take place without undue risk.

(f) Information about how to apply for a licence is available from local Animal Health Divisional Offices and comprehensive guidance has been available on the Defra website since the beginning of November.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce further control on the importation of wild birds as pets. [20945]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* On 28 October, the EU introduced an extensive ban on imports into the Community of captive birds, along with new restrictions on the importation of pet birds. UK import rules have been amended to reflect this. In line with EU-wide measures, we had previously banned imports of all live birds and products from countries with the H5N1 strain of avian influenza.

Bird Markets

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government had plans to ban bird markets, fairs and shows prior to the European Commission decision. [27560]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government had discussed with stakeholders, and placed on the Defra website, an analysis of the possible precautionary measures that could be adopted, but there were no plans to ban bird markets, fairs and shows prior to the European Commission decision.

Cars (Air Conditioning)

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the effects of the use of air conditioning on the *(a)* fuel efficiency and *(b)* carbon dioxide emissions of cars. [27429]

Mr. Morley: The 2002 report by TNO Automotive for the European Commission, "Options to integrate the use of mobile air conditioning systems and auxiliary heaters into the emission type approval test and the fuel consumption test for passenger cars" found that in Northern Europe an average car fitted with an air conditioner consumed an extra 0.21 litres per 100 kilometres. This corresponds to an additional fuel requirement of about 3 per cent. on average fuel consumption for a new car sold today. Carbon dioxide emissions are almost directly proportional to fuel consumption implying that the average vehicle would see a carbon dioxide penalty of about 5g/km over its lifetime.

Circus Animals

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce legislation to ban the use of animals in circuses. [27059]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* There are no plans to ban the use of animals in circuses in the absence of evidence that it is not possible to meet their welfare needs in a circus environment. However, the introduction of a welfare offence under the Animal Welfare Bill will require the person responsible for an animal to take reasonable steps to ensure its welfare. In addition we propose to overhaul the existing legislation in relation to performing animals. We consider that our proposed changes will lead to significant improvements in the welfare of animals used in circuses.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress being made towards the inclusion of aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, with particular reference to *(a)* the date this is likely to occur and *(b)* the emissions ceiling to be applied. [27910]

Mr. Morley: The European Commission adopted a Communication on reducing the climate change impact of aviation, favouring the inclusion of the climate impact of aviation into the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). They aim to bring forward a legislative proposal by the end of 2006. This is a key step in progressing work on this agenda and we have made this a priority for the UK Presidency of the EU. Our aim is to reach a consensus on the way forward at the December Environment Council.

An emissions ceiling or cap like other scheme details will be subject to negotiation with other member states. The Commission have set up an Aviation Working Group under the European Climate Change Programme, which will begin to consider the cap and allocation methodology at its meeting on 17 February.

Energy Efficiency

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place in the Library copies of papers distributed at the conference jointly held in London with the European Commission on 2 November entitled Europe and an Energy Efficient World: Acting and Learning Together; what assessment she has made of the benefits which will accrue to companies in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Blaenau Gwent from the new initiatives proposed; and if she will make a statement. [25863]

Mr. Morley: Conference proceedings are being collated in time for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 11 and COP/MOP1) in Montreal, which commences on 28 November. I have asked for copies to be placed in the Library. All papers will be placed on the conference website: http://olive360.com/defra/energyefficiency together with the many case studies that participants have forwarded to us.

The purpose of the conference was to bring together representatives from a wide range of countries and with a wide range of backgrounds in energy efficiency and to learn from the richness of their experiences. The conference considered policy issues surrounding the promotion of energy services, better products standards and labelling and how better to engage with and involve citizens in energy efficiency. Summary papers of the discussions will be used to inform several activities.

It will inform debate on the European Commission's Green Paper on Energy Efficiency; the development of the EU Action Plan on Energy Efficiency and the wider EU framework of legislation and programmes, including R&D into energy efficiency, which will have a direct impact on UK energy efficiency policy and hence potentially on individual firms and businesses. No assessment has been made of the specific benefits to companies in Wales or Blaenau Gwent.

It will inform the UK's preparations for the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's review of the energy commitments in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2006–07.

Furthermore, members of the Task Force on Sustainable Products under the UNEP Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production were present at the conference and used the debate on international product policy to inform their meeting held on 4 November in London.

We will use the conclusions in our discussions on practical measures to support our G8 commitments to increase efforts on energy efficiency domestically and across the world. We will also ensure that the conference proceedings are circulated to G8 colleagues, in recognition of the importance of energy efficiency in the Gleneagles Plan of Action.

Environmental Noises

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when Directive 2002/49/EC on assessment and management of environmental noises will be transposed into UK law. [27586]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following public consultation earlier on in the year, the adoption of regulations for the transposition of the environmental noise directive (2002/49/EC) in England is currently being finalised. A draft of the regulations is currently being sent out to environmental noise specialists for a short, technical consultation. This was considered a useful further step to take in light of the very technical nature of the subject matter. Following the conclusion of the second consultation around the end of November, the draft regulations will be finalised and then laid before Parliament. The Government are working towards an adoption date of the end of this year/beginning of next.

Greenhouse Gasses

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the level of greenhouse gas emissions generated by the powering of street lights in 2004–05. [28075]

Mr. Morley: The 2005 Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES) indicates that electricity consumption by public lighting was 1,991 Gigawatt-hours in 2004. This implies that street lighting was responsible for emissions of about 0.3 million tonnes of carbon in 2004.

Warm Front Scheme (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many residents in the North-East Milton Keynes constituency were *(a)* eligible for and *(b)* received grants under the Warm Front Scheme in each of the last five years. [27202]

Mr. Morley: Information on the exact number of residents in North-East Milton Keynes eligible for Warm Front is not available. However, on the basis of the statistical modelling used by the Warm Front Scheme Manager it is estimated that around 4,800 households in North-East Milton Keynes could currently be eligible for assistance from the Scheme.

Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the number of households assisted in each year in Nort-East Milton Keynes are as follows:

	Households assisted
2000–01	155
2001–02	210
2002–03	170
2003–04	206
2004–05	119
Total	860

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24462]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Over the last five years, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not used any 0870 telephone numbers as contact numbers for members of the public.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of current building stock in England meets the thermal insulation standards established by part J of the building regulations; what steps are being taken to

increase this proportion; and when he estimates the building stock will meet fully the new building standards. [23087]

Yvette Cooper: Part L applies whenever buildings are constructed, altered, extended or subjected to a material change of use. A further improvement in standards will come into effect next April. We estimate that around 2 to 4 per cent. of existing dwellings meet current (2002) part L insulation standards.

Separately, the Warm Front and Decent Homes programmes and the Energy Efficiency Commitment are increasing standards for existing homes. We are also undertaking a further review to consider how best to improve the sustainability of existing dwellings.

For buildings other than dwellings, around 4 per cent. of the total floor area meets current insulation standards, with up to a further 4 per cent. being upgraded each year. It is not economic or practical to improve all buildings to new building standards.

Fire Precautions Regulations

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the financial effects on the Transport industry of the revocation of the Fire Precautions (Sub-Surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989. [26554]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The potential costs and benefits to businesses of operating under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 were published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) when the Order was laid before Parliament in May 2004. The analysis within the RIA analysis did not discuss the impact on particular business sectors. Copies of this document have been made available in the Library of the House.

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether larger or older homes are likely to incur higher costs in producing a home information pack than small or recently built houses; and if he will make a statement. [24674]

Yvette Cooper: Most of the documents required in the pack will not cost any more for a larger or older property than they would for a smaller or recently built house. For example, evidence of title and copies of warranties will be unaffected by the age or size of the property.

Searches are charged at a rate set by the local authority, irrespective of the size or location of the house. Consumers will, however, be able to have searches undertaken by a private search company which will charge at a market rate.

The cost of the Home Condition Report (HCR) will be determined by the market and will vary depending on the size and possibly the location and type of property.

Housing

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average weekly rent was for a new two-bed letting in a registered social landlord property in 2005. [24268]

Yvette Cooper: The average weekly rent, excluding service charges, for RSL lettings for two bedroom registered social landlord properties in the first six months of 2005 was £64.48. Information on rents charged by registered social landlords on new lettings is available from the Continuous REcording (CORE) of new lettings of the housing corporation.

Information on the average weekly rent, excluding service charges, for RSL lettings for two bedrooms at 31 March 2005 is for those dwellings for which a size breakdown is available was £61.13. This information is based on data collected by the housing corporation via the annual regulatory and statistical return.

Mr. Barstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* short-term and *(b)* long-term empty properties there were in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each London borough in each year since 1997. [24374]

Yvette Cooper: The available information has been placed in the Library of the House. Long TermVacant (LTV) dwellings are those that have been vacant for over six months.

The figures are based on two sources. The first is the council tax band 1 (CTB1) return data for the years from 2002 onwards. Council tax data collected before this year are considered unreliable. So from 2001 back to 1997, the combined data from the following two sources are used: local authorities' housing strategy statistical appendix (HSSA) returns for empty council and private sector dwellings; and housing corporation's regulatory statistical return (RSR) for empty registered social landlords (RSLs) properties. Since RSLs did not collect LTV data until 2005, only total vacant dwelling figures are available from this combined source. Therefore separate answers for *(a)* and *(b)* are not possible for 1997 to 2001.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to provide affordable housing in *(a)* Huddersfield, *(b)* Yorkshire and *(c)* England. [24426]

Yvette Cooper: 'Sustainable Communities: Homes for All' sets out the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's plans to deliver more affordable housing over the next five years. Measures include assisting around 100,000 first time buyers and key workers nationally to achieve their home ownership aspirations and, through investment and efficiency savings, to deliver 75,000 social rented homes by 2008. Future delivery of social housing after 2007–08 will be dependent on the outcome of the Spending Review 2007.

The 2003–05 Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Housing Strategy identified the provision of affordable housing in high demand areas as one of its priorities. Through the Regional Housing Board's 2004–06 investment programme over £57 million is being invested in affordable housing in West Yorkshire and £6.7 million in Kirklees. Of this, around £3.9 million has been invested in affordable housing schemes in Huddersfield and 104 affordable homes are being provided.

The provision of affordable housing in high demand areas remains a priority in the 2005 Regional Housing Strategy. The Housing Corporation are currently

working with sub-regional partnerships and local authorities to put together an affordable housing programme for 2006–08, which will lead to between £41 million and £45 million being invested in new affordable homes in West Yorkshire.

The Regional Housing Strategy also sets out other options for local authorities and their partners to consider in order to provide affordable homes, such as alternative sources of funding and capacity through the planning system. We have approved a PFI (Private Finance Initiative) scheme in Kirklees which is intended to provide 550 affordable housing units up to 2010. There will be 400 units for small households and 150 units for people requiring extra care housing. Kirklees council are also delivering around 100 affordable units a year through the planning system and section 106 agreements.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what process the Government plan to adopt in relation to the procedure for an owner reclaiming property seized by a local authority under an empty dwelling management order. [24588]

Yvette Cooper: Provisions in the Housing Act 2004 provide that an Empty Dwelling Management Order may be revoked before the order is due to cease either on the initiative of a local authority, or on application to the authority by a relevant person, provided the authority:

(a) conclude there are no steps they could appropriately take to secure occupation of the dwelling;

(b) is satisfied the dwelling will either become or continue to be occupied following revocation;

(c) is satisfied the dwelling is to be sold;

(d) a final or further final Empty Dwelling Management Order is to be made;

(e) conclude that revocation would be appropriate to prevent or stop interference with the rights of a third party;

(f) consider there are other circumstances for revoking the order.

If the dwelling is occupied at the time the revocation is proposed, the order may only be revoked with the consent of the relevant proprietor. A local authority may make revocation subject to payment of any expenditure properly incurred that has not already been recouped from rental income. A relevant person may appeal to a residential property tribunal against a decision of a local authority to revoke or refuse to revoke an Empty Dwelling Management Order.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant homes there are in West Lancashire; and for what average period houses were vacant in each of the last three years. [27699]

Yvette Cooper: There were 1,386 empty homes in West Lancashire as at November 2004, the latest date for which figures are available. The data are as reported on CTB1 and CTB1S forms submitted by billing authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each year. The figure includes both long and short-term empty properties.

Details of the average period for which houses were vacant are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units expected to be built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme were *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to registered social landlord (RSL) stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works-only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, *(i)* works-only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* homebuy new build for key workers, *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers, *(n)* right to acquire, *(o)* voluntary purchase grant, *(p)* starter home initiative, *(q)* do-it-yourself shared ownership and *(r)* temporary intermediate and market rent housing in the South West Region in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08; and how much was spent on each category in each year. [25548]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The tables show the latest estimated completions and expenditure in the South West region for 2005–06 through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme for categories from *(a)* to *(r)*. Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Estimated completions for South West Region in 2005–06

		Units
(a)	Mixed Funded Social Rent	2,163
(b)	Temporary Social Rent	20
(c)	Homebuy Market Purchase	248
(d)	Homebuy New Build	17
(e)	Mixed Funded for Sale	737
(f)	Misc works to RSL stock	408
(g)	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	21
(h)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	35
(i)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0
(j)	Intermediate rent for Key Workers	0
(k)	Homebuy Market Purchase for Key Workers	0
(l)	Homebuy New Build for Key Workers	0
(m)	Mixed Funded for Sale for Key Workers	0
(n)	Right to Acquire	7
(o)	Voluntary Purchase Grant	14
(p)	Starter Home Initiative	0
(q)	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0
(r)	Temporary intermediate and Market rent housing	0

Estimated expenditure in South West Region for 2005–06

		£ million
(a)	Mixed Funded Social Rent	68.106
(b)	Temporary Social Rent	0.463
(c)	Homebuy Market Purchase	8.615
(d)	Homebuy New Build	0.261
(e)	Mixed Funded for Sale	10.785
(f)	Misc works to RSL stock	1.957
(g)	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	0.995
(h)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	0.300
(i)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0.205
(j)	Intermediate rent for Key Workers	0.000
(k)	Homebuy Market Purchase for Key Workers	0.000
(l)	Homebuy New Build for Key Workers	0.000
(m)	Mixed Funded for Sale for Key Workers	0.000

Estimated expenditure in South West Region for 2005–06

		£ million
(n)	Right to Acquire	0.082
(o)	Voluntary Purchase Grant	0.151
(p)	Starter Home Initiative	0.000
(q)	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0.000
(r)	Temporary intermediate and Market rent housing	0.000

Note:
Categories *(f)*, *(g)*, *(h)*, and *(i)* are not counted as completions and figures are only provided for illustrative purposes. The Key Worker Living Scheme does not include the South West region.
Source:
Housing Corporation Information Management System as at 12 October 2005.

For 2006–07 and 2007–08 Regional Housing Boards have made recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of Regional Housing Pots funds. The South West Regional Housing Board has recommended that from their allocation of £361 million for the two years a total of £281 million should be allocated to the provision of affordable housing. However, the exact distribution of funding between programmes for 2006–08 will not be known until the completion of the Housing Corporation's bidding process.

In August 2005 the Housing Corporation launched the bidding round for the 2006–08 Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). This invited both registered social landlords and non-registered bodies to apply for funds to develop affordable housing based on priorities set by the Regional Housing Boards. The outcome of this bidding round will not be known until early in 2006.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether councils graded *(a)* excellent and *(b)* good under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) are subject to (i) future CPA inspections and (ii) inspections from inspectorates other than the Audit Commission; and whether they are required to submit best value performance (A) information and (B) plans; [24683]

(2) if he will list the freedoms that local authorities graded *(a)* excellent and *(b)* good under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment received in relation to local government inspection. [24684]

Mr. Woolas: All councils are and will continue to be subject to inspection. Key targets for reductions in the inspection of local authorities were set out in the November 2002 announcement on Freedoms and Flexibilities. These include an exemption from virtually all inspection for councils in the excellent CPA category and a 25 per cent. reduction for councils in the good category.

Overall, significant reductions have been secured in the inspection burden placed on English single tier and county councils, with the greatest reductions focussed on excellent and good councils.

Between 2001–02 and 2004–05 the number of days inspectors from the Audit Commission, Ofsted, Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) spent in councils had reduced by over one third and the number of inspections undertaken had reduced by more than 50 per cent.

The Audit Commission, which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) sponsors, anticipates that by 2006–07, the volume of inspections needed for CPA, including the corporate assessments planned for that year, should fall by 68 per cent. from the 2002–03 level. Excellent councils will only be subject to inspection where there are grounds for serious concern in a particular service, and good councils will continue to receive a significant reduction in inspection.

In accordance with ODPM Circular 02/2004, authorities categorised in CPA as excellent and good only need to provide the minimum essential information for Government to monitor performance, namely:

outturn data for Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs);

targets for BVPIs in the current year and subsequent 2 years; and

confirmation that they are adopting the Code of Practice in their approach to workforce matters and contracting.

They are also able to annex the information to their annual corporate plan, rather than producing a separate Best Value Performance Plan.

London Underground (Fire Regulations)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether fire regulations on the London underground are a devolved matter; and if he will make a statement. [26906]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Legislation dealing with general fire safety on the London underground is not devolved. At present the legislation for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has responsibility consists of the Fire Precautions Act 1971, the Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations) Regulations 1989 (as amended) and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended).

Pathfinder Areas

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated public expenditure in each of the Pathfinder areas is in 2005–06. [22470]

Yvette Cooper: Information on total public expenditure in Pathfinder areas is not available. Total payments to the housing market renewal pathfinders to date for 2005–06 are shown as follows:

Pathfinder	£ million
Birmingham Sandwell	7.42
East Lancashire	23.62
Hull and East Riding	1.01
Manchester Salford	24.90
Merseyside	30.75
Newcastle Gateshead	13.25
North Staffordshire	9.20
Oldham Rochdale	13.06
South Yorkshire	15.29
Total	138.50

Rented Property (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average weekly rent was for a two-bedroom *(a)* registered social landlord and *(b)* local authority property in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead in the last year for which figures are available. [25579]

Yvette Cooper: Figures for Hemel Hempstead are not available centrally. The average weekly rent in Dacorum district council area two bedroom properties at the end of March 2005 are given in the table for those properties for which a property size is available:

Average weekly rent for two bedroom social properties

	£
Registered Social Landlords	73.24
Local Authority Landlords	62.14

Note:
Registered Social Landlord data are based on data collected by the Housing Corporation via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return. Local authority data based on un-audited returns from the Second Subsidy Claim form and are provisional for 2005.

Student Dwellings

Grant Shapps: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will move the time when a local authority area reports the number of student dwellings for council tax purposes from the autumn to the spring. [26846]

Mr. Woolas: Information on a billing authority's taxbase for council tax purposes needs to be collected in the autumn so that up-to-date statistics can be used for the purposes of the formula grant settlement. Information on the number of dwellings occupied solely by students, and therefore exempt from council tax, is a part of a consolidated return from the billing authority and it would not be practical to receive information on student dwellings separately at a different time of year.

Sustainable Development

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what sustainable development requirements he has placed on his Department's *(a)* executive agencies, *(b)* advisory non-departmental bodies, *(c)* executive non-departmental bodies, *(d)* tribunals, *(e)* public corporations and *(f)* other bodies; and if he will make a statement. [24399]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The UK Sustainable Development Strategy commits Departments and their executive agencies to producing Action Plans setting out the steps they are taking to implement the Strategy. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be publishing its Sustainable Development Action Plan in December 2005 and it is intended that this will cover steps being taken across the Office and its three executive agencies to promote Sustainable Development.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), its Executive Agencies and the Government Offices for the Regions are covered by the requirements of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate (FSDGE) which requires Departments and their Executive Agencies to improve their performance in utility, land and resource use across their estates.

The guidance on sustainable development in Cabinet Office's "Non-Departmental Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments" applies directly to all of ODPM's executive and advisory non-departmental public bodies. Other sponsored bodies are aware of this guidance and would apply it as appropriate.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Michael Jabez Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been imposed in Hastings and Rye in the past three years. [26145]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the table.

Number of antisocial behaviour orders issued at all courts, as notified to the Home Office, where restrictions have been imposed within the local government authority areas of Hastings and Rother, by period

	Hastings borough council	*Rother district council*
2002	2	3
2003	5	—
2004	9	5
Total	16	8

Asylum Seekers

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of new substantive asylum applications received in 2004–05 received a final decision, including appeal, within six months. [26663]

Andy Burnham: The latest published information on cases receiving a final decision within six months is published in the Asylum Statistics: 2nd Quarter 2005 United Kingdom. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office research development and statistics directorate website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Information on the proportion of new substantive asylum applications in 2004–05, that were decided, including final appeal, within six months, is not yet available.

British Transport Police

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions were made by the British Transport police in each British Transport police area, for *(a)* selling alcohol or attempting to sell alcohol to a person who is drunk, *(b)* selling alcohol or attempting to sell alcohol to an individual under 18 years, *(c)* being drunk and disorderly, *(d)* being drunk and incapable and *(e)* violence against the person in each year for which figures are available. [24967]

Hazel Blears: It is not possible to identify prosecutions made by the British Transport police on the Home Office court proceedings database as the prosecuting authority cannot be identified.

Citizenship Tests

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether people from abroad with only limited English need to pass the Life in the UK test to gain British citizenship. [25428]

Andy Burnham: All those applying for naturalisation as UK citizens will need to demonstrate that they have a sufficient knowledge of life in this country unless they are exempt, for instance on grounds of age. As first set out in the written statement dated 15 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 15–16WS, there are two ways of doing this. An applicant may qualify by passing the Life in the UK test, or by successfully completing an accredited ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course which includes approved teaching materials on the theme of citizenship.

Crime

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of antisocial behaviour have been reported to police in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25582]

Hazel Blears: There is currently no data on the number of incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB) due to the subjective nature of ASB itself. The latest data collected on ASB relates to the public perception of ASB in England and Wales and is measured by the British Crime Survey

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for each category of crime there have been in *(a)* Essex, *(b)* the Metropolitan police area of London and *(c)* Hertfordshire in each of the last five years for which figures are available; what the (i) conviction rate and (ii) clear-up rate for each category was in that period; and if he will make a statement. [20093]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for each category of offence in Essex, the Metropolitan police force area and Hertfordshire, 1999 to 2003, is given in the table together with the conviction rates. Statistics for 2004 will be published in late November.

The detections rate statistics are based on the number of offences recorded and detected by the police in England and Wales. These data are not comparable with those for convictions, which look at the actual number of defendants found guilty. Data on detection rates are provided in table 2.

Detection rates by offence group and police force area

Percentage

Police force area	*Total*	*Violence against the person*	*Sexual offences*	*Robbery*	*Burglary*	*Theft and handling stolen goods*	*Fraud and forgery*	*Criminal damage*	*Drug offences*	*Other offences*
2000–01										
Essex	26	78	56	26	13	18	30	15	96	67
Metropolitan Police	15	28	31	12	10	9	10	9	89	46
Hertfordshire	24	74	65	34	14	18	35	12	96	66
2001–02										
Essex	26	79	50	25	13	19	28	14	95	67
Metropolitan Police	14	26	32	11	10	9	10	8	84	43
Hertfordshire	24	80	68	31	11	20	38	12	99	80
2002–03										
Essex	27	71	40	21	13	17	22	15	93	63
Metropolitan Police	14	24	33	13	13	8	9	8	82	44
Hertfordshire	23	66	53	31	15	18	23	12	97	68
2003–04										
Essex	28	69	37	21	12	17	24	15	95	66
Metropolitan Police	15	26	34	12	12	8	13	9	87	49
Hertfordshire	25	64	54	34	17	17	21	14	93	67
2004–05										
Essex	27	63	33	23	12	17	28	15	93	74
Metropolitan Police	21	43	35	15	13	10	12	13	97	61
Hertfordshire	29	68	41	36	21	19	21	15	95	76

Notes:

1. Offences detected in the current year may have been initially recorded in earlier years and for this reason percentages may exceed 100.

2. Number of recorded crimes and detections will be affected by changes in reporting and recording. For more information see Chapter 3 in 'Crime in England and Wales 2002/03'.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for all offences by offence type, with conviction rates[1]. Essex, Hertfordshire and Metropolitan police force areas, 1999–2003

Police force area	1999 Proceeded against	1999 Found guilty	1999 Conviction rate (percentage)	2000 Proceeded against	2000 Found guilty	2000 Conviction rate (percentage)	2001 Proceeded against	2001 Found guilty	2001 Conviction rate (percentage)
Essex									
Violence against the person	1,454	622	43	1,361	569	42	1,547	613	40
Sexual offences	228	81	36	151	81	54	195	66	34
Burglary	828	533	64	837	436	52	717	403	56
Robbery	132	89	67	153	78	51	198	80	40
Theft and handling stolen goods	3,669	2,815	77	3,473	2,572	74	3,476	2,677	77
Fraud and forgery	591	411	70	637	386	61	627	403	64
Criminal damage	530	323	61	483	274	57	1,195	798	67
Drug offences	1,267	1,131	89	1,139	1,001	88	1,133	979	86
Other indictable offences	1,799	854	47	1,687	790	47	1,811	725	40
Indictable motoring offences	294	203	69	260	188	72	293	210	72
Summary offences (excluding motoring)	19,485	16,198	83	20,858	16,682	80	15,595	12,330	79
Summary motoring offences	24,212	20,691	85	23,985	20,062	84	26,345	22,125	84
Total all offences	54,489	43,951	81	55,024	43,119	78	53,132	41,409	78

Police force area	2002 Proceeded against	2002 Found guilty	2002 Conviction rate (percentage)	2003 Proceeded against	2003 Found guilty	2003 Conviction rate (percentage)
Essex						
Violence against the person	1,298	618	48	1,471	702	48
Sexual offences	201	79	39	186	77	41
Burglary	680	405	60	648	410	63
Robbery	206	95	46	171	84	49
Theft and handling stolen goods	3,169	2,484	78	2,994	2,457	82
Fraud and forgery	593	395	67	525	386	74
Criminal damage	728	441	61	648	402	62
Drug offences	1,095	981	90	1,038	896	86
Other indictable offences	1,806	726	40	2,001	799	40
Indictable motoring offences	278	192	69	246	183	74
Summary offences (excluding motoring)	17,862	14,255	80	17,298	13,932	81
Summary motoring offences	32,747	26,932	82	26,466	21,960	83
Total all offences	60,663	47,603	78	53,692	42,288	79

Police force area	1999 Proceeded against	1999 Found guilty	1999 Conviction rate (percentage)	2000 Proceeded against	2000 Found guilty	2000 Conviction rate (percentage)	2001 Proceeded against	2001 Found guilty	2001 Conviction rate (percentage)
Metropolitan police									
Violence against the person	11,024	4,905	44	11,166	5,076	45	11,853	5,413	46
Sexual offences	1,117	532	48	1,043	463	44	1,283	527	41
Burglary	5,264	3,297	63	5,302	3,276	62	5,310	2,977	56
Robbery	2,806	1,410	50	3,591	1,451	40	4,856	1,767	36
Theft and handling stolen goods	23,276	18,511	80	21,363	16,799	79	21,160	16,356	77
Fraud and forgery	4,825	3,306	69	4,609	3,269	71	4,302	2,997	70
Criminal damage	3,137	1,804	58	2,571	1,458	57	2,551	1,340	53
Drug offences	11,280	9,999	89	10,387	8,868	85	11,465	9,181	80
Other indictable offences	12,088	6,995	58	12,038	6,802	57	12,669	7,141	56
Indictable motoring offences	1,162	779	67	1,085	741	68	1,187	767	65
Summary offences (excluding motoring)	96,567	79,401	82	100,234	83,611	83	79,562	64,079	81
Summary motoring offences	80,268	63,387	79	71,610	55,542	78	70,370	55,099	78
Total all offences	252,814	194,326	77	244,999	187,356	76	226,568	167,644	74

Police force area	2002 Proceeded against	2002 Found guilty	2002 Conviction rate (percentage)	2003 Proceeded against	2003 Found guilty	2003 Conviction rate (percentage
Metropolitan police						
Violence against the person	12,808	6,394	50	11,992	5,871	49
Sexual offences	1,461	603	41	1,548	567	37
Burglary	5,715	3,339	58	5,343	3,207	60
Robbery	4,872	1,936	40	4,048	1,835	45
Theft and handling stolen goods	22,517	17,773	79	20,239	15,845	78
Fraud and forgery	4,816	3,420	71	5,038	3,601	71
Criminal damage	2,437	1,378	57	2,459	1,357	55
Drug offences	12,404	10,461	84	12,327	10,408	84
Other indictable offences	14,518	8,235	57	13,983	7,865	56

Police force area	2002 Proceeded against	2002 Found guilty	2002 Conviction rate (percentage)	2003 Proceeded against	2003 Found guilty	2003 Conviction rate (percentage
Indictable motoring offences	1,304	857	66	1,576	1,008	64
Summary offences (excluding motoring)	98,044	81,098	83	93,106	76,548	82
Summary motoring offences	74,836	59,442	79	78,790	62,518	79
Total all offences	255,732	194,936	76	250,449	190,630	76

Police force area	1999 Proceeded against	1999 Found guilty	1999 Conviction rate (percentage	2000 Proceeded against	2000 Found guilty	2000 Conviction rate (percentage)	2001 Proceeded against	2001 Found guilty	2001 Conviction rate (percentage
Hertfordshire									
Violence against the person	903	393	44	973	467	48	1,005	456	45
Sexual offences	114	49	43	103	63	61	87	55	63
Burglary	373	254	68	426	255	60	398	226	57
Robbery	74	63	85	136	57	42	124	89	72
Theft and handling stolen goods	1,743	1,315	75	2,015	1,482	74	1,966	1,482	75
Fraud and forgery	376	263	70	445	348	78	343	250	73
Criminal damage	69	40	58	56	37	66	29	41	141
Drug offences	525	447	85	481	421	88	536	462	86
Other indictable offences	871	440	51	905	447	49	960	494	51
Indictable motoring offences	84	67	80	109	81	74	111	80	72
Summary offences (excluding motoring)	9,382	7,324	78	10,640	8,161	77	9,955	7,687	77
Summary motoring offences	12,854	10,203	79	12,218	9,239	76	11,866	8,961	76
Total all offences	27,368	20,858	76	28,507	21,058	74	27,380	20,283	74

Police force area	2002 Proceeded against	2002 Found guilty	2002 Conviction rate (percentage	2003 Proceeded against	2003 Found guilty	2003 Conviction rate (percentage
Hertfordshire						
Violence against the person	1,046	539	52	1,190	507	43
Sexual offences	114	70	61	132	52	39
Burglary	524	314	60	545	313	57
Robbery	185	113	61	177	110	62
Theft and handling stolen goods	2,102	1,558	74	2,161	1,671	77
Fraud and forgery	371	280	75	409	297	73
Criminal damage	64	32	50	106	60	57
Drug offences	582	481	83	630	545	87
Other indictable offences	1,025	471	46	1,379	624	45
Indictable motoring offences	149	95	64	198	128	65
Summary offences (excluding motoring)	8,840	6,696	76	11,264	8,469	75
Summary motoring offences	13,823	10,389	75	15,186	11,987	79
Total all offences	28,825	21,038	73	33,377	24,763	74

[1] Conviction rate is based on the proportion of defendants proceeded against, who were found guilty

Note:
These data are on the principal offence basis.
Source:
RDS—Office For Criminal Justice Reform.

Deepcut Barracks

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Devon and Cornwall police Report into the Surrey police's investigation into the deaths of four recruits at the Deepcut Army Barracks between 1995 and 2002. [25731]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 10 November 2005]*: Devon and Cornwall police have completed their review of Surrey police's investigation into the deaths of the soldiers at Deepcut Barracks. This was submitted to Surrey police on 31 August 2005. The report is a Surrey police document which is not normally subject to publication as they have a duty of care to other interested parties who may be named in the report with regards to sensitive or protected information. However, they have advised us that they intend to provide the families of the deceased soldiers with as much information as possible. They have written to each of the families informing them that they have received the report and explaining the next stage of the process.

Deportation

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were deported from the United Kingdom between 1 January and 2 November, broken down by *(a)* nationality and *(b)* destination. [26436]

Andy Burnham: The Home Office produces quarterly bulletins on the number of asylum seekers removed from the UK, broken down by nationality. The latest available figures cover the second quarter of 2005. Figures for the third quarter of 2005 will be published on

22 November. Information on the destination of asylum removals for the first six months of 2005 is given in the following table.

Statistics on the number of non-asylum cases removed from the UK are published annually. Figures for 2005 will be published in the summer of 2006. The published statistics are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Removals and voluntary departures[1] of principal asylum applicants, by destination: January to June 2005[2,3]

Destination	Persons removed
Europe	
Albania	370
Czech Republic	5
Macedonia	15
Moldova	25
Poland	5
Romania	205
Russia	25
Serbia and Montenegro	640
Turkey	175
Ukraine	50
Other Former USSR	70
Other Former Yugo	50
Europe Other	1,060
Europe Total	2,685
Americas	
Colombia	95
Ecuador	60
Jamaica	155
Americas Other	75
Americas Total	380
Middle East	
Iran	150
Iraq	255
Middle East Other	65
Middle East Total	465
Africa	
Algeria	60
Angola	60
Burundi	10
Cameroon	15
Congo	35
Dem. Rep. Congo	15
Eritrea	*
Ethiopia	5
Gambia	20
Ghana	130
Ivory Coast	5
Kenya	20
Liberia	15
Nigeria	215
Rwanda	5
Sierra Leone	20
Somalia	10
Sudan	15
Tanzania	20
Uganda	105
Zimbabwe	195
Africa Other	190
Africa Total	1,175
Asia	
Afghanistan	400
Bangladesh	125
China	90
India	140
Pakistan	250
Sri Lanka	190
Vietnam	5
Asia Other	130
Asia Total	1,335
Other, and nationality not known	50
Grand total	6,095

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.
[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 with * = 1 or 2. Data may not sum due to rounding.
[3] Provisional figures.

Passport Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the bidders that have been shortlisted for the UK Passport Service Abl tender; and when a decision on the successful bidder is expected. [26067]

Andy Burnham: For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not possible, at this time, to disclose those bidders shortlisted under the Authentication by Interview estates procurement. It is anticipated that preferred bidder status will be announced late November 2005.

Police Helicopters

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used by the Metropolitan police in deciding whether to order the launch of a police helicopter; and if he will make a statement. [21991]

Hazel Blears: Each launch of a police helicopter in the Metropolitan police area will fall within the criteria set out and is subject to due consideration being given to the environmental impact of each flight:

public/police safety
armed incident
critical incident
vehicle pursuit
crime reduction
counter terrorism
photo/video surveillance
public order
security escorts
security searches.

Road Safety

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many road traffic police officers there were in each year between 1990 and 2005; and if he will make a statement. [25190]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Data are provided in the table. Figures are only available from 2003 onwards.

Police officers whose main function is Traffic[1], 2003 to 2005

Total for England and Wales	*Full-time equivalent[2]*
As at 31 March:	
2003	6,901.89
2004	6,702.40
2005	7,103.93

[1] Staff with multiple responsibilities (designations) are recorded under their 'primary' role or function.
[2] Full-time equivalent includes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.

Speed Limits

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what statistics his Department collects on the number of police officers deployed to stop motorists who exceed speed limits. [24933]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office collects statistics on the main function of police officers. Staff with multiple responsibilities are recorded under their primary role or function.

There is a 'traffic—operational' function which includes all police officers who are predominantly employed on motor cycles or patrol vehicles for the policing of traffic and motorway related duties. This does not include officers employed in accident investigation, vehicle examination and radar duties. As at 31 March 2005 there were 6,428 (full-time equivalents) police officers recorded under the 'traffic—operational' function.

West Mercia Constabulary

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the performance of West Mercia constabulary. [22107]

Hazel Blears: The Police Performance Assessments published by the Home Office and Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary on 27 October show that in 2004–05 West Mercia police achieved a very positive assessment of its performance across the range of its core policing activity.

West Mercia police received the following assessment. All delivery grades are either good or excellent and most direction grades are improved—there are no deteriorated grades.

In particular, the force showed strong performance for the excellent and improved gradings in investigating crime—notably for its overall detection rate and offences brought to justice performance; and for its performance in resource use—notably in the areas of leadership and performance management.

Performance Area	*Delivery*	*Direction*
Reducing crime	Good	Improved
Investigating crime	Excellent	Improved
Promoting safety	Good	Stable
Providing assistance	Good	Stable
Citizen focus	Good	Improved
Resource use	Excellent	Improved
Local policing	Good	Improved

DEFENCE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place in the Library copies of his Department's Chart of Accounts for financial years 1997–98 to 2005–06; [24601]

(2) if he will list his Department's top level budget holders and their related intermediate and working level management groupings for financial year 2005–06. [24605]

Mr. Ingram: Yes. I will provide copies from financial year 2000–01 when the Chart of Accounts was first adopted for financial management purposes in the Ministry of Defence. This will also provide the budgetary structure down to basic level Budget. It will take some time for all the information to be collated. Once this has been done, I will place copies in the Library of the House.

Future Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the timetable is for the Department's aircraft carrier programme. [26572]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Aircraft Carrier (CVF) project is in its assessment phase, the aim of which is to balance the key parameters of performance, cost and time. The main investment decision will be taken when we know with confidence the risks involved in building the carriers, when we have a proper understanding of the costs involved and the implications in terms of the wider interface with other projects. At that time, ship build time scales and consequent in-service dates (ISDs) will be set.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what estimate *(a)* he has made and *(b)* the Iraqi authorities have made of the number of civilian casualties during the events of 19 September 2005 in Basra; [20522]

(2) whether he has requested the return of the *(a)* car and *(b)* equipment seized at the time of the arrest of the two military intelligence officers on 19 September 2005 in Basra; [20521]

(3) whether the raid on the Jamiyat prison on 26 September 2005 was approved in advance by *(a)* Officials and *(b)* Ministers in his Department; [20520]

(4) what reports he has received of torture being conducted at the Jamiyat prison in Basra; [20519]

(5) whether either of the two military intelligence officers arrested in Basra on 19 September 2005 were *(a)* carrying non-UK passports and *(b)* not of UK nationality; [21098]

(6) whether compensation will be offered to Iraqi citizens affected by British military action in Basra on 19 September 2005; [20835]

(7) what reasons have been given by Iraqi police for their arrest of the two British officers in Basra on 19 September 2005; [20834]

(8) whether Basra's principal council has requested that the two military intelligence officers arrested on 19 September 2005 handed over to Iraqi authorities. [20833]

John Reid *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Commanders in the field have full authority to take action to protect life. On 19 September, a day of fast moving events, the Ministry of Defence was consulted throughout. The acting commander of British forces in MND (SE) was able to take the difficult decision to mount the operation to enter the police station in the knowledge that he had the full support of the chain of command. The two British soldiers arrested in Basra on 19 September by the Iraqi Police Service are both UK nationals and were not carrying the passports of any other nation.

The car that the two British soldiers were travelling in was not seized. Although some of the personal equipment worn or carried by the British soldiers was removed by the Iraqi Police Service, most was recovered. All the equipment subsequently found in the police station was retrieved.

Due to the difficulty in obtaining reliable information it is not our policy to comment on civilian casualties. In this case, although we are aware of media reports, we have not been provided with any evidence relating to the deaths of Iraqis.

The Ministry of Defence has well-established procedures for handling claims for compensation in Multi-National Division (South East) and indeed any other theatre in which we operate. If there are any legitimate claims for negligence that arise out of the events of 19 September, they will be considered in the normal way.

I am aware of serious allegations of prisoner abuse at the Jameat including two alleged deaths in custody. UK support to the Iraqi Police Service in Basra and elsewhere is designed among other things to enhance police governance, accountability and respect for human rights. We take this very seriously. We have been pressing the Iraqi authorities very hard in both Basra and Baghdad to investigate these allegations thoroughly and then to take appropriate action and we will continue to do so.

The Iraqi Government have said that the two soldiers were arrested because the Iraqi Police Service initially believed them to be terrorists and they were not able to immediately confirm their status as British soldiers. Having confirmed their identity we were extremely concerned when they were not released in accordance with Iraqi law. We have subsequently agreed with the Iraqi Government that in future any such incident will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant articles of Iraqi law, which affirm that the UK retains sole jurisdiction over its armed forces personnel.

We never received a formal request from either Basra's principal council or the Iraqi Government to hand the individuals over to the Iraqi authorities. Furthermore an Iraqi judicial inquiry concluded that under Iraqi law there were no grounds for such action, given the immunity of Multinational forces personnel from the Iraqi legal process.

British forces were fully within their rights to act in the way they did and I fully support their actions.

Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Programme

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has received further requests from Swan Hunter for additional funding to complete the two ships being built by Swan Hunter as part of the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary). [24834]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1264W.

RMP Historic Investigation Team

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on whose authority it was decided to set up 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and which *(a)* Government Ministers and *(b)* Law Officers were involved in discussions leading to its creation, with specific reference to discussions between Defence Ministers and Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office; [27058]

(2) what the remit is of 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and what circumstances have led to its mission and co-operation with the Police Service of Northern Ireland; [27057]

(3) how many cases and operations 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team is expected to investigate; and how many soldiers and former soldiers are expected to be involved in those investigations; [27056]

(4) what the estimated annual budget is of the 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and if he will make a statement. [27086]

Mr. Ingram: The 6th Regiment, Royal Military Police (6 RMP) Historic Inquiry Team (HIT) have been established as the HQNI focal point for providing information to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) review of all 'troubles' related deaths. They are not undertaking any investigative responsibilities in relation to this review.

The RMP maintain close liaison with all Home Office police forces and routinely assist both in civil police investigations and requests for information involving service personnel. The current PSNI review is no different from any other Home Office police investigation and requests for information are being met with full and open disclosure.

The PSNI are expected to review some 2,000 cases, though each case-file may contain more than one incident of death. The RMP have approximately 930 military police case files, which contain information relevant to these deaths. In addition, 6 RMP maintain the Northern Ireland Operational Archive, which stores material such as patrol reports, log sheets and patrol data. The RMP HIT remit is to trawl this material in response to requests for information from the PSNI. The number of cases involving military personnel has not yet been quantified.

The 6 RMP HIT was formed by means of a routine internal reorganisation of existing manpower in order to meet changing priorities within an existing area of

military police support. The Commanding Officer of 6 RMP made the decision to form the 6 RMP HIT so that the support to the PSNI inquiries could be delivered in the most effective way possible, and this decision was endorsed by the Chief of Staff, Headquarters Northern Ireland.

As the 6 RMP HIT has been created through an internal reorganisation of existing regimental resources, no additional cost has been incurred and an increase to the extant 6 RMP budget is not considered necessary at this stage.

Terrorism

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about the size of the British armed forces and their ability to meet the threats of terrorism in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the rest of the world. [27500]

John Reid: I have received no representations specifically linking the size of the armed forces and their role in the Government's comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy.

The role of the armed forces in meeting the threat of terrorism was set out clearly in the New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review (Cmnd 5566) and the two Defence White Papers 'Delivering security in a changing world' and 'Future capabilities' in 2003 and 2004 (Cmnd 6041 and Cmnd 6269).

The armed forces continue to provide a number of specialist capabilities in support of the civil authorities in the United Kingdom. Although there is no military solution to terrorism, the Government have demonstrated that when necessary they are willing and able to deploy significant forces overseas as part of their counter-terrorism strategy.

I have received a number of representations relating to the Government's decision to disband the three Home Service battalions of The Royal Irish Regiment when their role in support of the Police Service of Northern Ireland ends as a result of the process of security normalisation which began on 1 August 2005.

Thailand

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether an agreement is in place between the Thai and the British Governments, whereby arms and munitions are supplied by the British in return for chickens from Thailand; and if he will make a statement. [26266]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* No such agreement exists. The Government are, however, supporting BAE Systems to work with the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand to assist with the modernisation of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. This was affirmed in a Joint Statement on 13 October by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The text of the Joint Statement can be found at http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page8306.asp

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Nationals (Drug Smuggling)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals have been convicted and been given life sentences for drug smuggling in *(a)* Thailand, *(b)* Singapore, *(c)* Turkey, *(d)* Morocco, *(e)* Tunisia and *(f)* the Netherlands in the last five years. [25275]

Dr. Howells: The following table provides figures for the number of British nationals we are aware of who have been convicted and given life sentences for drug smuggling in each of these countries in the last five years.

Country	*Number of British nationals*
Thailand	4
Singapore	0
Turkey	0
Morocco	0
Tunisia	0
Netherlands	0

Burundi

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the new government in Burundi regarding the killing of British citizen Charlotte Wilson in December 2000; and if he will press the Burundian Government to take action to bring the perpetrators to justice. [27634]

Ian Pearson: We have raised the case of Charlotte Wilson on several occasions with the new Burundian Government. We continue to press the Burundian authorities for progress in bringing Charlotte's killers to justice, and to remind them of the importance we attach to a resolution of the case.

Most recently, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development raised this case with President Nkurunziza in Bujumbura on 1 November. President Nkurunziza said that his Government was committed to investigating this and many similar cases. We will maintain pressure on the Burundian authorities to bring the perpetrators of this case and similar atrocities to justice.

EU Council of Ministers

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the British Presidency of the EU would support a proposal that the Council of Ministers should meet in public. [27527]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK Presidency supports finding ways for the Council to improve Council transparency. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said before the European Parliament on 23 June

> "Mr. Watson challenged me over Council transparency and, certainly in relation to legislating, there is a strong case for that. Let us consider that under our Presidency".

We held an initial discussion with partners in October and we will continue to work on the issue of improving Council transparency during the UK Presidency.

Foreign Students

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many foreign students have been granted visas to study in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years, broken down by nationality. [26115]

Dr. Howells: The number of student visas issued in each of the last five years, broken down by post:

Post	2000	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Abidjan	183	487	392	527	141
Abu Dhabi	853	838	1,091	1,336	1,033
Abuja	484	788	1,389	1,469	2,837
Accra	1,788	2,315	3,103	2,804	1,749
Addis Ababa	239	240	190	215	159
Algiers	0	892	344	282	229
Almaty	1,420	2,835	2,347	1,715	2,324
Amman	502	708	758	906	808
Amsterdam	177	210	252	303	227
Ankara	506	413	361	538	1,525
Antananarivo	21	26	23	30	24
Ascension Island	0	1	[1]	[1]	[1]
Ashgabat	160	85	118	129	312
Asmara	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	7
Athens	63	54	41	43	79
Bahrain	388	676	758	903	801
Baku	226	245	306	385	424
Bamako	[1]	0	0	[1]	[1]
Bandar S B	60	22	43	132	440
Bangkok	3,694	3,375	4,228	5,038	4,936
Banjul	1,050	1,088	475	537	549
Beijing (Peking)	8,109	12,178	17,435	14,469	9,963
Beirut	273	258	309	348	387
Belgrade	1,550	1,138	1,183	1,102	1,420
Belmopan	1	1	0	1	[1]
Berlin	0	1	1	1	2
Berne	0	0	0	0	[2]
Bogotá	2,685	2,654	2,488	2,329	2,469
Brasilia	0	0	1	1	0
Bratislava	902	1,281	1,796	1,725	4
Bridgetown	22	36	30	42	252
Brussels	38	39	46	54	111
Bucharest	1,173	1,195	1,000	517	780
Budapest	67	103	96	133	87
Buenos Aires	17	72	117	125	146
Cairo	535	441	384	336	426
Canberra	327	363	355	412	603
Caracas	239	327	268	79	151
Casablanca	581	409	458	315	243
Chennai (Madras)	1,295	3,369	4,915	4,978	5,331
Chicago	87	98	78	373	1,690
Chisinau	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	140
Chongqing	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	24
Colombo	1,936	1,850	1,194	1,654	1,641
Copenhagen	62	83	71	89	71
Dakar	83	94	79	83	84
Damascus	535	502	432	500	570
Dar Es Salaam	845	779	876	805	782
Dhaka	723	1,344	2,313	2,190	2,133
Doha	307	310	432	513	574
Dubai	443	591	836	1,159	1,171
Dublin	110	113	178	205	236
Düsseldorf	426	586	750	377	504
Ekaterinburg	227	596	628	852	1,219
Freetown	117	225	510	467	273
Gaborone	48	67	79	83	327
Geneva	274	317	326	357	231
Georgetown	52	73	101	61	60
Gibraltar	0	1	[1]	[1]	[1]
Guangzhou	2,562	3,737	5,040	3,956	3,726
Guatemala City	2,562	3,737	27	23	0
Hamilton	27	8	[1]	[1]	[1]
Hanoi	304	270	720	1,077	1,314
Harare	173	408	178	656	751
Havana	11	19	18	28	45
Helsinki	49	37	27	41	43
Hong Kong	229	234	175	1,916	6,497
Honiara	6	3	2	3	3
Islamabad	1,680	2,649	2,554	10,332	8,953
Istanbul	6,702	5,185	5,107	3,208	2,709
Jakarta	747	771	638	702	862
Jedda	1,126	1,318	1,243	1,590	2,651
Jerusalem	199	93	224	138	159
Kampala	783	993	1,536	1,174	897
Karachi	741	1,095	227	29	1,906
Kathmandu	701	489	346	365	341
Khartoum	150	151	367	384	488
Kiev	4,218	3,325	2,715	1,895	2,098
Kigali	7	6	3	0	0
Kingston	198	292	442	339	211
Kinshasa	25	30	55	64	104
Kolkata (Calcutta)	295	414	532	660	641
Kuala Lumpur	376	298	669	1,836	5,947
Kuwait	460	578	807	964	943
LaPaz	1	0	7	42	125
Lagos	1,032	2,133	2,525	2,685	5,208
Lahore	[1]	485	[1]	[1]	[1]
Lilongwe	26	38	90	171	303
Lima	257	266	388	302	302
Lisbon	83	70	60	73	77
Los Angeles	154	139	168	461	3,121
Luanda	159	238	266	293	272
Lusaka	559	564	580	459	569
Luxembourg	12	14	7	10	15
Madrid	143	201	229	305	455
Managua	1	0	2	[2]	[1]
Manila	154	183	263	252	275
Maputo	35	49	59	48	57
Maseru	3	5	0	6	[1]
Mbabane	9	11	44	42	41
Mexico City	924	11	30	157	1,142
Minsk	237	291	421	564	474
Montevideo	54	13	25	20	16
Moscow	1,501	5,882	1,304	7,125	1,483
Mumbai (Bombay)	1,538	2,231	3,463	5,268	5,510
Muscat	1,181	1,171	1,166	1,170	1,767
Nairobi	1,246	1,780	1,667	1,196	991
Nassau	39	47	49	[2]	[1]
New Delhi	1,662	2,266	3,264	3,735	3,801
New York	325	334	453	1,083	4,683
Nicosia	335	248	321	695	383
Nuku'alofa	5	2	1	0	2
Oslo	47	36	33	56	78
Ottawa	153	219	294	612	1,959
Panama City	4	4	4	4	21
Paris	705	578	594	584	696
Phnom Penh	[1]	[1]	[1]	17	29
Port Louis	834	986	924	1,010	1,305
Port Moresby	22	49	29	1	15
Port of Spain	298	294	295	379	433
Port Stanley	0	0	0	[1]	[1]
Prague	278	242	400	553	123
Pretoria	250	598	154	234	469
Pyongyang	[1]	[1]	[1]	0	12
Quito	178	249	343	387	398
Rabat	0	0	0	0	0
Rangoon	306	462	679	220	192
Reykjavik	2	5	3	6	15
Riga	232	92	133	157	71
Rio de Janeiro	12	18	43	150	1,132
Riyadh	984	944	1,617	1,805	6,749
Rome	221	227	320	289	395
San Jose	7	1	0	10	[1]
San Salvador	0	11	14	0	[1]
Sana'a	197	234	221	250	147
Santiago	6	11	14	260	280
Santo Domingo	35	23	14	15	24
Sarajevo	58	134	36	164	129
Seoul	32	34	107	3,026	7,339
Shanghai	1,775	3,456	4,729	5,219	5,672
Singapore	270	659	710	784	1,757
Skopje	114	282	96	181	162
Sofia	2,476	2,988	940	619	582
St. Petersburg	777	653	825	923	1,032
Stockholm	20	32	74	80	93
Suva	18	13	8	20	16
Taipei	8,567	7,746	9,464	6,845	9,116
Tallinn	50	41	40	62	73
Tangier	0	0	[1]	[1]	[1]
Tashkent	453	1,220	988	1,026	434
Tbilisi	354	468	881	740	528
Tegucigalpa	4	6	6	0	[1]
Tehran	685	954	900	977	1,151

Post	2000	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Tel Aviv	45	45	43	173	866
Tirana	174	132	121	191	208
Tokyo	146	155	161	2,693	8,961
Tripoli	1,363	2,612	2,564	2,029	2,745
Tunis	1,226	1,053	897	583	189
Ulaanbaatar	135	188	481	232	120
Valletta	2,298	62	34	64	50
Victoria	95	63	22	3	62
Vienna	137	100	111	104	115
Vila	1	1	0	0	1
Vilnius	100	162	99	138	52
Warsaw	129	110	139	79	56
Washington	88	87	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—
Wellington	950	74	62	78	102
Windhoek	5	23	13	63	71
Yaoundé	104	272	314	265	343
Yerevan	15	46	85	33	144
Zagreb	270	708	587	582	627
Total	99,559	121,466	128,144	146,538	182,409

[1] Post not open.

[2] Statistics unavailable.

[3] Prior to 2001–02, Entry Clearance Statistics were published by Calendar year.

Source:

UK visas Global Statistics. These have been published online since 2001–02 and can be found at www.ukvisas.aogov.uk.

Maldives

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the high commissioner in the Maldive Islands has made to the Maldive authorities on the treatment of Mohamed Nasheed and the Maldivian Democratic Party. [25831]

Dr. Howells: The British high commissioner in Colombo, accredited to the Maldives, has raised our concerns on the trial of Mohamed Nasheed and current political events on several recent occasions. He did so on 26 September with President Gayoom of the Maldives and on 31 October with the Foreign Minister, Ahmed Shaheed.

The deputy high commissioner also raised these issues with Foreign Minister Ahmed Shaheed in August 2005, shortly after Mr. Nasheed's arrest, and on 27 October, following his first court appearance.

The British high commission is active in co-ordinating EU action locally. It led an EU fact-finding mission to the Maldives in August that met Government Ministers, officials and detainees, including Mohamed Nasheed. An EU statement was issued on 2 September, emphasising the responsibility of the Maldivian authorities to uphold the right of political parties to meet freely and to carry out peaceful political activities. It noted the seriousness of the charges against detainees, called for due process, and made clear that the credibility of such trials would be scrutinised closely. We will continue to underline to the Government of the Maldives its democracy and human rights obligations, both bilaterally and with our EU partners.

Poland

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is on the timetable for Poland's adoption of the euro. [27528]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Each new member state will pursue a strategy for adoption of the Euro appropriate to its circumstances, and in line with its obligations under the Treaty establishing the European Community. The new Polish Prime Minister, Mr. Marcinkiewicz, has said that his Government will not seek to adopt the Euro during the current Parliament. Polish President-elect, Lech Kaczynski, has said that he favours holding a referendum before adoption of the Euro.

Republic of Congo

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of the hostilities in the Republic of Congo following the visit of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Kolelas. [26232]

Ian Pearson: There have been several reports of clashes between Government forces and rebels known as "Ninjas" before and since the return to the Republic of Congo of Bernard Kolelas. The Bacongo district of the capital, Brazzaville, was most affected by the violence. Several people are reported to have died in these clashes including Government security forces, rebel fighters and civilians.

On 20 October, the Congolese army said that the rebels had been forced to flee the Bacongo area. Brazzaville is now said to be calm, although we continue to monitor the situation.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan on coordinated offensive operations undertaken by the Government of Sudan and the Janjaweed Arab militia in Darfur *(a)* on 18 September in Khartoum Djadeed, Sandego, Khasantongur, Tary, Martal and Djabain and *(b)* on 28 September, in Arusharo, Acho and Gozmena. [25598]

Ian Pearson: On 18 and 28 September respectively, Arab Militias attacked the towns and surrounding areas of Khartoum Djadet and Aro Sharrow. We also received unconfirmed reports that the Government of Sudan's airforce acted in co-ordination with the militias during these attacks. The African Union is investigating these incidents and we await their report. Offensive military overflights by the Government of Sudan would constitute a breach of its obligations under the Abuja Security Protocol and, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1591, those responsible are liable to be targeted with a travel ban and assets freeze.

We have made clear that the recent increase in violence is unacceptable, and that those responsible must be held to account. During the recent EU Ministerial Troika meeting in Sudan on 8 October, both my noble Friend Lord Triesman, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, Javier Solana, raised recent attacks with the Sudanese Government. The UK, as EU Presidency, has also issued three statements condemning the recent increase in violence and calling on all sides to

rein in the belligerents, and to work for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Tibet

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights situation in Tibet. [24215]

Ian Pearson: The Government remain concerned about the human rights situation in Tibet. Issues of specific concern include interference by the Chinese/Tibetan authorities in the religious activities of the Tibetan people. The Government support some project work in Tibet and we monitor developments in the region closely.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 14 November 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNAIDS

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 724W, on access to treatment, when his Department expects UNAIDS to establish its taskforce; when it expects UNAIDS to set its intermediate targets; and if he will make a statement. [27857]

Mr. Thomas: The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is in the process of establishing a Global Steering Committee for scaling up towards universal access. The UK has recently agreed to be co-chair, alongside the UNAIDS. The Committee will determine whether intermediate targets will be set. We expect the Committee to report to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2006.

Cheap Food Exports

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made on the impact of cheap food exports to developing countries from the EU on the economies of those countries; and if he will make a statement. [26097]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development supports a range of research on the impacts of developed countries agricultural policies on developing countries. One current programme is with the United Nations Food and Agricultural organisation (FAO) on the impacts of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) agricultural policies on developing countries. The research outputs are available at: www.fao.org/trade. The Government recognise the damaging impact that trade-distorting subsidies in the EU and other OECD countries have on developing countries and we are committed to securing reductions in these subsidies, through the reform of the common agricultural policy and the World Trade Organisation talks.

The most recent common agricultural policy reform package agreed in 2003–04 marks a significant shift in the EU's agricultural policy. The de-coupling of subsidies from production should increase the market orientation of European farmers, leading to reductions in production and disposal of subsidised surpluses abroad.

The Government also fully support the commitment made as part of the WTO's Doha Development Agenda 'to reduce, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies, and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support'.

We are pushing strongly for progress towards this at the upcoming WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department from May 1997 up to and including April 2005, broken down by Act. [27590]

Mr. Thomas: No legislation introduced by the Department for International Development since 1997 has contained criminal law provisions.

Fair Trade

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is on trade with developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [27628]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government are committed to the development of an open and rules-based international trading system that fulfils its potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in poorer countries. Our key policy commitments on trade and development, as well as our objectives for the current round of multilateral trade talks, are set out in the Government's White Papers, "Making Globalisation a Force for Good" (July 2004) and "Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor" (December 2000). The UK Government are working hard to support the poorest and most vulnerable producers, be it through multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or regional trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements.

At the G8 summit in Gleneagles in July, we made real and substantial progress for developing countries on more and better aid, deeper debt relief, and re-affirmed our commitment to a successful conclusion to the current round of WTO trade talks. The G8 also agreed to provide increased funds for trade related capacity building to assist developing countries take advantage of the new opportunities from a positive conclusion to the round. There is increased international support for increased 'Aid for Trade' as reflected at the recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings and the G8 summit in Gleneagles. It is important that we build rapidly on the outcome of these meetings.

The forthcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong represents an important opportunity to make a significant contribution to reducing global poverty. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest. These gains should include improved participation by developing countries in the world trading system, through substantially increased market access for developing countries and the dismantling of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies by industrialised countries.

Illegal Logging

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent representations he has made *(a)* directly and *(b)* through the EU to the Governments of (i) Indonesia and (ii) Cameroon regarding illegal logging. [25365]

Mr. Thomas: The UK has been closely engaged with Indonesia concerning illegal logging since preparing for the Ministerial Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) Ministerial Conference in Bali in September 2002. The resulting declaration led to the UK-Indonesia Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which aims to tackle illegal logging in Indonesia and ultimately eliminate trade in illegally harvested timber between the two countries.

Our ambassador in Jakarta and DFID officials have maintained frequent and direct contact with the Indonesian Minister of Forestry and his officials concerning implementing the MoU and we are making steady progress.

My most recent direct contact with the Minister of Forestry was to invite him to visit the UK in September to discuss progress and future activities. Unfortunately the Minister had to postpone his visit.

Since the trade issues must be dealt with at the EU level, these cannot be tackled under the MoU and DFID, together with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, have been working to put in place the EU forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) action plan. These will provide for voluntary partnership agreements between the EU and timber producing countries with a licensing scheme to control illegal trade as their focus. The European Commission is leading on preparations for such an agreement with Indonesia, which we hope will supersede and strengthen our MoU. Our ambassador underlined the importance of such an agreement in a meeting with the Indonesian Minister of Forestry last July and DFID officials, through the commission in Brussels and its delegation in Jakarta, are lending practical support to the current preparations.

The UK has been working closely with the Government of Cameroon over a number of years to tackle illegal logging and forest governance problems. We have supported the Government to develop a comprehensive national programme to address illegal logging and improve forest management and have also supported an independent monitor in Cameroon to help the Government combat forest crime. We worked closely with the Minister of Forests and Prime Minister to support Cameroon hosting the Pan African Ministerial Conference on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in 2003. Most recently DFID officials met the Minister responsible for Forestry and Ministry of Finance in October to finalise plans for our support to the national programme and to further understanding about the opportunities afforded by the voluntary partnership agreement with Europe for the timber trade.

The UK has been supporting the Cameroon Government in preparing for negotiations with the European Commission for such an agreement alongside Germany, who co-ordinates this work for the member states. The Forest Minister recently indicated to us that they would like to negotiate a partnership agreement in July 2006 when work reviewing the legal code is completed.

Immunisation

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to encourage more countries to pledge money to the International Finance Facility for Immunisation. [28414]

Hilary Benn: DFID is continuing to work alongside HM Treasury and the Foreign Office to encourage more donors to pledge to the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) through one-on-one meetings and discussions and international conferences. Italy, France, Sweden and Spain remain the core committed European donors, but we are now holding discussions with Norway, Belgium, and Austria and hope that they might also contribute. Outside Europe, we are holding discussions with South Africa, India, Brazil and Japan, all of whom are expressing some interest in participating.

Kenya

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the potential danger to workers involved in the flower industry in Kenya due to exposure to chemicals; and if he will make a statement. [28097]

Hilary Benn: DFID has been working with stakeholders in the Kenyan flower industry since 2003, in the face of a possible boycott by European buyers on the grounds of labour rights abuses on flower farms.

DFID, together with the Dutch, is supporting the Kenyan Ethical Horticultural Business Initiative (HEBI). This is a 'not for profit' organisation with a board comprising all those involved in the industry as well as Government, human rights organisations and unions representing the workers. Pilot audits, which include assessments of exposure to chemicals, on eight farms, revealed that while some problems exist the industry generally is socially responsible. But to ensure that internationally recognised social business practices are being followed, the HEBI has produced a code of practice for flower farmers. This includes a regular independent audit and inspection of flower farms and a better understanding by growers and workers of their social and legal rights and obligations.

South Asian Earthquake

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many tents have been sent from the UK as part of the UK's contribution to the South Asian earthquake emergency relief response from *(a)* UK Government Departments, *(b)* NGOs and others through the Disasters Emergency Committee and *(c)* NGOs and charities which did not use the DEC as the conduit for delivery of aid. [27854]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has sent 5,500 winterised family tents in response to the South Asian earthquake. The Government of Pakistan reports that 335,393 tents have been distributed in total, and the Government of

Pakistan and the United Nations are confident that up to a further 300,000 tents will be delivered by the end of the month. DFID does not have figures for the number of tents delivered by the independent agencies of the Disasters Emergency Committee or other non-governmental organisations.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many UK helicopters are helping with the relief following the earthquake in Pakistan; and what plans he has to increase this number in the immediate future. [26148]

Mr. Thomas: The Ministry of Defence has three CH-47 Chinook helicopters, operational since 28 October, assisting with the relief effort at DFID's request. DFID has also channelled £2 million through the International Committee of the Red Cross and £1 million through the World Food Programme which includes support to helicopter provision. DFID has channelled a further £1.5 million through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service also for helicopter provision. As of 9 November, there were 102 helicopters in operation with an additional 16 in the pipeline. We are monitoring the overall situation with regard to helicopter provision and examining options to ensure appropriate numbers and types are available.

Palestinian Authority

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid from the UK has been committed to *(a)* the Palestinian Authority and *(b)* non-governmental organisations operating in Palestine since the inception of the Authority. [26509]

Hilary Benn: During the period 1994 to 2004, the UK provided a total of £104 million official development assistance to the West Bank and Gaza. Nearly £31 million of this assistance was channelled through non-governmental organisations. A further £153 million humanitarian assistance was given to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency over the same time period.

Palm Oil

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and *(b)* others on the destruction of the habitat of the orang-utan due to the increased demand for palm oil in the UK. [28000]

Mr. Thomas: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development have discussed this issue with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The UK Government are in discussion with EU member states about the threats to tropical rainforests caused by oil palm expansion and is taking the following steps to tackle this problem.

My right hon. Friend and the Under-Secretary with responsibility for rural affairs, landscape and biodiversity, my hon. Friend the Member for South Dorset (Jim Knight), recently represented the UK at an inter-governmental meeting on the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP) which covers orang-utans. The Kinshasa intergovernmental meeting in September, formally adopted a Global Great Apes Conservation Strategy and an aspirational declaration. This commits range states of great apes to a number of actions and targets, including slowing the loss of great apes and their forest habitats by 2010.

The UK has been wholly supportive of the GRASP mission. The Government, through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), has committed around £600,000 to the Great Apes Survival Project.

The UK Government also support the conservation and sustainable management of rainforests. DFID, together with DEFRA and FCO, is helping developing countries to address the governance and market failures that drive illegal and unsustainable logging of forests. DFID supports the Multistakeholder Forestry Programme in Indonesia which is strengthening forest management and helping to protect forest habitats, including those of the orang-utan.

Defra, through the Darwin Initiative, is also helping countries to design and implement conservation measures to address the loss of forest biodiversity and rare natural habitats.

Republic of Yemen

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the value of grants in aid made to the Republic of Yemen was in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [26434]

Hilary Benn: Grants in aid, including grants to voluntary organisations, form one part of DFID's larger bilateral assistance package. The latest figures of the value of grants in aid provided by DFID to the Republic of Yemen in each of the last financial years is as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	0.964
2001–02	2.192
2002–03	2.103
2003–04	3.721
2004–05	4.422

Tuberculosis

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what percentage of funding for all countries to which the Department gives direct budget support is attributable to the control and treatment of TB in 2005–06. [25501]

Mr. Thomas: It is not currently possible to give a percentage figure for funding spent directly on TB control and treatment from total direct budget support which DFID provides. This is because national governments do not have financial accounting systems that trace the proportion of direct budget support spent on individual diseases. However, DFID provides a significant part of its funding directly to government budgets in support of their overall strategies for poverty reduction ('Poverty Reduction Budget Support'). DFID provided £423 million in 2004–05 in this way, partner

governments may use some part of this directly for TB control activities, or for building up health services to diagnose and treat TB as well as other major causes of ill health.

Water and Sanitation (Funding)

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will use the UK's presidency of the EU to ensure that the commitments in the United Nations Millennium Review Summit Outcome Document for better targeting of aid are applied by all EU member states to their aid for water and sanitation; [26104]

(2) if he will use the UK's presidency of the EU to ensure that the recommendation of the Commission for Africa for a reversal starting in 2005 of the decline in aid for water and sanitation is adopted by all member states. [26103]

Hilary Benn: The UK presidency is actively engaged in negotiations with the European Commission and European Parliament to agree a new Development Policy Statement that will set the framework within which all EU aid is spent. DFID is working to ensure that the Statement agrees that aid is focused on poverty reduction, meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)s—including those related to water and sanitation—and the needs identified by partner countries. I chaired a debate about the statement at the informal meeting of EU Development Ministers in Leeds on 25 October. It is hoped that we will reach final agreement at the meeting of EU Development Ministers that I will chair in Brussels 22 November.

I have also tabled a paper on EU aid effectiveness that will be debated at the same meeting. This includes language on promoting a more effective allocation of resources and asking member states to publish projections of aid by type, including water and sanitation, and country over the next three years and if possible longer.

The 22 November Council will also agree a contribution to a new EU Strategy for Africa that should be agreed at the December European Council. The Strategy will include action on water and sanitation. We are hopeful that this will result in member states increasing their allocations to water supply and sanitation.

World Trade

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure that the December World Trade Organisation talks will produce an outcome which is beneficial to *(a)* the development of less developed countries, *(b)* poverty eradication in those countries and *(c)* capacity to meet the millennium development goals. [27664]

Mr. Thomas: Working with the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) and other Government Departments, and in line with the aims and objectives set out in the 2004 Trade and Investment White Paper, DFID is actively pursuing an outcome to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks which delivers real development gains for developing countries.

DFID works with the poorest group of developing countries, the G90, to ensure their views are represented in the WTO through technical assistance where we provide considerable support to help developing countries participate in the negotiations, through policy research on issues of key concern for developing countries such as special products and through direct engagement with key WTO members such as the least developed country (LDC) chair. We try to ensure that developing country views are heard loud and clear, and that policy proposals in Geneva and elsewhere are based on sound evidence and with development at their core.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the Government's policy is on encouraging countries to privatise public services in return for other changes to world trade rules which would benefit the countries concerned. [27668]

Mr. Thomas: Increasing the access, coverage and quality of water, education and health services is vital if countries are to reach the Millennium Development Goals. In March 2005, DFID published a policy paper entitled "Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: changing aid 'conditionally'". The policy commits us to only using conditionality to ensure that aid is used effectively for the purposes intended and can be accounted for to the UK Parliament.

We are committed to supporting governments in developing countries to make their own decisions about how to develop their economies and provide services to their people, based on evidence of what works best to reduce poverty. DFID will not make aid conditional on specific policy decisions by partner governments or attempt to impose policy choices on them, including in sensitive economic areas such as privatisation or trade liberalisation.

DFID also encourages developing countries to make their own decisions about service delivery, including whether or not to open their service sectors to foreign providers. However, developing countries are not obliged to accept any request or to open up their services sectors. It all comes down to which option is the most effective in reducing poverty, a decision for governments of developing countries to make through their own political process. Nothing in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) forces them to privatise or prevents them from establishing appropriate regulation.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will assess the impact on poor countries were they to be enabled to provide 1 per cent. of world trade by value. [26985]

Mr. Thomas: Based on data from the World Trade Organisation for 2004, the value of total world trade in both goods and services was $11 trillion. Therefore any group of countries, whether they are the least developed countries or the wider group of developing countries, would capture an extra $110 billion of exports by value if they increased their share of world trade by 1 per cent.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether a flock will be slaughtered if it is *(a)* found to be positive to avian influenza (i) High Path and (ii) Low Path and *(b)* not positive but in (A) a slaughter zone and (B) a movement restriction zone. [26889]

Mr. Bradshaw: Powers to slaughter in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza are contained in Section 16A and Schedule 3 of the Animal Health Act 1981 (as amended).

This allows the slaughter of:

(i) any diseased poultry;

(ii) any poultry suspected of having disease; and

(iii) any poultry with a view to preventing the wider spread of avian influenza. This power can be exercised whether or not the poultry is affected with avian influenza or suspected of being so affected.

These powers apply to both poultry with HPAI and LPAI.

Any action taken to control avian influenza would be proportionate and decided upon in the light of an overall assessment of the risks, costs and benefits in a particular situation. However, it is a requirement under EU obligations that poultry on an infected premises must be slaughtered.

Biomass Industry

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations the Government have received on possible regulatory barriers to the development of the biomass industry; and if she will make a statement. [22079]

Margaret Beckett: The Department has received a number of representations on possible regulatory barriers. The Biomass Task Force, led by Sir Ben Gill, was set up a year ago to identify the barriers to developing biomass energy and to recommend ways to overcome the problems. Their report was published on 25 October and copies have been placed in the House Library. The Government have committed themselves to publishing a full response to the report within the next six months.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which biomass *(a)* products and *(b)* by-products have been reclassified as waste since 1997. [22080]

Margaret Beckett: No biomass products or biomass by-products have been reclassified as waste since 1997.

The definition of "waste" in force in Great Britain since May 1994 is the definition in Article 1*(a)* of the Waste Framework Directive (as amended) which provides that waste is

" . . . any substance or object . . . which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard."

Whether or not a substance is discarded as waste is a matter which must be determined on the facts of the case and the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has issued several judgments on the interpretation of the definition of waste and the meaning of "discard". ECJ judgments are binding on member states and their "competent authorities".

It rests in the first place with the producer or holder of a substance to decide whether it is being discarded as waste. However, the Environment Agency is designated as a competent authority for the purposes of implementing the directive in England and Wales. It is the agency's view that residues from the incineration or co-incineration of biomass (e.g. poultry litter) disposed of as waste in compliance with the EU Animal By-products Regulation are waste within the meaning of the directive.

The classification of a substance as waste does not preclude its use. For example, waste ash from the incineration or co-incineration of biomass may be used as a fertiliser and spread to land for benefit to agriculture. The Government continue to encourage the recovery of waste by means of recycling, re-use and reclamation. This encouragement includes the use of the Government's discretion under Article 11 of the waste framework directive to provide exemptions from waste management licensing. Licensing exemptions for the recovery of certain kinds of waste ash are provided in paragraphs 9A, 13 and 19A of Schedule 3 to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 (as amended).

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which Government body is the main source of advice for the biomass industry. [22081]

Margaret Beckett: In common with other policies and issues which are wide-ranging in their impact on the UK, there are a number of Government bodies which offer advice to the biomass industry. Defra and the Department of Trade and Industry advise on Government policy and the grants available to farmers and biomass developers. Defra also issues best practice guidance on growing energy crops and the Forestry Commission provides advice on woodfuel production and management. The Environment Agency advises on pollution control. Advice on developing local biomass projects is available from the Regional Development Agencies. Advice is also available from private bodies which received Government funding, such as the Community Renewables Initiative local support teams, which help to promote local biomass projects, and the Carbon Trust, which advises on the development of low carbon technologies and businesses.

The Biomass Task Force report, published on 25 October, recommends that the Carbon Trust should be the national focus of knowledge and analysis on biomass energy, with dissemination by the Regional Development Agencies. The report also recommends that technical, economic and best practice information is brought together and made available to stakeholders. The Government have committed themselves to publishing a full response to the report within the next six months.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what was the average size of grants made for biomass energy projects in each year since 1997. [22208]

Margaret Beckett: The average size of grants for Defra and Forestry Commission biomass energy grant schemes are as follows:

Grant scheme

£

	Energy crops scheme			
	Establishment grants	*Producer groups*	*Woodland grant scheme*	*Community energy programme*
1997	—	—	2,276	—
1998	—	—	2,185	—
1999	—	—	6,584	—
2000	—	—	13,235	—
2001	17,245	—	948	—
2002	11,193	—	480	—
2003	4,137	22,199	253	47,459
2004	12,626	13,565	304	445,196

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much government funding was allocated to biomass crop breeding programmes in 2004–05; and how much has been allocated for 2005–06. [22336]

Margaret Beckett: Defra allocated £841,000 in 2004–05 and £732,000 in 2005–06 to R and D in support of the genetic improvement of dedicated bio-energy crops.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1W, on corruption, whether the Serious Fraud Office was contacted by the Department of Trade and Industry in connection with the allegations of corruption involving a DTI employee prior to 13 October; and if he will make a statement. [27875]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) was contacted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in September 2004 in connection with allegations of corruption involving a DTI employee. The matter is being considered by the SFO.

Countryside Alliance

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Government have asked the House of Lords to award costs in respect of the legal action from the Countryside Alliance in relation to the Parliament Act 1949; and how much was awarded. [26894]

The Solicitor-General: This matter is currently before the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords. By resolution of the House, this question is therefore inadmissible on the ground that it relates to a case in which proceedings are active in a United Kingdom court. I am not at liberty to answer any questions on this issue until the Judicial Committee has recorded an Order in the House of Lords' Minutes. My understanding is that this will not be until 18 November 2005 at the earliest. My hon. Friend will then be able to get a better view of the issue he raises.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Artefacts (Irish Parliament)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what information the Commission has on whether works of art, furniture, books, records and other artefacts known to be within the ownership or custody of the House were originally owned by or displayed in the Parliament of Ireland prior to the Act of Union 1801; and if he will make a statement. [22148]

Nick Harvey: I have checked with those responsible in the House for looking after the works of art, furniture, books and records. There is no evidence that any material which the House currently owns, or has custody of, came originally from the Parliament of Ireland. The remaining records of the Parliament of Ireland perished when the Irish Public Record Office was destroyed by fire in 1922.

Carriage Gates

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission for what reasons the wrought iron gates at Carriage Gates have been removed; and when they are expected to be replaced. [27625]

Nick Harvey: The wrought iron "Out" gates at Carriage Gates were removed for repair following an accident, and for installation of improved hinges. They were returned on 5 October.

Television System

Michael Fabricant: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission whether the Commission plans to digitise the internal House television distribution system; and if he will make a statement. [27261]

Nick Harvey: Yes. Provisional plans have been made to move from analogue to digital broadcast on the annunciator system. This is programmed for a phased changeover from the year 2010–11 through to 2014–15 to coincide with the expected difficulties in maintaining the existing analogue displays and equipment. The exact nature and phasing of the changeover is yet to be determined.

TREASURY

Alcohol/Tobacco Tax Revenue

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was received in taxation from *(a)* alcoholic drinks, *(b)* public houses and *(c)* tobacco products in Northern Ireland during the last year for which figures are available. [28222]

John Healey: Relevant information on Alcohol and Tobacco products in the UK are included in Table 1.1 of the HM Revenue and Customs Factsheets for Alcohol and Tobacco, which can be found on a HM Revenue and Customs website address at: http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task = factindex

Similar information on public houses is not available.

Statistical information on tax revenue at the level of detail requested is not available for Northern Ireland.

Carers (Devon)

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many full-time carers there were in each local authority area in the county of Devon as recorded by the 2001 census; how many provided more than 50 hours care per week; and what estimate the Government have made of those figures since the census. [27005]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Adrian Sanders, dated 14 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many full-time carers there were in each local authority area in the county of Devon as recorded by the 2001 Census; how many provided more than 50 hours care per week; and what estimate the Government has made of those figures since the Census. (27005)

We have interpreted the ambiguous phrase "carer" to mean any person who provides unpaid care.

The table below shows the number of people in each local authority in the county of Devon on Census day (29 April 2001) who were providing unpaid care, and of those how many were providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week. The data have been taken from table KS08 in Census 2001 Key Statistics for local authorities in England and Wales which is available in the House of Commons Library.

The Office for National Statistics has not conducted a survey since the 2001 Census which specifically asked questions about the provision of unpaid care.

Number of people in each local authority in the county of Devon providing unpaid care—Census day (29 April 2001)

		Provision of unpaid care	
Area	*All people*	*All people who provide unpaid care*	*All people who provide unpaid care: 50 or more hours of care a week*
Devon county	704,493	72,969	14,491
East Devon	125,520	13,764	2,542
Exeter	111,076	9,896	2,036
Mid-Devon	69,774	6,942	1,314
North Devon	87,508	8,993	1,839
South Hams	81,849	9,109	1,625
Teignbridge	120,958	12,785	2,709
Torridge	58,965	6,249	1,401
West Devon	48,843	5,231	1,025

Source:
Table KS08 Census 2001 Key Statistics for local authorities in England and Wales.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mrs. James: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance is given to local authorities by his Department about the funding of citizens advice bureaux. [27213]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury does not provide guidance to local authorities about funding citizens advice bureaux.

Mrs. James: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial assistance is given to citizens advice bureaux by his Department. [27214]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury does not provide any direct financial assistance to citizens advice bureaux

Consumer Debt

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down the £1.130 billion of consumer debt in the United Kingdom confirmed by the Bank of England into categories of expenditure. [27391]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Bank of England's lending to individuals figures show that the total debt stock in September 2005 was £1,130 billion. This figure can be broken down into two major components; consumer credit stock (£190.795 billion) and secured stock (£939.456 billion).

Consumer credit stock consists of that on credit cards (£55.895 billion) and other (£134.863 billion).

The majority of secured lending is used for house purchases, but there are no figures available as to the eventual use of consumer credit.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department between the end of the 2003–04 session and the end of April 2005, broken down by Act. [28473]

John Healey: The following provisions created criminal offences in primary legislation sponsored by HM Treasury between the end of the 2003–04 session and the end of April 2005:

Finance Act 2004

Schedule 1—New Schedule 2A to the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979

Paragraph 5—Offences of possession, sale, etc. of unstamped containers

Paragraph 6—Offence of using premises for sale of liquor in or from unstamped containers

Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005

Section 19—Wrongful disclosure

Section 21(4)—Disclosure to a prosecuting authority

Section 29(4)—Confidentiality

Section 30—Impersonation

Section 31—Obstruction

Section 32—Assault

Section 40(3)—Confidentiality

Customs Duties

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to ensure that people buying goods from abroad on the internet pay the appropriate customs duties; and if he will make a statement. [27535]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs operate import controls at UK ports of entry, and international postal depots on consignments containing goods entering the UK from outside the European Union.

These controls are applied to all consignments using well-established risk assessment techniques to identify those for examination.

For consignments imported via the Royal Mail, HMRC examines declarations affixed to packets to ensure that the correct customs duty, excise duty and import VAT is charged and collected. This process includes examining the contents of packets with incomplete or missing declarations.

Economic and Monetary Union

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials in his Department are assigned to work on the potential integration of the UK with European economic and monetary union; and what the salary of each is. [27150]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Budget 2005 noted that the Government did not propose a euro assessment be initiated at this time. The Chancellor's statement to the House on 9 June 2003 on UK membership of the single currency set out a reform agenda of concrete and practical steps to address the policy requirements identified by the assessment of the five economic tests. A range of officials from across the Treasury contribute to this work. Disaggregated information relating to the salaries of the officials concerned is not available.

Economic Performance

Mr. Bone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the UK's economic performance in comparison with other major European countries. [27627]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This year we have faced the highest sustained oil prices for a quarter of a century and a slow-down in our main export markets. In any previous decade anyone of these would have pushed the UK economy into recession. In contrast, this year the economy has not only continued to grow, but grown faster than any other major European economy.

The Treasury paper on "Global Europe: Full employment Europe" set out the need for Europe, with growth at 1.2 per cent. this year and unemployment approaching 10 per cent., to become outward not inward looking, focused on external competition, and to combine flexibility with fairness.

Euro

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the estimated cost to date of preparations for possible euro entry by the UK. [27741]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The latest estimate of Government spending on preparations for possible entry to the single currency is set out in paragraph 2.5, on page 8, of the report on Euro Preparations, December 2004.

Copies of the document are in the Library of the House and on the Treasury's euro website www.euro.gov.uk

House Insurance

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Financial Services Authority on the regulation of house insurance. [28247]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Treasury Ministers and Officials have regular discussions with the Financial Services Authority on a wide variety of subjects, including general insurance regulation.

House Prices

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average change in UK house prices since May 1997 was in *(a)* cash and *(b)* percentage terms; and what the change in inheritance tax threshold in (i) cash and (ii) percentage terms over the same period was. [26942]

Dawn Primarolo: Housing comprises one element of overall wealth representing around 40 per cent. of the value of the average estate on death.

Since 1997, household sector net wealth has risen by around 50 per cent. in real terms. Despite this significant rise in net wealth during this period, only around 6 per cent. of estates paid any IHT during the last tax year—94 per cent. of estates were not subject to any IHT. And in order to provide certainty for hardworking families with estates valued at around the threshold, in the Budget earlier this year the Chancellor announced that the IHT tax-free threshold would rise from £263,000 to £275,000 in 2005/06, £285,000 in 2006–07 and £300,000 in 2007–08, a faster rise than statutory indexation.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many private finance initiative (PFI) contracts have a duration of more than 25 years; and whether the value of these contracts is included in the 2005 Budget Red Book estimated PFI expenditure of £138.4 billion. [26225]

John Healey: The Treasury does not hold specific information on how many signed PFI contracts have a duration of more than 25 years. The estimated unitary charges of all PFI projects are included in table C19 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 2005. The format of this table is in line with the Dear Accounting Officer letter "Reporting PFI Contracts to Parliament" published by the Treasury Officer of Accounts in 2000.

The quoted figure of £138.4 billion represents an aggregation of estimated nominal payments that cannot be interpreted as Government's present liability. Payments that have been made within signed PFI projects are included within departmental accounts.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of which private finance initiative projects the obligations on either party have failed to be met and consequently *(a)* the contract has been renegotiated and *(b)* the contract has failed and the project has been taken back into public hands. [27039]

John Healey: The Treasury does not hold information centrally on contract negotiations across all PFI projects.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the 2005 Budget Red Book estimates for payments under private finance initiative contracts between 2005–06 and 2030–31 include payments for *(a)* capital and interest payments and *(b)* maintenance and service contracts. [26887]

John Healey: Table C19 of the 2005 Budget Red Book sets out the estimates for payments under private finance initiative contracts between 2005–06 and 2030–31. These figures are an aggregation of the projected annual unitary charge payments on PFI projects signed to date. Unitary charge payments under an individual PFI project are the public authority's payments for the service it has contracted for to deliver the specified outputs. The contractors' aim to recoup their costs over the life of the contract through the unitary charge, including capital, operating and finance costs.

Revenue and Customs

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the transcript of the recent interview given by Mr. David Varney, Chairman of HM Revenue and Customs, to the *Financial Times* on 5 July 2005; and if he will make a statement. [13596]

Dawn Primarolo: The *FT* story of July wrongly asserted that David Varney had said the structure of tax credits "may have to change". A transcript of his remarks to the *FT* is available in the Library of the House.

SIPPs

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether an individual with a second home held within a self-invested personal pension which is let rent free to *(a)* a grandparent, *(b)* a sibling, *(c)* a son or daughter and *(d)* a spouse will have to pay a commercial level of rent into the pension fund from 6 April 2006; [25976]

(2) if an individual who currently lets a second property rent free to *(a)* a grandparent, *(b)* a sibling, *(c)* a son or daughter and *(d)* a spouse and who transfers ownership of the property to their self-invested personal pension on 6 April 2006 will have to pay capital gains tax; [25977]

(3) which family members living rent free in a second home held within a self-invested personal pension from 6 April 2006 will not be subject to a benefits in kind tax. [25978]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: From April 2006, if a commercial level of rent is not paid on a residential property held within a SIPP, the SIPP member will face a benefit in kind charge if the property is available for their own use or if certain family members stay in the property cheaply. Additionally, if a lease is granted to any connected person, whether a family member or not on less than commercial terms, this will trigger the unauthorised payment rules which impose a tax charge of 40 per cent. on the SIPP member and 15 per cent. on the SIPP provider. And any individual transferring a second property to a SIPP on or after 6 April will be subject to capital gains tax under the normal rules, regardless of the current letting arrangements.

The Government keep all aspects of the tax system under review. Where there is evidence of abuse, it will take appropriate action to stop it.

Tax Credits

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the analysis of the household survey data for 2003–04 to provide an estimate of families in West Lancashire eligible for, but not claiming, child tax credits. [27708]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (John Barrett) on the 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 318W. Due to sample size constraints, it will not be possible to produce estimates at parliamentary constituency level.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people in West Lancashire have received tax credits in 2005 to date; [27709]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the number of tax credit overpayments in 2004–05 in West Lancashire; what their total value is; and if he will make a statement; [27748]

(3) how many people in West Lancashire local authority area are in receipt of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit; [27751]

(4) if he will make a statement on the National Audit Office Report on the Accounts of the Inland Revenue 2004–05, with particular reference to tax credit overpayments in 2004–05 in West Lancashire. [27752]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dunbartonshire (Mr. McFall) on the 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1429W.

Travel (Economic Value)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the economic value of *(a)* EU-based and *(b)* non-EU based travel into the UK in each of the last eight years was; and what his Department's estimate is for the next financial year. [27054]

John Healey: Spending by overseas residents in the UK is described as 'earnings' (by UK residents) rather than 'expenditure' (by overseas residents). The figures for the last eight years are shown in the following table.

Overseas residents visits to the UK: Earnings by UK residents at current prices

£000

	EU-25	Non-EU
1997	5,305	6,939
1998	5,374	7,297
1999	5,057	7,441
2000	4,858	7,947
2001	4,344	6,962
2002	4,742	6,995
2003	5,018	6,837
2004	5,677	7,370

HM Treasury provide forecasts for volumes of exports of goods and services, but do not make forecasts for individual components of these exports.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Valuation Office Agency has made of the effect on a property's notional valuation if that property is assigned a value significance code of US (utility: adj. radio mast, sub-station, pylon, etc). [26935]

Dawn Primarolo: When assigning dwellings to council tax bands, the Valuation Office Agency have to consider the characteristics of each property, which may affect value. The agency have sought to capture information about proximity to radio masts etc under one of the "value significant codes " as a characteristic that may affect value. Whether the value is affected, and to what extent, depends on the circumstances of individual case.

VAT

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate the Government have made of the cost of exempting *(a)* homes built on previously developed land and *(b)* property conversions from value-added tax. [26936]

Dawn Primarolo: No estimates have been made specifically of the cost of a VAT exemption for homes built on previously developed land and property conversions.

However, estimates have been made for existing VAT reliefs. The cost of the zero rate for construction of new dwellings is estimated at around £6.7 billion in 2004–05 and the reduced rate for certain residential conversions at £150 million. These estimates are published by HM Revenue and Customs in the VAT Factsheet which can be found at www.uktradeinfo.co.uk.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue to be raised from imposing value-added tax on new housing at *(a)* 5 per cent. and *(b)* 7 per cent. [26937]

Dawn Primarolo: A 5 per cent. rate of VAT on new housing might raise up to £1.9 billion.

A 7 per cent. rate of VAT on new housing might raise up to £2.7 billion.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Electricity

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of an average electricity bill covers the costs of electricity generated but subsequently lost in *(a)* production, *(b)* transmission, *(c)* distribution and *(d)* energy inefficiency within the household. [27851]

Malcolm Wicks: The price of electricity varies over time. The value of losses will be dependent on the value of electricity at the time the losses occurred. This means it is very difficult to determine an accurate value of the level of losses in England and Wales.

A certain amount of electricity is used by generators to operate their businesses. Generators have strong financial incentives to restrict their losses as any electricity lost means they have less to sell. Approximately 1.5 per cent. of the electricity put on to the transmission network is lost. This represents approximately 0.6 per cent. of the average standard credit electricity bill. The level of electricity lost on the distribution networks varies from network to network. The simple average of losses on distribution networks is 6.3 per cent. This equates to about 2.4 per cent. of the average standard credit electricity bill. There are no figures available to answer the fourth part of this question. Energy inefficiency in the household is being tackled and the Government support the Energy Savings Trust's save 20 per cent. campaign.

Energy Efficiency

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Sustainable Energy Policy Network last discussed household energy efficiency; and what the outcome of those discussions was. [26964]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Sustainable Energy Policy Network frequently discusses energy efficiency, particularly in the context of the forthcoming Climate Change Programme Review. On a monthly basis the SEPN Programme Board discusses progress against all Energy White Paper commitments including energy efficiency. The outcome of these discussions is to exchange information between Departments about progress and effectiveness of policies and to ensure that approaches are properly co-ordinated.

Additionally the Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Board discussed energy efficiency at its meeting in June and the minutes of that meeting are available on the Department's website.

Liquid Natural Gas Importation Facilities

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what liquid natural gas importation facilities there are in the UK; and what sites are under consideration for development. [27199]

Malcolm Wicks: A new liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility on the Isle of Grain was commissioned this summer. Two new LNG import terminals are under construction at Milford Haven, South Wales. Sites for LNG import terminals are under consideration at Canvey Island and Anglesey. Development of further import sites is a commercial matter for the market.

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to be able to announce the start date for the low carbon buildings programme. [25604]

Malcolm Wicks: I made an announcement about the new programme on Wednesday 2 November, *Official Report*, column 47WS.

The new programme will begin in April 2006, subject to EU state aids approval.

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to announce *(a)* the outcome of the consultation on the Low Carbon Buildings Programmes and *(b)* the start date of the new programme. [23851]

Malcolm Wicks: Officials are currently working up plans for the Low Carbon Buildings programme and this will take account of the consultation exercise, which closed 23 September 2005. We will consult industry further on developments later this year before finalising details of the new programme early next year.

We aim to start the programme in April 2006, subject to EU State Aids clearance and I recently announced a budget of £30 million over three years.

Microgeneration Promotion

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress he has made in drawing up a strategy for microgeneration promotion; and if he will make a statement. [26833]

Malcolm Wicks: A public consultation on the Government strategy to promote microgeneration was held between 23 June and 23 September this year. In addition a study into the costs and benefits of microgeneration was commissioned and is expected to report shortly. The findings of this study and the responses to the consultation are being fed into the process of developing the final strategy, which will be published in April 2006.

Miners' Compensation

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 710W, on miners' compensation, if he will *(a)* place in the Library and *(b)* post on his Department's website the details of the efficiency improvement programme on miners' compensation to which reference is made. [25685]

Malcolm Wicks: The efficiency improvement programme includes six work streams:

People

attrition, career development, employment terms;

Productivity improvement

'fast track' offers, development of compensation calculators;

Quality

service level agreement;

Strategic and operations planning

establishment of a programme office, additional claims handling offices;

Systems and business intelligence

electronic data management, website allowing case tracking and access to calculators; and

Financial management

enhanced review and audit procedures.

Improvements against benchmarks are regularly reported and monitored. This detailed information is commercially confidential and inappropriate for publication.

Ministerial Travel

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* flights and *(b)* helicopter flights have been taken by Ministers within his Department for (i) UK and (ii) overseas visits in each year since 1995; on how many occasions (A) charter flights were used and (B) first and club class tickets were obtained; and who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27806]

Alan Johnson: The answer to this question could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Power

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been levied in fines by the Nuclear Inspectorate against *(a)* companies, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* individuals with regard to incidences of pollution (i) in total, (ii) in each region and (iii) per fine in each year since 1995, broken down by the type of pollution incidence. [27792]

Malcolm Wicks: The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate does not impose fines. This is a matter for the courts.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* other Ministers in his Department attended in the last three months at which nuclear power was discussed; and who attended each meeting. [17406]

Malcolm Wicks: Following is a list of meetings in the last three months at which DTI Ministers specifically discussed nuclear power.

Secretary of State

19 October

Meeting to discuss Sellafield and safety issues

Irish Minister for the Environment

Minister of State for Energy

11 July 2005

Meeting to discuss Sellafield MOX Plant

DTI officials

14 July 2005

Meeting to discuss nuclear industry issues

Representatives of the Nuclear Industry Association

21 July 2005

Meeting to discuss Sellafield

DTI officials

8 September 2005

Meeting to discuss nuclear issues

Representative of the US Nuclear Energy Institute

11 October 2005

Meeting to discuss nuclear industry issues

Representatives of British Energy

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

5 September 2005

Meeting to discuss nuclear industry issues

Representatives of BNFL

13 October 2005

Meeting to discuss nuclear industry issues

Representatives of British Energy.

Radioactive Material

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many movements of spent nuclear fuel occurred in each year since 1997 *(a)* by air within UK airspace, *(b)* by sea within UK waters, *(c)* by rail and *(d)* by road. [27666]

Malcolm Wicks: The movement of spent nuclear fuel is regulated by the Nuclear Industries Security Regulations 2003 (NISR 2003) which became effective on 22 September 2003. Information concerning the number of movements of spent nuclear fuel prior to this date is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost and by reference to individual nuclear operators. Since 22 September 2003 individual sea, rail and road carriers of nuclear material have been required to provide the Office for Civil Nuclear Security with a seven-day notification of movement and the number of movements notified are as follows:

Financial year	*Sea*	*Rail*	*Road*
2003–04[1]	16	405	568
2004–05	6	852	875
2005–06[2]	1	471	487

[1] September 2003 to March 2004.
[2] To date.

The NISR 2003 do not cover the movement of nuclear material by air, but since 22 September 2003, there have been no recorded movements of spent nuclear fuel by road or rail to or from a UK airport.

Renewable Energy

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements exist to manage the supply of electricity from Snugborough wind farm in County Cavan in the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland, with particular reference to the renewables obligation certificate scheme; and if he will make a statement. [25525]

Malcolm Wicks: Renewables obligation certificates (ROCs) can be claimed by generators where the electricity is generated and supplied in Great Britain and Northern Ireland using technologies eligible under the renewables obligation. Under this scheme Snugborough wind farm is not eligible to claim ROCs as it is located in the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will include energy-from-waste technology in the renewables obligation. [26114]

Malcolm Wicks: Waste from pure biomass, e.g. agricultural waste, food wastes and forestry material are all currently eligible under the renewables obligation. In addition mixed waste from non-fossil derived energy is eligible when electricity is generated using pyrolysis, gasification or anaerobic digestion technologies.

The Government are consulting within the renewables obligation review on a proposal to extend eligibility to the conventional combustion of mixed wastes for projects using good quality combined heat and power.

Wind Energy

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what statistics are kept by his Department in regard to wind farm applications in each region. [26991]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not hold statistics in regard to wind farm applications broken down by region.

Applications for wind farms that do not fall to the DTI to deal with under sections 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (ie wind farms with a capacity of less than 50 MW onshore) are normally dealt with through the local planning system.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average level of subsidy given to companies applying for planning permission to erect *(a)* onshore and *(b)* offshore wind turbines has been since 1997. [27178]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department of Trade and Industry does not provide subsidies for companies applying for planning permissions to erect onshore and offshore wind turbines.

Onshore and offshore wind which are generating electricity are able to benefit from the Renewables Obligation (RO) which along with exemption from the climate change levy will provide support of £1 billion per year by 2010 to the renewable industry.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether an application has been made by npower renewables in relation to the development of the Gwynt-y-Mor wind farm off the coast of North Wales. [27196]

Malcolm Wicks: No application has been received.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of wind farm planning applications have been successful to date. [27339]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not hold information on the percentage of wind farm planning applications that have been successful to date.

Applications for wind farms that do not fall to the DTI to deal with under Sections 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (i.e. wind farms with a capacity of less than 50MW onshore) are normally dealt with through the local planning system.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of turbines required to generate the 10 per cent. energy from wind power expected by the Government; and how many grid connections are planned to facilitate this. [26231]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's target of renewable energy sources contributing 10 per cent. of our electricity by 2010 is for all forms of renewables, not just wind. However it is clear that wind will make the main contribution. At this stage it is difficult to predict precise numbers. There are already just under 1,450 wind turbines of various sizes, currently in operation. These turbines are sited both offshore and onshore.

Generating 10 per cent. of UK electricity from renewables could mean an increase of possibly another one and halt times that number.

As with the number of turbines it is not possible to calculate the number of grid connections that are required to facilitate the meeting of the 10 per cent. renewables target. This will depend on where windfarms are located and the grid infrastructure in those areas.

TRANSPORT

A14

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the average daily number of vehicles which use *(a)* junction 7, *(b)* junction 8 and *(c)* junction 9 of the A14; and what estimate he has made of the average daily number of vehicles which will use each junction in (i) 2011, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2031. [28107]

Dr. Ladyman: Junctions 7, 8 and 9 of the A14 are the three junctions on the Kettering Bypass. Following the recommendations of the London to South Midlands multi-modal study in July 2003 to widen the A14 through the East Midlands to dual three lanes, the Secretary of State asked the Highways Agency to carry out further work on the A14 Kettering Bypass section of the route.

A study is currently under way of possible options for this route. This will take into account the growth in local development set out in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy.

Traffic counts are being undertaken as part of the study which will provide estimates of the traffic flows using these junctions. The study is expected to report in February 2006.

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what decisions have been taken by the Highways Agency on public consultations with representatives of interest groups related to the proposed A21 upgrade. [28219]

Dr. Ladyman: We announced the preferred route in February 2005 having taken into account the views expressed during and following the public consultation held in 2002–03. Following my meeting with the hon. Member on 20 October 2005, I asked the Highways Agency to meet with representatives of interest groups and I understand they have arranged a meeting for the 28 November.

A27 Lewes Bypass

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to have the A27 Lewes bypass resurfaced with a quieter material in the next financial year. [27679]

Dr. Ladyman: Whenever a road needs to be resurfaced for safety and maintenance reasons, quieter surfacing is used as a matter of course. Last year a 1 km stretch of the A27 Lewes bypass was repaired using low noise material.

The bypass is now in good condition and there are no plans to resurface the remainder in the next financial year. However a technical survey is programmed for next financial year and any works identified as a result of the survey, such as resurfacing with a quieter material, would be carried out in financial year 2008–09, subject to allocation of funds.

A43

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of congestion on the A43 Kettering-Northampton road at peak times; and what estimate he has made of the expected level of congestion in *(a)* 2011, *(b)* 2021 and *(c)* 2031. [28104]

Dr. Ladyman: The A43 between Kettering and Northampton is the responsibility of Northamptonshire county council, as local highway authority. The Department for Transport has, therefore, made no assessment of congestion on this section of road.

A45

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the traffic levels were on the A47 Acle Straight in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [28044]

Dr. Ladyman: The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) 24 hour traffic flows for A47 Acle Straight between 1999 and 2004 are as follows:

	AADT (Westbound)	*AADT (Eastbound)*
1999	10,796	9,713
2000	10,850	10,089
2001	11,435	10,803
2002	11,664	11,349
2003	13,129	12,267
2004	12,723	11,821

A63

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what Highways Agency funding is triggered by recognition of the A63 as a trans-European network route by the European Commission. [26836]

Dr. Ladyman: The presence of the A63 on the European Union's trans-European transport network does not trigger Highways Agency funding for potential projects on that road. While trans-European network funding may in principle be available from the EU, it is in the first instance for the region to consider its own regional road network priorities within the framework of its regional funding allocation.

Air Pollution

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what targets his Department has set for air levels of *(a)* carbon monoxide, *(b)* lead, *(c)* nitrogen dioxide, *(d)* particles, *(e)* benzene and *(f)* 1.3 butadiene. [27607]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government and Devolved Administrations air quality policies are set out in detail in the "Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland", published in January 2000. An Addendum to the Strategy was published in February 2003. Copies of both documents are available in the Library of the House.

The strategy sets objectives for nine main air pollutants to protect human health and two objectives to protect vegetation and ecosystems. The air pollutants covered by the strategy are benzene; 1,3-butadiene; carbon monoxide; lead; nitrogen dioxide; particles (PM10); ozone; sulphur dioxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Buses

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what are the passenger use figures for each of the 43 bus schemes that will receive funding under the scheme announced by his Department on 1 November, for each year since 1997; [28313]

(2) if he will list the 43 bus schemes that will receive funding under the scheme announced by his Department on 1 November. [28314]

Mr. Darling: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement of 1 November 2005 announcing the results of the Kickstart competition. A list of the schemes was placed in the Libraries of the House.

The schemes are for new, or in some cases substantially enhanced, services which will begin operation in the new few months, now that funding has been announced. The question of passenger use figures in prior years for the services concerned does not therefore arise.

Congestion (Urban Areas)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what targets his Department has set for reducing congestion in urban areas. [27564]

Dr. Ladyman: In July 2005 the Government published a new public service agreement target for urban congestion that, by 2010–11, the 10 largest urban areas will meet the congestion targets set in their Local Transport Plan relating to movement on main roads into city centres.

Local Transport Plans will be published in March 2006.

Correspondence

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will respond to the letter of 19 October from the hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle on train services from Bexhill to London Victoria. [28218]

Derek Twigg: We have no record of a letter of 19 October. I have written to the hon. Member today in response to his letter of 14 September.

Driving Licences

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have had their driving licences removed due to their use of illicit substances since 1997. [28038]

Dr. Ladyman: Data are only immediately available for the past and current financial year. They are as follows:

April 2004 to March 2005—976 licences refused or revoked for drug misuse/dependence

April 2005 to October 2005—784 licences refused or revoked for drug misuse/dependence

These figures do not include licences revoked by the courts.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many applications for driving licences had documents lost *(a)* by and *(b)* in transit to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in 2004–05. [27325]

Dr. Ladyman: During the financial year 2004–05 the number of documents in support of driving licence applications lost by DVLA was 734 (0.01 per cent. of the 6.8 million driving licences issued last year). Holders of digitised UK passports now need only to quote the number on the application form and do not need to forward the document to DVLA.

No record of non-receipt of applications (including associated documents) is kept. Drivers are advised that the responsibility for their delivery rests with Royal Mail.

Highways Agency

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment the Highways Agency makes of the likely impact on traffic on Agency-controlled roads *(a)* before and *(b)* after construction of major schemes on surrounding roads which are not operated by the agency. [26765]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency is consulted on all developments, including road schemes, that impact on the strategic road network. All major proposals are required by the planning system to have a full transport and environmental impact appraisal carried out. The agency can and does comment on these impacts.

The agency does not specifically assess other authorities' schemes after construction but regularly monitors traffic flows on the strategic network.

Inter-urban Congestion

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the level of inter-urban congestion was *(a)* in 2000 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available; and what the predicted level for 2010 is. [27481]

Dr. Ladyman: In 2000, congestion was measured on the basis of average vehicle delay, using data derived from floating car surveys, and comparing actual traffic speeds with those that would be achievable by a car in the absence of other traffic. Full details of the methodology are available on the Department's website at:

www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_transstats/documents/page/dft_transstats_021863.pdf

Under this measure, the estimated average vehicle delay in 2000 in England was 3.2 seconds lost per vehicle kilometre (sec/vkm) on inter-urban motorways and trunk roads.

The Government published predictions of the level of average vehicle delay in the "Transport Ten Year Plan 2000: Delivering better transport—progress report" (December 2002) to which I refer the hon. Member. The Progress Report also announced that the Government were developing new indicators of congestion that would be more meaningful to road users and capture important aspects of congestion such as journey time reliability.

In July 2005 the Department announced a new indicator of congestion looking at the reliability of journey times. Details are on the Department's website at http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/page/dft_about_030578-01.hcsp#P61_1195.

The first data using the new indicator will be published in November 2005.

Learner Drivers (First Aid)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the merits of introducing an element of first aid training for people learning to drive; and if he will make a statement. [28214]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 504W.

Marine Pollution

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* marine, *(b)* oil and *(c)* other pollution incidences recorded in United Kingdom waters in each year since 1990 from shipping registered in (i) the UK, (ii) the EU and (iii) other countries; what actions were taken to clean up in each case; what the cost was; by whom this was paid; what fines were levied; and if he will make a statement. [27773]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not available in the form requested.

The Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) produced a report entitled "Long-term analysis of oil spill statistics for the waters around the British Isles 1964 to 1995". For this period the trend was for a consistent and continuing decline in the numbers of pollution incidents in UK waters accompanied by reductions in the annual total number of incidents attributed to the handling and transportation of oil around the UK coastline. The annual reports that have been produced between 1995 and 2004 have shown a continuation in these trends.

The United Kingdom follows the internationally recognised 3-tiered classification of marine pollution. A Tier-3 spill would require a national response and activation of the national contingency plan.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has a robust cost recovery regime that ensures, where possible, the polluter pays principle is applied. A recent example of this principle followed the grounding of the tug Vanguard in the Inner Sound between the Isle of Skye and the mainland in September 2004. MCA resources including equipment from national stockpiles were deployed. All costs incurred by the MCA have been recovered.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the occasions since 1975 when ships have lost dangerous cargoes overboard in *(a)* United Kingdom waters, *(b)* the English channel and *(c)* the North sea; what cargo was lost in each case; and what was subsequently recovered. [27774]

Dr. Ladyman: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency uses data provided by the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) and statistics are not available in the form requested. It can however be confirmed that such instances are few in number. coastguard experience suggests that around five or six incidents of cargo being lost overboard occur over the course of one year in United Kingdom waters and only a few of these can be listed as dangerous or harmful. In a circumstance where a dangerous or harmful cargo has been reported to have been lost overboard in UK waters the Maritime and Coastguard Agency would execute recovery where necessary and operationally possible.

Motorway Repairs

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the health and safety implications of *(a)* how and *(b)* where motorists repair a punctured tyre on a motorway hard shoulder; if he will include guidance in the Highway code; and if he will make a statement. [27643]

Dr. Ladyman: Guidance on breakdowns and accidents is already included in the Highway Code. Rule 249 of the Code (additional rules for the motorway) advises that road users should not attempt even simple repairs. They are further advised to use an emergency telephone in order to seek help.

Ports

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many UK ports are subject to the International Ship and Port Facility Security code regulations. [26337]

Dr. Ladyman: There are currently 524 separate UK port facilities that are subject to the regulations. A port can comprise one or more port facilities.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how frequently UK ports are required to be inspected under the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. [26338]

Dr. Ladyman: The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code does not specify inspection frequencies for port facilities.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many ports in the UK exclusively serve ships of less than 500 tonnes gross. [28187]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held by the Department.

Private Motoring Costs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the external costs associated with private motoring, with particular reference to environmental costs; and if he will make a statement. [27777]

Dr. Ladyman: A study[1] was undertaken for the Department in 1998 which made estimates of the external costs associated with surface transport. The table presents the estimates of the marginal external costs (cost per additional vehicle kilometre) associated with car use for 1998 as found by this study. The presentation of high and low values reflects the uncertainty associated with estimation of external costs.

	Marginal cost (p/vkm), 1998 prices	
	Low cost estimate	*High cost estimate*
Infrastructure	0.05	0.07
Congestion	8.98	10.44
Accidents	0.79	1.38
Air pollution	0.18	0.88
Noise	0.01	0.52
Climate change	0.12	0.47

The pence per kilometre values for climate change found in the study were based on the recommended values at the time—£27/tonne of carbon in the low scenario and £106/tonne of carbon in the high scenario. Guidance from DEFRA that was published after the surface transport study was published advises that values of £35 per tonne of carbon be used for the low scenario and £140 per tonne for the high scenario. Therefore the values for climate change in the table should be uprated by around 30 per cent. to reflect the latest Defra values.

[1] Surface Transport Costs and Charges: Great Britain 1998. Final Report to DETR. Institute of Transport Studies and AEA Technology Environment (Sanson, T., Nash, C., Mackie, P., Shires, J., and Watkiss, P. (2001))

Railways

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many franchises were operated under a management only contract in each year between 1997 and 2004; and if he will make a statement. [26949]

Derek Twigg: Management only contracts are those where the DfT Rail Group takes the full risk for the operation and pays the train operating company a management fee.

Between 1997 and 2000 there were no such contracts. In 2001 there was one, between 2002 and 2004 there were two in each year.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising was forced to discharge its duty under section 30 of the Railways Act 1993 to ensure the continuity of railway services as the operator of last resort in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1998, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2000, *(e)* 2001, *(f)* 2002, *(g)* 2003 and *(h)* 2004; and if he will make a statement. [26954]

Derek Twigg: The Strategic Rail Authority terminated the Connex South Eastern franchise in 2003. This resulted in the only occasion that Section 30 of the Railways Act 1993 has been used since the privatisation of the railways.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of train overcrowding along the Hastings to Charing Cross line; and if he will make a statement. [28217]

Derek Twigg: The latest available figures show that passenger loadings on the Hastings to Charing Cross line are within the permitted limits.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) in light of the improved performance of South East Trains since it was returned to public hands, what lessons can be learned by private sector franchises; [26520]

(2) what assessment he has made whether there is a case for South East Trains to remain in public hands given its improvement in performance since its private sector franchise was removed. [26921]

Derek Twigg: The Future of Rail White Paper made it clear that our policy would be for rail franchises to continue to be operated by the private sector. Recent improvements in the performance of South East Trains (SET) have been encouraging, as has been the performance of other train operating companies. The improved performance of Network Rail has played a significant role in this.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the availability to the public of contracts between the Government and the train operating companies. [26955]

Derek Twigg: Franchise agreements and associated documents which form the contracts between train operating companies and the Government are publicly available through the Department of Transport's Public Register. Members of the public can either consult the register in person or request register material from the Department.

Reversing Vehicles

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations apply to the use of audible warning devices on reversing vehicles; whether the inclusion of advertising in such warnings is permitted; and if he will make a statement. [27566]

Dr. Ladyman: Legislation governing the use of audible warning devices on reversing vehicles is contained in Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. Regulation 37 states that a reversing alarm should not be strident, whilst Regulation 99 restricts such devices for use on goods-vehicles over two tonnes gross weight, buses, engineering plant, refuse vehicles and works trucks. The regulations do not specifically prohibit advertising in the warnings.

Road Accidents

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by how much the number of individuals killed and seriously injured on roads changed in *(a)* 2000 and *(b)* 2005 to date compared with 1994 to 1998 levels (i) in England and (ii) in relation to (A) children aged under 16 years and (B) adults, broken down by social class; and what the predicted levels are for 2010. [27565]

Dr. Ladyman: The numbers of child (aged 0 to 15) and adult killed and seriously injured casualties in personal injury road accidents in England for the years 2000 and 2004 (the latest year for which figures are available), compared with the 1994–98 baseline average and the percentage change are shown in following table.

	Child KSI	Adult KSI
1994–98[1]	5,729	35,085
2000	4,417	31,449
2004	3,353	26,418
2002[2]	-23	-10
2004[2]	-41	-25

[1] Average
[2] Percentage change over.

Information on social class of casualties is not available. The Department's projection is that it remains on track to achieve the casualty reduction targets set out in the March 2000 road safety strategy "Tomorrow's roads—safer for everyone".

School Transport (Cycling)

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many cycle journeys were made to schools in the 12 months *(a)* prior to the establishment of the Bike It scheme and *(b)* since the establishment of the scheme; [28321]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Bike It scheme; how many school travel advisers have been appointed under the scheme; and what is the average cost of employing a school travel adviser. [28322]

Mr. Darling: Cycle journeys at the 40 Bike It schools increased from 2 per cent. before the scheme was established in May 2004 to 8 per cent. in June 2005. A report from Sustrans who manage the scheme has been placed in the House Library. The Department's new expert advisory body on cycling, Cycling England, has made an assessment of the scheme and has decided it has been sufficiently successful to include in their work plan for the next three years. The scheme did not appoint any school travel advisers but did appoint four Bike It officers who add value to the work of local authority school travel advisers. The average cost to employ an officer is £45,000 per annum. This includes salary and all overheads.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent developing the Bike for All website; and what assessment has been made of its effectiveness. [28323]

Mr. Darling: In total, the Department for Transport has invested £30,000, excluding VAT, on developing the Bike For All cycling portal.

Cycling England, through DFT funding, is also committed to making a contribution of £11,200 in the current and next financial years towards the editorial content and maintenance of the site.

Success has primarily been measured by the number of visitors, which over the last 3 months has averaged just under 500 a day.

Seatbelts Legislation

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on planned changes at *(a)* national and *(b)* EU level to legislation relating to the installation and wearing of seatbelts. [27720]

Dr. Ladyman: Recently published European legislation will extend the mandatory requirement for the installation of seat belts to buses (except urban buses), coaches and goods vehicles. This is broadly in line with UK requirements in place since October 2001. European legislation will also prohibit the installation of sideways facing seats in new types of vehicle. Certain types of coach used to provide conferencing facilities are exempt from this until October 2010. Accident data will then be reviewed to determine whether the exemption should be extended. Otherwise, these requirements will apply to new types of vehicle being brought to the market from October 2006 and to all newly registered vehicles from October 2007.

Regulations are in preparation to come into force in 2006 (subject to Parliamentary approval) which will introduce a requirement for passengers in buses and coaches aged three years and above to wear seat belts where they are available when in seats other than the front. This follows a Departmental consultation in 2004 about changes needed in seat belt wearing regulations to transpose the requirements of European Directive 20/2003/EC into domestic legislation. The consultation document and the subsequent decision letter are available on-line at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/divisionhomepage/039143.hcs.

The Department is considering the results of consultation about changes needed to transpose the same Directive's requirements for the compulsory use of child restraints in cars and goods vehicles, and related issues. The consultation document is available at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_control/documents/contentservertemplate/dft_index.hcst?n=13759&l=2.

SCOTLAND

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department between May 1997 and the end of April 2005, broken down by Act. [28258]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office was formed on 1 July 1999 and has sponsored two pieces of primary legislation between then and the end of April 2005, the Sunday Working (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004. Neither Act created criminal offences.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

1. **Mr. Flello:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of British armed forces' presence in Afghanistan on the supply of heroin to the UK. [27264]

John Reid: First let me extend my condolences to the family and friends of Lance Corporal Steven Sherwood of the Royal Gloucestershire Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment who was killed in a shooting incident at Mazar-e-Sharif last month, and to the family and

friends of Sergeant Christian Hickey of the 1st Battalion the Coldstream Guards who was killed by an improvised explosive device in Basra last month.

British forces are in Afghanistan to deny terrorists a base by helping the Government to develop their democracy, security, and economy. If the economy is to thrive we must help the Afghan Government to tackle the narcotics trade which also feeds 90 per cent. of the heroin supply in the UK. This is in the interests of both our countries.

My right hon. Friend the Minister for the armed forces has today issued a statement on contingency planning for phase three of ISAF.

Deepcut Barracks

12. **Meg Hillier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the release to Parliament of the review by Nicholas Blake QC into the deaths of young soldiers at Deepcut. [27275]

Mr. Ingram: Nicholas Blake's plan is to publish his report before Christmas; if that proves to be impracticable, the report will be published in January. When I announced that Mr. Blake would conduct the review I confirmed that his report would be published in full, together with my response to it.

Shipbuilding

13. **Mr. Davidson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to ensure a regular supply of defence work for the shipbuilding industry. [27276]

Mr. Ingram: A joint and detailed view of the forward maritime programme is being developed with industry. This has been done in order to create a potentially more balanced and stable industrial demand within affordability and capability constraints. The detail will be refined as work continues to develop a strategy to sustain key industrial capabilities and to improve efficiency in the United Kingdom maritime sector.

Arctic Convoys

15. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will discuss with the Prime Minister further recognition of those who served in the Arctic convoys. [27278]

Mr. Touhig: The Government have the greatest respect for all those who served at sea during the Second World War, whether they were transporting the supplies to or from the United Kingdom or protecting the sea lanes. Their gallant efforts and their many sacrifices have not been forgotten.

On 7 March 2005, the Prime Minister announced the introduction of a new Arctic Emblem, which could be worn as a unique addition to medals. There are no plans to seek further recognition.

Recruitment

16. **Anne Main:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on trends in recruitment for the armed forces. [27279]

Mr. Touhig: In the first five months of this financial year the armed forces gained 6,190 new recruits from civilian life. This represents 32 per cent. of the recruiting target and is comparable to the position at the same point in the last financial year.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent measures have been taken by the Defence Recruiting Committee to promote recruitment from members of minority ethnic groups; and what targets for minority ethnic recruitment have been set for each of the services. [26273]

Mr. Touhig: The Defence Recruiting Committee, through its Diversity Recruiting Sub-Committee, undertakes many and varied recruiting and outreach activities to promote recruitment from minority ethnic groups.

All three services have specialist Diversity Action Teams aimed at promoting armed forces careers. These teams continue to engage with all ethnic minority groups to raise awareness of service careers and to improve representation. Religious leaders from minority faiths have been appointed to act as advisers on matters of religious requirements and to ensure that personnel from minority faiths receive appropriate pastoral and spiritual care.

The Specialist Recruitment Teams continue to concentrate their efforts on high ethnic minority population areas, especially Greater London, and to create new and build on existing ethnic minority community partnerships. These partnerships involve links with secondary schools, local/borough councils, community organisations, religious organisations, employment groups, youth centres, festival organisers and the ethnic media.

The recruiting goal for this financial year is for each service to increase incrementally the proportion of UK ethnic minority recruits by 0.5 per cent. above last year's goal. To this end, the financial year 2005–06 goals are: naval service 3.5 per cent.; Army 3.9 per cent.; RAF 3.6 per cent.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the minimum entry criteria are for recruitment into the armed services. [26277]

Mr. Touhig: Details of the basic entry eligibility criteria can be found on each Service's careers website. The website addresses are:

www.royalnavy.mod.uk

www.army.mod.uk

www.rafcareers.com

Cadet Forces (Kettering)

17. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the contribution made by cadet forces in Kettering constituency. [27280]

Mr. Touhig: Like all members of the cadet forces, the cadets in Kettering make a positive contribution to their local community through being actively involved in local events and supporting both local and national charities and local community projects.

Royal Regiment of Scotland

18. **Gordon Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence If he will make a statement on the progress made to date on the formation of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. [27281]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Regiment of Scotland will be formed from the current battalions within the Scottish Division around March of next year. The amalgamation of the 1st Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) with the 1st Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers will occur later in the same year.

The new cap badge of the Royal Regiment of Scotland was announced during the Edinburgh Military Tattoo on 16 August and symbolises a distinctive Scottish identity. The final decisions on the basing, regimental headquarters and dress of the Royal Regiment of Scotland are still being considered.

Defence Industrial Strategy

19. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultation his Department undertook in preparing the defence industrial strategy. [27284]

Mr. Touhig: The Defence Industrial Strategy is a top priority for the Government and is designed to ensure that the capability requirements of the UK armed forces can be met, now and in the future. Work is progressing apace, with the intention to publish before Christmas. In conducting the work, we have been taking the views of a very broad spectrum of stakeholders, including industry at many levels.

Reserve Forces

20. **Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the manning levels of the reserve forces. [27285]

Mr. Touhig: Based on our current plans, manning levels in the reserve forces are sufficient to support current and future operations.

Service Family Associations

21. **Vera Baird:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent meetings he has had with associations representing service families; [27286]

23. **Mr. Russell Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what meetings he has had recently with associations representing service families. [27288]

Mr. Touhig: I have had regular contact with Service Families Federations, most recently in the Families Forum in September, when I heard from and discussed with the chairs of the Families Federations many of the most compelling families issues. I am pleased to say that the representations of the federations on behalf of all service families form an integral part of our work for them.

Iraq

22. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what troop movements are anticipated in Iraq during the next three months. [27287]

John Reid: The routine roulement of UK forces in Multi-National Division (South-East) (MND(SE)), began in October, and is due to complete by the end of November. The next routine roulement of UK forces is expected to take place in May 2006, and will be announced in due course.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many *(a)* Sea King, *(b)* Merlin and *(c)* Lynx helicopters are deployed to Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [23054]

(2) what the helicopter flying hours are for Multi-National Division South East for each month since May; and if he will make a statement; [23052]

(3) what proportion of British troop movements within Multi-National Division (South-East) in Iraq is conducted by *(a)* air and *(b)* road; and if he will make a statement. [23312]

John Reid: We currently have 20 helicopters in the Multi-National Division (South-East). For reasons of operational security we do not comment upon the exact breakdown of these aircraft by type, the flying hours for the Multi National Division (South-East) or on the proportion of British movements overall in MND (SE) that are conducted by air. Information on the proportion of British movements conducted by air and road is not held centrally. Priority for the allocation of helicopter use is an operational decision.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has received evidence of involvement by the Mujaheddin for Islamic Revolution in Iraq in the death of British service personnel. [23950]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* The deaths of British forces in Iraq are investigated by the Special Investigations Branch. We do not disclose the detail of this work in order not to compromise any potential prosecutions. Where an evidential case can be built against individuals, appropriate measures will be taken, irrespective of their affiliation to any particular organisation.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart regarding the future of the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr; and if he will make a statement. [27172]

Mr. Ingram: We hold regular discussions with our coalition partners, including the United States, about progress in Iraq. The Iraqi port authorities assumed responsibility for the ports at Umm Qasr North and Umm Qasr South in summer 2004 and, as such, decisions on the future of the ports will be a matter for the Iraqi authorities. The United Kingdom will continue, as part of our wider security sector reform work, to provide training to the Iraqi port security guards until they achieve the level of capability required to provide security themselves.

1st Battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers from the 1st Battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers have gone absent without leave in the past 12 months. [21527]

Mr. Ingram: Unit records provide details of individuals who have been absent for a period of more than seven days. In the last 12 months, this information shows 18 soldiers from the 1st Battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers recorded as absent without leave.

Advisory Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government is required to *(a)* consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* publish their response to advice from. [27258]

Mr. Touhig: The MOD has no Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies (ANDPBs) which the Government are required to consult prior to legislative proposals being made.

The Government are required to publish their responses to recommendations made by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. Government and ANDPBs are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department have a statutory base; which of his Department's non-departmental public bodies *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and if he will indicate in each case whether this is a statutory requirement. [27259]

Mr. Touhig: The MOD has no Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies (ANDPBs) with a statutory basis.

The situation in relation to the publication of advice and reports for each of MOD's 11 ANDPBs is set out as follows.

The Central Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors (ACCO).

Advice to the MOD is not published. Annual reports are available on request. They are not laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

The Advisory Group on Medical Countermeasures (AGMC).

Advice to the MOD is not published. Annual reports are published. They are not laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

The Animal Welfare Advisory Group (AWAC).

Some AWAC advice to MOD is published in minutes of their meetings. Annual reports are published and laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB).

The AFPRB publishes its advice to Government through an annual report which is laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions and War Pensions Committees.

Advice and reports to MOD are not published or laid before Parliament although general information on the activities of the War Pensions committees is published in the Veteran's Agency annual War Pensioner's Report. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

Dartmoor Steering Group (DSG).

There is no formal publication of the DSG's advice to MOD although it informs the strategic management of the Dartmoor Training area. An Annual Report is submitted to the Secretaries of State for Defence and the Environment and a copy laid in the House of Commons Library. This is a statutory requirement.

Defence Nuclear Safety Committee (DNSC).

Advice to MOD is not published. Annual reports are not published or laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

Nuclear Research Advisory Committee (NRAC).

Advice to MOD is not published. Annual reports are not published or laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

National Employers Advisory Board (NEAB).

Advice to MOD is not published. Annual reports are published and copies are placed in the Libraries of the House. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

Defence Scientific Advisory Council (DSAC).

Advice to MOD is not published. Annual reports are published. They are not laid before Parliament. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

Review Board for Government Contracts (RBGC).

The recommendations of the RGBC to MOD concerning the pricing of non competitive Government contracts are normally published. Such reports together with annual reports on running costs are placed in both Libraries of the House. There is no statutory requirement to publish advice or annual reports.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation excercises, *(c)* conduct consultation excercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of member's interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether in each case this is a statutory requirement. [27260]

Mr. Touhig: Information on *(a)*, *(d)* and *(f)* is published in the Cabinet Office's Public Bodies Directory at http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb

The remaining information requested for each of MOD's 11 Advisory Non Departmental Public Bodies (ANDPBs) is as follows.

Central Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors (ACCO)

ACCO does not conduct public consultation exercises or consultation exercises with outside commercial interests. It does not publish agendas for meetings (it holds hearings that are listed in the building to hold the hearing). There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Advisory Group on Medical Countermeasures (AGMC)

AGMC does not conduct public consultation exercises, consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC)

The AWAC does not conduct public consultation exercises, consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB)

The AFPRB does not conduct public consultation exercises. It may commission independent research from external consultants. It does not publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions and War Pensions Committees

They do not conduct public consultation exercises, consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Dartmoor Steering Group (DSG)

The DSG does not conduct public consultation exercises, consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas for its annual meeting. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Defence Nuclear Safety Committee (DNSC)

The DNSC does not conduct public consultation exercises, consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or agendas. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Defence Scientific Advisory Committee (DSAC)

The DSAC does not conduct public consultation exercises, consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

National Employers Advisory Board (NEAB)

NEAB does not conduct public consultation exercises. Individual NEAB members may consult with outside agencies when forming their input to NEAB advice. It does not publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Nuclear Research Advisory Committee (NRAC)

The NRAC does not conduct public consultation exercises. Individual NEAB members may consult with outside agencies when forming their input to NEAB advice. It does not publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Review Board for Government Contracts (RBGC)

The RBGC does not conduct public consultation exercises. During their periodic reviews of the profit, formula for non-competitive Government contracts the RBGC invites submissions from the Joint Review Board Advisory Committee (JRBAC). The JRBAC, a committee whose membership is drawn from UK defence contractors, acts under delegation from the Confederation of British Industry, to represent industry on review board matters. The Review Board may, in conducting its reviews, take account not only of submissions made by the Government or industry, but also any representations made to it by any person or body it wishes to consult. It does not publish agendas.

There is no statutory requirement to hold meetings, conduct consultation with the public or outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or agendas and minutes.

Armed Services (Training)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the terms of reference were for research he has undertaken into the impact of poor basic skills on drop out rates from Phase I and Phase II training in the armed services; what the principal conclusions were of this research; and if he will place a copy of the results in the Library. [26281]

Mr. Touhig: To date, no studies have been undertaken specifically looking at the impact of poor basic skills on the drop out rates from Phase 1 and 2 training, although the Army plans to conduct one in 2006.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the wastage rates were in each of the four largest army Phase II training establishments in each of the last four years for which figures are available. [26283]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not held in the format requested. The table covers the last four financial years and shows the number of soldiers entering the four largest Army Phase 2 training establishments: Infantry Training Centre (Catterick) (ITC(C)), Defence College of Logistics (DCL), Royal School of Military Engineers (RSME) and the Defence College of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (DCEME) and the level of wastage from training over the same period.

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
Unit	*Input*	*Wastage*	*Input*	*Wastage*	*Input*	*Wastage*	*Input*	*Wastage*
ITC(C)	4,080	420	4,100	970	5,250	1,180	3,240	950
DCL	1,520	200	2,140	250	1,860	200	1,480	170
RSME	940	10	1,390	40	1,150	130	1,280	140
DCEME	760	170	1,230	240	1,220	140	1,300	140

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Direct comparison between the input and wastage figures in any particular year can be misleading because of varying course lengths and fluctuations in numbers under training. The overall underlying wastage rate at Phase 2 over the last few years has, however, shown a slight increase. It should also be noted that, since April 2002, the Infantry has run a combined Phase 1 and 2 course at ITC(C); figures since this date therefore include numbers for Phase 1 where generally the level of wastage is higher.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance he has issued to the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow concerning vetting procedures for military and civilian instructors at initial training establishments. [26289]

Mr. Touhig: While no specific guidance has been issued to the Army Personnel Centre (APC) concerning vetting for military instructors at initial training establishments, the APC has procedures in place to confirm the suitability of an individual selected for this type of employment.

Civilian instructors are managed by the Army Training and Recruiting Agency and screened for their suitability by the Defence Vetting Agency.

There is currently no requirement for either military or civilian instructors to undergo Criminal Records Bureau Employment Checks. However, this policy is currently under review.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent changes he has made to the content of induction courses for staff and trainees at initial training establishments to identify at risk behaviour of trainees. [26299]

Mr. Touhig: Training to help instructors identify 'at risk' behaviour in trainees is provided in the 'Train the Trainer' (TTT) courses currently offered by the Defence Centre of Training Support. A new TTT package providing enhanced coverage of the subject will be mandated for all instructors, including staff in initial training establishments, from April 2006. The Department is currently piloting elements of this new course with the Army.

Concurrently all three services have introduced enhancements to induction training for new staff and to the arrival briefings given to trainees. New training staff now receive guidance from appropriately qualified personnel on how to recognize symptoms of at risk behaviour in trainees, including suicide, self-harm and bullying, and what corrective or referral action to take. In addition, arrival briefings for trainees have now been revised to include more emphasis on diversity and potential self-harm and bullying issues, including how to look out for each other and how to take appropriate referral action.

Armoured Protection

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department plans to ensure the provision of *(a)* fully armoured vehicles and *(b)* body armour to all UK troops in combat. [26628]

Mr. Ingram: We issue body armour to all UK troops on operations. We deploy vehicles with a level of protection commensurate with their operational role and with the threat, which we keep under continuous review.

Bullying

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the findings were of the Special Investigation Branch investigation of allegations of bullying involving soldiers of the Royal Highlands Fusiliers at Fort George Barracks, Inverness and on overseas duty in Cyprus. [25361]

Mr. Touhig: The Special Investigation Branch investigation into anonymous allegations of bullying covered in several newspapers has been completed and found no evidence to substantiate the allegations. During the course of the investigation, a number of additional allegations were made. These were pursued separately; most have been concluded with no evidence of wrongdoing, but some are still ongoing.

Civil Contingency Reaction Force

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many of the reservists who are part of the civil contingency reaction force have been deployed to Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [27167]

(2) how many of each of the civil contingency reaction force contingents are available to be deployed in the event of an emergency; and if he will make a statement. [27168]

Mr. Ingram: Details of those members of the civil contingency reaction force (CCRF), who have been deployed to Iraq, are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, I can confirm that, when CCRF members are mobilised for overseas commitments, they are immediately replaced by other personnel.

All CCRF contingents would be available to be deployed, if required, in the event of an emergency.

Courts Martial

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Attorney-General about the operation and supervision of the system of courts martial; and if he will make a statement. [26838]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and the Attorney-General have a strong mutual interest in the military criminal justice system. The three Service prosecuting authorities are subject to the general superintendence of the Attorney-General in their independent discharge of their statutory functions. A major Bill concerning the military justice system is to be introduced by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, shortly. It is therefore clearly appropriate that given their respective roles and responsibilities, the Secretary of State and Attorney-General exchange views on the subject of the military justice system.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the oral Answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 21–30, on courts martial, what the cost was of converting the court martial building at Colchester for trial of serving and former members of the Parachute Regiment accused of murdering an Iraqi citizen. [27103]

Mr. Ingram: The final cost of converting the building used for this court martial is expected to be in the region of £77,000. This covered basic repairs to the building including roof repair, lighting, heating and access for the disabled. On current plans, the building will be used for at least one other multiple defendant trial.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27730]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is contained in the Ministry of Defence's Claims Annual Report 2004–2005, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Defence Aviation and Repair Agency

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Defence Aviation and Repair Agency. [27621]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made to the House on 8 November 2005.

Departmental Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27413]

Mr. Touhig: Specific data on the number of consultants employed by the Ministry of Defence is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, summaries of MOD expenditure on External Assistance, of which consultancy is a part, are available in the Library of the House for the years 1995–96 to 2004–05.

With respect to Special Advisers, this information is collated separately and is announced to the House at the end of each Parliamentary session. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 161WS, that the MOD had two Special Advisers who were employed within Special Advisers Pay Band 2 and 3 respectively.

Departmental Staffing

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed by his Department increased in financial year 2004–05 compared with 2003–04. [24598]

Mr. Touhig: The increase in the average number of full time equivalents from 2003–04 to 2004–05 was due to a temporary increase in the number of permanent and casual civilian staff and an increase in the number of locally employed civilians in Iraq and Sierra Leone. The overall trend, however, is downwards. Since April 2004, the total number of civilians employed by the Department (including its trading funds) has reduced from 109,050 full time equivalents to 106,270 (1 October 2005).

Future Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the exact roles and responsibilities of each member of the Future Carrier Alliance are; when he will have a clear indication of the accurate costings of building the two new aircraft carrier ships; what the current budget for building the two new aircraft carriers is; whether French shipyards will have a role in the building of the hulls of the two aircraft carriers; and what meetings he has held with other Government Departments on the Defence Industrial Strategy work. [26182]

Mr. Ingram: Roles and responsibilities within the Carrier Alliance will be underpinned by commercial arrangements designed to align all parties to common project objectives. The industrial participants will agree contracts which will set out clearly their responsibilities in terms of areas of work related to the Carriers and the interface between the various parties, the risk that each party is taking on and where the accountability for each of these lies. These will form part of the overall shipbuild strategy and will be finalised when the main investment decision is taken.

Estimated costs are being constantly refined and will not be bound until the main investment decision, though we are confident that the continuing work to mature our cost, schedule and risk information will ensure the capability required is affordable.

Given that both the UK and France are embarking on major, complex carrier procurement projects, we are examining areas of mutual benefit and opportunities to deliver economies. It is for industry to put forward proposals which will be judged on their merits and in light of national policies.

As one would expect in the development of any Government strategy which requires the perspective of several Government Departments, there have been a number of meetings at ministerial level with Ministers and officials from other Government Departments. These have included the Department of Trade and Industry, Her Majesty's Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Generals

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many serving generals have never had operational responsibilities in a conflict zone; and how many have had no such responsibilities since 1995. [26825]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 56 General officers serving in the Regular Army, of whom 12 have never had any operational responsibilities in a conflict zone. All except one of the remaining 44 have had such responsibilities since 1995. The definition of a conflict zone excludes peace-keeping operations with the United Nations in Cyprus and service in support of the civil police in Northern Ireland.

Gulf War Immunisations

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research his Department is carrying out to establish whether the combination of immunisations against chemical and biological weapons given to service personnel before and during the 1990–91 Gulf war was medically harmful; and what the findings of the research have been to date. [27250]

Mr. Touhig: A programme of research, overseen by an independent panel of experts, has investigated the possible adverse health effects of the combination of vaccines and tablets which were given to UK personnel to protect them against the threat of biological and chemical warfare during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict.

The core study in the programme has been undertaken at Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), Porton Down and involved monitoring for a range of effects in marmosets for up to 18 months following the administration of vaccines and/or pyridostigmine bromide (the active ingredient in nerve agent pre-treatment tablets). Interim results, announced on 1 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 55WS, have been published and showed no apparent adverse health consequences. Final results are expected to be submitted for peer-reviewed publication shortly.

A second study has investigated the specific combination of anthrax and pertussis vaccines. This work was carried out by the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control. Publication of the final results was announced on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 117WS. In mice, pertussis vaccine combinations, or aluminium salt caused illness; anthrax vaccine produced little effect; diluted vaccine combinations produced less serious side effects of shorter duration. As the researchers pointed out, caution should be exercised in applying these results to humans because of the relatively high dosage used in the tests and the very different sensitivity to these vaccines in mice and humans.

A third study has examined whether staff from Dstl Porton Down who received multiple vaccinations, including anti-biological warfare vaccinations, in the course of their duties have higher levels of recorded sick leave than their unvaccinated colleagues. The results of this study will also be submitted for publication shortly.

Further details are on our website at:
www.mod.uk/issues/gulfwar/research/interact.htm

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes were made to the *(a)* number and *(b)* nature of the immunisations against chemical and biological weapons given to service personnel for service in the 2003 Gulf War compared with those given for service in the 1990–91 Gulf war. [27251]

Mr. Touhig: A total of two immunisations against chemical and biological weapons were offered to service personnel deploying on Operation Granby ("1990–1 Gulf war"). The immunisations were for anthrax (which was administered with a pertussis adjuvant) and for plague.

A total of two immunisations against chemical and biological weapons were offered to service personnel deploying on Operation Telic ("2003 Gulf war"). The immunisations were for anthrax (without a pertussis adjuvant) and for smallpox. The latter was only offered to a small cohort of personnel which included nuclear biological and chemical specialists and medical personnel who would have been part of the first response in the event of a smallpox incident.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26602]

Mr. Touhig: None.

Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why the Integrated Project Team leader for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project has resigned. [25502]

Mr. Ingram: The Integrated Project Team leader for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project has not resigned.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was in each of the last five years of upgrading properties in his Department's married quarters estate; and what the planned expenditure is for the next five years. [23326]

Mr. Touhig: I can confirm that the costs of upgrading service families accommodation for the last five financial years were:

Financial year	*£ million*
2000–01	62.8
2001–02	78.0
2002–03	53.6
2003–04	43.9
2004–05	23.2

These figures do not include new build properties.

In accordance with departmental policy, the detail of forward spending plans is being withheld because it relates to the formulation of policy.

Medical Negligence

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time members of the armed forces have sued the Department for medical negligence in each of the past five years. [27618]

Mr. Touhig: The MOD does not record the information in a format which will readily identify full-time and part-time members of the armed forces who make claims.

The number of claims for compensation received in each of the past five years in which allegations of clinical negligence have been made is shown in the table:

Financial year	*Number of claims received*
2004–05	86
2003–04	92
2002–03	119
2001–02	142
2000–01	128

Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability Project

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project. [26021]

Mr. Ingram: The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) project has been established to investigate a wide range of solutions to provide the capability to meet the future logistic support requirements of the Royal Navy and to provide sea-based support to deployed forces. It is too early to say what the final designs and specifications for the vessels might be. We will use the Assessment Phase to look into the potential options before any decisions are made at the Main Gate investment point.

Military Bases (Designated Areas)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the bases which are designated areas under the terms of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. [25009]

Mr. Ingram: There is no provision for such designations under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001.

Military Establishments (Incidents)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what dates he *(a)* received and *(b)* agreed protocol between service police forces and Home Department police forces on dealing with deaths or injuries likely to result in death on military establishments; and if he will place a copy of the protocol in the Library. [26303]

Mr. Ingram: Following detailed negotiations which began in December 2004, a protocol between the Secretary of State for Defence and the Association of Chief Police Officers has recently been finalised. The protocol reinforces the fact that primacy for conducting investigations into all deaths, or serious deaths where death is likely, on military establishments in the UK rests with the chief officer of the Home Department police force under whose jurisdiction the death occurs. The protocol, which covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland, was signed on behalf of the Secretary of State and a representative from the Association of Chief Police Officers on 7 November 2005. Copies of the protocol will be placed in the Library in the near future. An identical but separate protocol is being drawn up between a representative of the Secretary of State and the Association of Chief Police Officers (Scotland). Copies will be placed in the Library once this has been signed.

Military/Police Assistance

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information his Department has published on military and related police assistance provided to foreign governments since 27 February 1998. [17086]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given on 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1062–64W; 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1751W; 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 19–20W; and 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 26W, all of which provide relevant information.

The Ministry of Defence regularly publishes general information on military assistance to foreign governments, most recently in Delivering Security in a Changing World, Supporting Essays (Cm 6041–11) and the Ministry of Defence Annual Reports and Accounts 2004–2005 (HC 464).

Missing Weapons

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Army *(a)* handguns, *(b)* rifles and *(c)* other weapons went missing in the UK in each year since 1997; and how many were recovered over the same timescale. [25714]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested for the period 1 January 1997 to 15 October 2005 is detailed in the table.

	Handguns lost	Handguns recovered	Rifles lost	Rifles recovered	Other weapon losses	Other weapons recovered
1997	1	0	5	3	0	0
1998	5	1	1	0	0	0
1999	2	1	5	1	0	0
2000	20	3	6	1	3	0
2001	3	1	7	1	4	0
2002	1	0	1	0	0	0
2003	1	0	2	2	6	2
2004	1	0	4	1	4	0
2005	5	1	5	1	0	0
Total	39	7	36	10	17	2

Noise-induced Hearing Loss

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent on *(a)* war disablement pensions and *(b)* Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments for noise-induced hearing loss, in each year since 1990. [26860]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* War pensions are not awarded for individual conditions, but for the total degree of disablement due to service, assessed on a percentage basis. This overall assessment takes account of all conditions that are attributable to or aggravated by service. We cannot therefore separately identify amounts paid in respect of one particular condition. The information requested is not therefore available for war disablement pensions.

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme only applies to injuries or illnesses caused on or after 6 April 2005, and there have been no awards made for noise-induced hearing loss under the Scheme since it came into force.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are in receipt of a war disablement pension for noise-induced hearing loss. [26861]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* A war pension is awarded based on the overall percentage disablement due to service of an individual, not on particular medical conditions.

Our war pensions database indicates that there were approximately 80,000 people entitled to an on-going payment under the War Pensions Scheme at 30 June 2005 who had had a claim accepted for noise induced hearing loss.

In about half of these cases, there were no claims for any other medical conditions recorded.

Royal Anglian Regiment

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his intention to post the *(a)* 1st and *(b)* 2nd Battalion of the Royal Anglian Regiment for tours of duty in (i) Iraq and (ii) Afghanistan in the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [26253]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The latest roulement (Operation TELIC 7) of UK troops in Iraq was announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, to the House, on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 26. As a result of this roulement, the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment has recently returned from Iraq. The next routine roulement of UK forces in Iraq is expected to take place in May 2006, and an announcement will be made in due course. Announcements on future deployments to Afghanistan will be made once final decisions have been taken.

Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what legal assistance his Department will make available to those *(a)* serving and *(b)* former servicemen who face prosecution by the six Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and what budget has been provided for this purpose. [27101]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence will provide whatever assistance is appropriate for serving and former servicemen who are required to assist the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) with their review of unresolved deaths in Northern Ireland. No separate budget has been provided for this purpose. The six RMP Historic Inquiries Team is not undertaking any investigative responsibilities in relation to this review.

Royal Navy (Caribbean)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will reconsider the decision to reduce the Royal Navy presence in the Caribbean station. [26883]

Mr. Ingram: British military commitments and the tasking of military assets, including the Royal Navy presence in the Caribbean during the core hurricane months, are reviewed regularly. There are no plans to change these at present.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect on the international drugs trade of having Royal Navy ships stationed in the Caribbean; and if he will make a statement. [26884]

Mr. Ingram: None. The primary purposes of the RN deployment in the Caribbean (Atlantic Patrol Task (North)) are the promotion of UK interests in the region and the provision of security to UK Overseas Territories, including support to humanitarian operations and disaster relief. Counter-drugs activities are carried out as part of deployments to provide a tangible presence as one element of the UK's broader counter-drugs engagement in the region. These are co-ordinated by HM Revenue and Customs.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what amount of drugs the Royal Navy has been responsible for seizing in the Caribbean in each of the last five years; and what the estimated value was of such seizures in each year. [26885]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 558W, to the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Hollobone).

Royal Ordnance

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what goods have been supplied *(a)* to his

Department and *(b)* to his Department's sub-contractors by BAE Systems plc from the former Royal Ordnance factory in Bridgwater, Somerset, in the last five years. [26364]

Mr. Ingram: The Bridgwater site supplies a range of explosive compounds and products including fillings for warheads, propellants and demolition stores.

A list of the individual items supplied over the last five years to the Ministry of Defence or MOD prime contractors by the BAE Systems Land Systems facility at Bridgwater is as follows. MOD deals with prime contractors only. Relations with any sub-contractors is a matter for the prime contractor.

Items

New products

RF-01-NPM11
Rowanex 1001 premix
RF-03-NPM6
Rowanex 1301 premix
RF-23-NPM02
Rowanex 6000 premix
RP3
Rowanex 6000, 2400 and Rowanex 2000 binder
RF-25-NPM01
Rowanex 1400 premix
RF-03-NPM37
Rowanex 1100 premix
TATB
K10 Rowanite 8001
Rowanite 8002
CXM-7
Premix for PBXN109
PBXN110
Premix Class 2 Special
PBXN110
Premix Class 3 Special
PBXN-109 filling
Rowanex 1100 procure
Rowanex 3601/PBX-N7
Rowanite 533 BBG
Rowanite 558 BBG
BBP75:25 Nocat
Rowanite 8101
BOBBA 8
Rowanex 4400(M)
Rowanex 2400
Warheads under PBXN-109

Demolition products

POPLIN
ROMOR
Giant Viper MLI
Python
PE4 bulk
PE4 Cartridges
PE6A1
SX2/Demex 200 bulk
SX2 Demex 200 sheets
ECT 63 g/m (all lengths)
Blade 100 g/m (all lengths)
Blade 240 g/m(all lengths)
Blade 450 g/m (all lengths)
Blade 650 g/m (all lengths)
Blade 1150 g/m (all lengths)
'Old' Bangalore torpedo
Brixal 75/25
E-mite
Paw-Paw
Demex 400

Additives

Styphnic acid
2:4 DNR
Processed waste NG acid
Lead Stannate
LAP (Lead Aceto Pthalate)
Basic Copper Salycilate

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date and on whose authority did the project of joint subsidiary take place between the Société National des Poudres et Explosifs and Royal Ordnance for the manufacture of military powders and explosives. [26365]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is aware that discussions took place some years ago between Royal Ordnance (now BAE Systems Land Systems) and Société National des Poudres et Explosifs with a view to a joint venture. No final agreement was reached between the two companies.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military powders will be manufactured in the UK up to the end of 2007; and who the majority shareholders of the explosive manufacturers are. [26366]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence procures a large range of explosive products (including primer compositions and energetic materials) from a number of manufacturers, both in the United Kingdom and abroad. Details of each type of explosive substance provided are not held centrally and it would incur disproportionate costs to produce a comprehensive list. The identities of the majority shareholders of the various businesses are an issue for the companies themselves.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what does the BAE Systems plc factory at Chorley, Lancashire, produce; and from where will future production be sourced when that factory closes. [26367]

Mr. Ingram: The main production output of BAE System's factory at Land Systems Chorley is initiators for various natures of munitions. Production at the site has been suspended since an industrial incident in March 2005. Current production remains limited to filling and assembling a small number of stores using stocks of previously manufactured compositions.

Following is a list of those items which have, until recently, been manufactured at the Chorley site:

Item

TVE L4
Cap Conducting. CC No. 1
Cap and Holder (TV23 AF)
L106 2.25grn RWY
L106 2.1grn L
L106 Delay.
MDF items and End Fittings for warheads
6.5grn LZY Detonator and Housing
Igniter CC
IEBW 222
CLC Charge Line Cutting
7.62mm SAA Cap—Air
7.62mm SAA Cap—Land
5.56mm SAA Cap
IEBW 302, Detonator Nl6
CERU 201/Cap EBW No l Mk2
Primer 52
Cartridge Cable Cutter
IEBW 213
Detonator EEBW Nl Mk2

BAE Systems Land Systems are responsible for the security of supply of these items and will remain so after the closure of the Chorley site. They have provided detailed plans on how they intend to achieve this and we remain confident in their ability to do so. These plans are of a commercial nature and it would not be to the benefit of the company or the Ministry of Defence to release them.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guarantee of continuity of supply does his Department secure for ammunitions sourced outside the UK. [26368]

Mr. Ingram: It is common practise for all contracts let to foreign based ammunition suppliers to include a clause whereby if supply could not be met, the manufacturing data is passed to the Ministry of Defence to allow manufacture elsewhere.

Staff Relocations

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation; to which places they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [24639]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Between August 2004 and March 2005 1,230 posts were relocated when the Army Technical Foundation college, at Arborfield, closed and its function moved to the Army Foundation college at Harrogate. The closure was part of a fundamental restructuring of the way in which the Army conducts its junior training. The restructuring meant that the posts relocated to a number of establishments throughout the country.

No relocations from the south east are likely to take place in 2005–06.

Terrorism

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the remit is of the Terrorist Investigation Unit (TIU); what contact there is between the TIU and 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and how many members of the TIU there are. [27354]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Tribunals and Inquiries Unit (TIU) manages the Ministry of Defence's contribution to public inquiries and other investigations, and arranges assistance to former and serving MOD employees who are involved in them. The TIU provides policy guidance to 6 Royal Military Police Historic Inquiries Team on their assistance to the Police Service of Northern Ireland's review of unresolved deaths during the troubles. Currently there are six members of the TIU, which is headed by a senior civil servant.

Type 23 Frigates

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 919W, on Type 23 frigates, what repairs are taking place to the three vessels' platforms, systems and equipment in order to comply with maritime regulations; what the findings of the previous stability tests for the three ships were; and *(a)* when and *(b)* by whom the next stability tests will be undertaken. [26370]

Mr. Ingram: The Type 23 frigates are currently certified in class by Lloyd's Register survey and comply with maritime regulations. Following the relevant Inclining Experiment (stability test) and subsequent stability calculations each ship was demonstrated to meet MOD Type 23 Stability Standard for the following 10 years. Certificates of Safety—Stability were issued for each ship with the following expiry dates: HMS Norfolk valid until 6 August 2006, HMS Marlborough 6 August 2006 and HMS Grafton 7 November 2006.

As part of their reactivation for sale to the Republic of Chile the prime contractor, BAE Systems, intend to contract Lloyd's Register to survey each ship (between January 2006 and July 2007) and recommend any repair work required to maintain certification to meet maritime regulations. The prime contractor will also conduct Inclining Experiments on HM Ships Norfolk (July 2006) and Grafton (December 2006) and stability calculations to confirm that all three ships continue to meet the Type 23 Stability Standard. HMS Marlborough being of the same stability batch as HMS Norfolk will not require to undergo an Inclining Experiment. Certification of class will be issued by Lloyd's Register to support the transfer to the Republic of Chile.

Yorkshire Regiment

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) where the three battalions of the new Yorkshire Regiment will be based when it is formed in June 2006; [25691]

(2) what specific roles and operational functions he intends to allocate to the three battalions of the new Yorkshire Regiment to the end of 2007; [25690]

(3) if he will make it his policy for recruitment to the new Yorkshire Regiment to be restricted to people living in the Yorkshire and Humber region. [25689]

Mr. Touhig: All battalion names are provisional and subject to Royal assent but, under current plans: the 1st Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) will be based in Catterick and will be a light-role battalion; the 2nd Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards) will be based near Chepstow until mid-2007 when they will relocate to Weeton, Lancashire. They will also be a light-role battalion, and the 3rd Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment (Duke of Wellington's) will be based in Warminster and will be an armoured battalion.

Current policy allows an infantry recruit, irrespective of where he resides, to join whichever regiment he wishes provided there are spaces within that regiment and he passes the associated selection criteria and training course. There are no plans to change this policy.

PRIME MINISTER

China

Peter Law: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he had with Chinese President Hu Jintao on *(a)* climate change and *(b)* energy technology support during his visit to London. [28953]

The Prime Minister: President Hu and I agreed that climate change and energy were important global issues on which we could work together more closely in future. The UK-China Sustainable Development Dialogue, signed in the margins of the President's visit, and the EU-China Partnership on Climate Change signed in Beijing in September provide a solid platform for future co-operation. I am keen to engage with China on the potential for a workable framework on future action after Kyoto at next month's UN climate change conference.

Climate Change

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the speeches he has made regarding climate change since becoming Prime Minister. [26832]

The Prime Minister: I regularly give speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues, including environmental issues. Copies of my speeches are available on the Number 10 website.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list policy commitments he has made relating to climate change since 1997. [27522]

The Prime Minister: The UK Climate Change Programme, published in November 2000, sets out the Government's strategic approach to tackling climate change, including our policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to ensure we meet our target under the Kyoto Protocol and to move us towards our domestic goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010. Significant policies the Government have put in place to reduce emissions include the renewables obligation, the climate change levy and climate change agreements, and the voluntary greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme—the first such economy-wide trading scheme in the world.

The programme also explained how climate change will affect the UK and the action we are taking to prepare for this. We are reviewing the programme, looking at how existing policies are performing and the range of policies that we might put in place in future. In the Energy White Paper, published in February 2003, we said we would put the UK on a path towards a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of some 60 per cent. by about 2050.

Dedicated Government Vehicle

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister (1) on what date the Government first provided a dedicated government vehicle to members of the family of the serving Prime Minister; and for what reason; [28066]

(2) when the most recent assessment of *(a)* his and *(b)* his family's security was carried out. [28067]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my noble Friend Lord Bassam on Monday 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column WA62.

It has been the practice of successive governments not to comment on security issues.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27672]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Cabinet Office to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister whether, prior to giving his statement to the House of 24 September 2002, he communicated to *(a)* the then British ambassador to the United States, Sir Christopher Meyer and *(b)* his then personal foreign policy adviser Sir David Manning that his policy in respect of Iraq was to achieve regime change. [27084]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Dodds) on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 112W.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the *(a)* benefits and *(b)* costs to the United Kingdom of its participation in the Iraq War and occupation. [27478]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Dr. Howells) gave to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 948–49W.

London Bombings

Mr. Drew: To ask the Prime Minister who the attendees were at the meeting he held with representatives of the Muslim community following the London bombings of 7 July; if he will publish the notes of the meeting; and what action he plans to take as a result of that meeting. [26961]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Hamilton) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 165W.

I also refer my hon. Friend to the comments made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Salford (Hazel Blears), the Minister of State for the Home Office on 10 November 2005, which set out the follow-up action the Government have taken in partnership with representatives of the Muslim community. Copies are available on the Home Office website.

Ministerial Travel

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Prime Minister what the cost was of each Minister's unplanned return journey to London for the Terrorism Bill debate and votes on Wednesday 9 November. [28748]

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Prime Minister what the total cost to public funds was of Ministers and accompanying officials *(a)* returning to Westminster for parliamentary votes on 9 November and *(b)* returning thereafter to resume official duties away from Westminster. [28609]

The Prime Minister: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Copies of these lists are available in the Library of the House. Information on the number of officials accompanying Ministers on overseas visits is included in the list. All Ministers' travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers".

Information for the year 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the financial year.

Ministers (Severance Payments)

John Hemming: To ask the Prime Minister how many severance payments a resigning Minister is entitled to within any 12 month period. [25500]

The Prime Minister: Severance pay is payable in accordance with section 4 of the Ministerial and other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991.

Typhoon Fighter Planes

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Prime Minister what the total cost was of his trip in July to discuss the sale of BAE Systems' Typhoon fighter planes to the Saudi Arabian defence forces; and if he will make a statement. [25287]

The Prime Minister: I visited Saudi Arabia in July 2005 to have talks with HRH Crown Prince Abdullah and other senior Ministers and officials. We discussed a wide range of issues including the Middle East Peace Process, Iraq, our bilateral relationship and the issues facing the G8 Summit at Gleneagles.

Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Copies of these lists are available in the Library of the House. Information on the number of officials accompanying Ministers on overseas visits is included in the list. All Ministers travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers". Information for the year 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the financial year.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoption

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were adopted from overseas in each of the last 10 years, broken down by country. [28227]

Maria Eagle: This information is not available centrally. The following table shows the number of applications to adopt, including a home study assessment, broken down by year and country, received since 1995 by the Department of Health and since June 2003 by the Department for Education and Skills.

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total*
Albania	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Algeria	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	3
Armenia	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	2	1	1	7
Azerbaijan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Barbados	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Belarus	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	5
Bolivia	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Bosnia-Herzegovina	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Brazil	7	4	4	3	1	—	2	1	1	1	—	24
Brunei	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Bulgaria	—	2	—	4	1	3	3	6	4	1	—	24
Burundi	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Cambodia	—	—	—	2	—	1	—	6	40	18	—	67
Canada	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	3
Chile	1	—	4	4	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	12

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
China	59	206	110	123	48	176	175	111	108	166	159	1,441
Colombia	1	4	4	7	—	1	4	2	—	1	1	25
Czech Republic	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Egypt	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
El Salvador	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Estonia	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Ethiopia	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	3	5
Gambia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2
Georgia	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	3
Ghana	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	2	4
Greece	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
Grenada	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Guatemala	12	16	26	20	4	24	13	28	29	15	18	205
Guyana	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	2	4
Haiti	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hong Kong	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
Hungary	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
India	22	29	21	22	6	14	19	24	24	26	28	235
Indonesia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Iran	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	2	5
Ireland	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Jamaica	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Japan	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
Jordan	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
Kazahstan	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	3	6	12
Kenya	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
Kosova	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Latvia	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Lebanon	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2
Lithuania	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	3
Macedonia	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2
Madeira	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	3
Mauritius	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	1	5
Mexico	1	—	—	2	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	7
Mongolia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Morocco	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	3	1	1	1	10
Nepal	1	1	1	2	—	—	—	1	2	4	—	12
Nicaragua	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Nigeria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	4
Pakistan	3	1	3	2	2	—	4	2	7	3	5	32
Paraguay	6	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8
Peru	—	—	1	1	—	1	1	—	—	1	2	7
Philippines	1	5	4	4	—	3	7	4	5	6	2	41
Poland	2	1	1	2	—	—	1	1	1	—	1	10
Portugal	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Romania	9	10	5	17	8	23	5	3	1	—	1	82
Russia	4	3	3	13	3	14	13	18	33	40	33	177
St Vincent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Samoa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Serbia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Sierra Leone	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Singapore	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	3
South Africa	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	1	—	5
Sri Lanka	3	2	3	—	—	2	7	2	2	3	1	25
Swaziland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Taiwan	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
Thailand	5	10	10	13	6	45	29	21	8	11	13	171
Tunisia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Turkey	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	1	4
Uganda	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Ukraine	1	—	—	2	1	2	1	2	—	—	—	9
USA	8	4	5	8	1	15	22	19	17	13	16	128
Venezuela	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Vietnam	1	1	3	2	2	11	11	15	—	—	1	47
Yugoslavia	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Zambia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Total	154	308	223	257	94	352	326	285	301	332	[1]313	—

[1] To date.

Adult Further Education

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much of the adult further education budget was allocated to *(a)* all level 3, *(b)* full level 3, *(c)* part level 3 and *(d)* first full level 3 qualifications in each year between 2000–01 and 2004–05. [25724]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The following table shows how much of the adult further education (FE) budget was spent on level 3 qualifications between 2002/03 and 2004/05[1].

[1] In 2000/01 and 2001/02 the data source for funding information was the Individualised Student Record. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)/Learning and Skills Council (LSC) used units as their currency for funding rather than cash. To obtain an accurate cash figure for 2000/01 and 2001/02 would take a disproportionate amount of time. For this reason figures for 2000/01 and 2001/02 have not been included.

	2002/03	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
All level 3 (£ million)	396	410	418
Of which			
Full level 3	174	200	212
AS level	24	24	26
Notional level 3	198	186	181
Distribution (percentage)			
Full level 3	43.9	48.7	50.6
AS level	6.0	5.9	6.1
Notional level 3	50.1	45.4	43.3

The DFES and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) jointly commissioned research into the prior qualifications of adult learners in further education (FE). This survey showed that 45 per cent. of adults on full level 3 courses were studying for their first full level 3.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many learners have applied successfully for the adult learning grant. [27031]

Phil Hope: Since the Adult Learning Grant pilots commenced in September 2003, there have been 10,811 successful applications received from learners. In academic year 2005/06 there have been 3,027 successful applications so far.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average level of individual contributions was to fees for adults in further education in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [25475]

Bill Rammell: In 2003/04 and 2004/05 adult learners in Further Education (FE) were assumed to contribute 25 per cent. of the basic course cost of their learning unless fees were remitted because the learner was receiving an income based benefit or on a Skills for Life programme. This proportion increased to 27.5 per cent. in 2005/06, and will rise again in 2006/07 to 32.5 per cent. and to 37.5 per cent. in 2007/08. In average terms, this means a rise from an hourly rate of £1.42 this year to £1.94 by 2007/08.

However, we know that historically many FE providers choose to waive the fees for some of these 'fee-paying' learners:

In 2003/04, FE providers collected £152 million out of an 'expected' £261 million.

In 2004/05, £159 million was collected out of an expected £277 million.

The Skills Strategy White Paper set out a vision for transforming the way in which the Learning and Skills sector can support higher national investment in skills, which included ensuring that the state, employers and individuals all contribute towards the costs of their learning, in line with the benefits received by each.

In order to increase the levels of fees collected, from 2005/06 the LSC agreed a fee income measure with each FE funded provider. To assist providers in developing a strategic approach to, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published a good practice guide to fee income earlier this year.

Clearly, with the increase in the fee assumption, it will be important that FE providers recover as much money as possible from learners as employers..

A-level Grades

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many A and A* grades at GCSE were achieved in schools serving the 2,000 least deprived wards in the country in each year from 1997. [25923]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives the numbers of A* and A grades in GCSEs[1] achieved by students in schools in the 25 per cent. least deprived Super Output Areas[2].

[1] These figures relate to full course GCSEs only.
[2] Deprivation classified within the English Indices of Deprivation.

	*A**	*A*
2005[1]	117,476	226,141
2004	110,753	220,822
2003	98,610	214,377
2002	95,611	204,293
2001	92,644	199,045
2000	83,833	192,152
1999	78,856	182,950
1998	71,280	175,456
1997	48,206	131,761

[1] 2005 figures are provisional; figures for previous years are final.

Anti-bullying Initiatives

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many initiatives the Government have announced to combat bullying in schools since 1997; [25383]

(2) how much the Department has spent on anti-bullying measures and campaigns in each year since 1997; [25379]

(3) how the Department assesses the effectiveness of anti-bullying initiatives. [25377]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is deeply concerned about the distress bullying causes and the effect it has on lives and we are determined to help schools reduce and respond to bullying.

Since 1997 our work has included conferences and events to disseminate good practice, alongside the development of guidance and resources for schools. The anti-bullying Charter for Action has fostered a wide consensus among schools, the voluntary sector, and professional associations. We have supported an award scheme to share and celebrate the excellent work of schools and children and young people in this area. We have given funding to the voluntary sector to embed effective practice and offer training and support to schools, children and young people and their parents. We have run a number of public information campaigns encouraging children to 'tell someone' and to support their friends. Anti-bullying work is embedded in the Primary and Secondary National Strategies Behaviour and Attendance strand, including through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials. Details of specific initiatives follow.

2000 and 2002 updated anti-bullying guidance folder for schools, 'Don't suffer in silence'

September 2003 public information film 'Tell Someone' launched, to encourage children who are being bullied to tell someone, and not suffer in silence.

November 2003 anti-bullying Charter for Action for schools launched

2003–04 'Make The Difference' campaign conferences held in each Government office region, targeted at head teachers and Chief Education Officers. Postcards and posters in English and a range of other languages created to encourage children and young people to tell someone if they are being bullied, and to support parents and schools in helping bullied children

July 2004 Anti-Bullying Alliance work, funded by DfES, to sustain momentum of 'Make The Difference', launched. Funding announced for dedicated anti-bullying Diana Award

November 2004, during the first national Anti-Bullying Week, blue anti-bullying bands campaign—Make A Stand, Wear The Band—launched by the Department, Radio One and the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), all working in partnership. This has been a significant success, with 1 million children and young people making a stand and wearing a band.

November 2004 second public information film, 'I Am', produced to coincide with the campaign. In this celebrities read lines from a poem written by a child who had been bullied to show young people that they are not alone if they are being bullied and can get help.

March 2005 conference on countering racist bullying

The figures for the anti-bullying strand of the Improving Behaviour and Attendance strategy are given as follows:

	£
2005/06	1,145,000
2004/05	1,612,560
2003/04	1,054,027
2002/03	183,749

Figures for earlier years are not available because the anti-bullying strand of behaviour work was not disaggregated.

We assess the success and effectiveness of our anti-bullying work as follows.

Qualitative evidence of success and effectiveness.

The Department's 2003–04 Make the Difference conference series was heavily over subscribed.

Delegates told us that they left feeling inspired and motivated to promote continuing changes and improvement in their schools.

The overall evaluations for the London conference were 100 per cent. positive, and for the series overall 97 per cent. positive.

The web statistics of a workshop used at the Wembley conference reflect the enthusiasm and interest generated by this conference. The number of hits on their site increased to over 20,000 the week following the conference, compared with 48 hits in their own launch week.

Last year's Beat Bullying campaign received support from a large number of famous personalities. Originally 100,000 blue bands were earmarked for the three-month-long campaign but within just 36 hours of the launch all had been allocated. By the end of December 2004 Radio One received the order for the millionth band.

The anti-bullying Charter for Action that was launched in November 2003 has been signed and returned to the ABA by about 4,000 schools. We believe that other schools have adopted the charter, but have not returned it to the ABA, and that more still have used it as the basis for developing their school anti bullying policies.

The two anti-bullying public information films ('Tell Someone', 2003, and 'I am', 2004) are the two most watched public information films created by the Department. It seems reasonable to assume that such a volume of interest has led to increased awareness, both of the need for children and young people to tell someone if they are being bullied, and of the fact that the person being bullied is not to blame.

We have no statistical evidence, for example of a decline in incidents, available to show the impact and effectiveness of our strategy. This is because nationwide statistics on bullying are not available and we think it would be very unwise to make an estimate (although racist incidents in schools do have to be reported).

Bullying cases appear to be reported more often now than previously but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children. Indeed it could be seen as a measure of effectiveness that as more children feel confident enough to report bullying it is likely that the number of recorded cases will rise.

Apprenticeships

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 14 to 16-year-olds have *(a)* started and *(b)* completed young apprenticeships since their introduction in May 2004; and if she will make a statement. [27193]

Jacqui Smith: A total of 3,000 pupils have started the two-year Young Apprenticeship programme since it began in September 2004. The first cohort of 1,000 pupils will complete the programme in July 2006.

Basic Skills

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to reach its target of reducing by at least 40 per cent. the number of adults in the workforce who lack basic skills. [28380]

Bill Rammell: The target for tackling basic skills in England is to 'Improve the basic skills levels of 1.5 million adults by 2007 and 2.25 by 2010' (since the launch of the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001). The 40 per cent. target refers to the Government's ambitions for 'Level 2': to reduce by at least 40 per cent. the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ2 or equivalent qualifications.

In 2001 the Government published the Skills for Life Strategy to tackle basic skills needs across England. Basic skills are a long term priority for the Government and basic literacy and numeracy learning is free to learners with skills below Level 2. Since 2001, we have put in place national standards and core curricula. We are continuing to focus on driving up quality of provision and are professionalising the workforce and extending the reach of the strategy. Since the strategy was launched in 2001, we have helped 1,130,000 adults achieve first qualifications in literacy, language or numeracy. In total, 3.7 million adults have taken up 7.8 million learning opportunities. Tackling basic skills underpins our Skills Strategy, 14–19 reforms, primary and secondary strategies, and our agenda set out in Every Child Matters.

Child Care

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* recent representations she has received and *(b)* meetings she has had about allowing a salary sacrifice child care voucher scheme for teachers; when she expects salary sacrifice to be permitted; and if she will make a statement. [28425]

Jacqui Smith: A number of representations about salary sacrifice have been received in the Department. My right hon. Friend has had no meetings specifically about salary sacrifice. She is currently giving careful consideration to the issue.

Children (Parental Access)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent estimate she has made of the number of children who have suffered non-accidental injuries during unsupervised access with their absent parent. [27090]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* We do not hold data on the number of children who are harmed during unsupervised contact with their non-resident parent, whether court ordered or otherwise. However, we take the issues of child protection and domestic violence extremely seriously and have taken a number of steps to ensure the safety of children involved in contact disputes.

On 31 January this year, we introduced new 'Gateway forms' designed to ensure that any issues of domestic violence can more readily be raised at the very start of Children Act 1989 private law court proceedings. We have also commenced section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which clarified the definition of 'harm' in the Children Act 1989, which now makes explicit that it includes any impairment suffered as a result of seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. In addition, section 1 of the Children Act 1989, which applies whenever the court is considering an application for a contact order, requires the court to have the welfare of the child as its paramount consideration. This is reinforced by the welfare checklist at section 1(3) of that Act, which requires the court to have regard to any harm the child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering.

Citizenship

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the post-16 citizenship pilot 2004–05. [28182]

Phil Hope: I am pleased to acknowledge the continuing success of this programme in encouraging active participation by young people—both in their learning and in their local and wider communities. This success was recognised most recently in the joint report by Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate. We are currently considering the recommendations in that report.

Class Sizes

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the pupil-teacher ratio in *(a)* Suffolk, *(b)* Cambridgeshire, *(c)* Essex and *(d)* Norfolk has been in each year since 1997. [25180]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the pupil teacher ratios for primary and secondary schools in the requested local authorities for each year since 1997.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: pupil:teacher ratios: 1997–2005 position in January each year—Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Norfolk local authorities

	Maintained Primary								
	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Suffolk	22.3	22.2	22.0	22.1	22.0	21.5	21.7	21.7	21.5
Cambridgeshire[2]	24.4	24.9	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Cambridgeshire[3]	[4]	[4]	25.0	24.6	24.1	23.3	23.7	23.6	23.6
City of Peterborough	[4]	[4]	24.2	23.2	23.0	22.9	23.1	23.2	22.5
Essex[2]	23	23.5	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Essex[3]	[4]	[4]	23.5	23.2	22.9	22.8	23.0	23.2	22.9
Southend	[4]	[4]	24.0	23.4	23.5	23.0	23.3	22.8	23.0
Thurrock	[4]	[4]	23.9	22.8	22.8	21.8	23.6	24.9	25.0
Norfolk	22.3	[illegible]5	22.7	22.7	22.1	23.0	21.7	22.3	22.1

	Maintained Secondary								
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Suffolk	16.6	16.5	16.6	16.9	17.1	16.9	16.9	17.2	17.0
Cambridgeshire[2]	17.4	17.5	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Cambridgeshire[3]	[4]	[4]	18.1	18.7	18.7	18.1	18.7	18.7	18.3
City of Peterborough	[4]	[4]	16.7	17.1	17.2	17.3	17.4	17.0	16.9
Essex[2]	16.6	16.7	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Essex[3]	[4]	[4]	16.8	17.2	17.5	17.5	17.6	18.0	17.4
Southend	[4]	[4]	16.4	16.9	16.8	17.2	17.3	17.7	17.9
Thurrock	[4]	[4]	18.0	18.5	18.9	19.8	19.8	20.8	19.9
Norfolk	15.7	16.1	16.2	16.6	16.9	17.5	17.1	17.3	17.6

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Before local government reorganisation.
[3] After local government reorganisation.
[4] Not applicable.
Source:
Annual School Census

Classics

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of specialist humanities colleges have chosen classics as a subsidiary specialist subject. [28301]

Bill Rammell: Humanities specialism was first introduced in 2004. There are 83 operational Humanities Colleges of which: 60 have humanities as a main specialism, 11 chose humanities as part of a combined specialism, and 12 schools chose humanities as a second specialism. Two out of the 83 operational Humanities Colleges have chosen classics as a subsidiary specialist subject. This represents 3 per cent. of schools with humanities as a main specialism or 2 per cent. of all operational Humanities Colleges.

Counselling Services

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on counselling services in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire schools in each of the last five years. [24129]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will place in the Library a copy of her Department's skills development plan. [23870]

Maria Eagle: I have placed the skills development plan for 2005–06 in the House Libraries.

Education

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the most recent truancy levels are for *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools in Milton Keynes. [27204]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on unauthorised absence[1] in Milton Keynes local authority 2004/05 can be found in table 2 of SFR 40/2005, Pupil Absence in Schools in England 2004/05 (Provisional). This can be found at the following website: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000602/index.shtml

[1] Unauthorised absence includes other forms of absence such as lateness, holidays during term-time not authorised by the school, absence where reason is not yet established and truancy.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to homework clubs in schools in Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. [27487]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available. Homework clubs may form part of a school's or local authority's study support (out of school hours learning) programme, for which funding is available through their base budgets, and the School Development Grant (SDG). Schools and local authorities may use their SDG for any purposes linked to school improvement, and it is for them to determine the amount to be allocated to study support.

Study support forms an integral part of the government's extended services agenda, which will require schools to offer a varied menu of activities from 8am to 6pm year round, including during school holidays. Additional funding of £680 million is being made available up to 2008 to support the start up of extended services in schools.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in West Lancashire have been removed from the Admissions Register because of *(a)* extended family holidays and *(b)* long-term absence in each year since 1997. [27656]

Jacqui Smith: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the early question from the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 150W.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school children in West Lancashire whose families are in receipt of child tax credit are eligible for free school meals. [27701]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not collected centrally.

Free school lunch eligibility is limited to children whose parents receive:

Income support (IS);

Income based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA);

Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;

Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to working tax credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £13,910 2005/06 FY);

Guaranteed element of state pension credit.

Children receiving IS or IBJSA in their own right are also entitled to a free school lunch.

Prior to 2003, the numbers known to be eligible for a free school meal were those pupils who had, or whose parents had, satisfied the relevant authority that they were receiving income support (IS) or income based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA) or support provided under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. From 6 April 2003 onwards this definition was modified:

to include the necessity for a request for the provision of a free lunch to be made by, or on behalf of a pupil; and to take account of changes made in 2003 to the tax credit and welfare payments' system, adding an additional eligibility category relating to the receipt of specified tax credits.

From April 2005 an additional eligibility category was added—parents who receive the guaranteed element of state pension credit.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in West Lancashire have re-taken A-level modules *(a)* once and *(b)* more than once in each of the last five years, broken down by subject. [27710]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on the number of students re-taking modules at A Level.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children in the West Lancashire area left school at the minimum age in each of the last five years, broken down by ward. [27712]

Jacqui Smith: The earliest that a young person can leave school is on the last Friday in June after they turn 16. There is no information available on how many pupils leave from this point in the academic year. The most readily available figures are for young people in post-compulsory education at the end of the calendar year.

The percentages of 16-year-olds not in post-compulsory education or work-based learning (WBL—e.g. apprenticeships) in Lancashire local authority (LA) are given in the table. Figures are provided for 1999/2000 to 2003/04 (the latest available). Participation estimates are not available below LA level.

Participation by 16-year-olds in Lancashire LA

Percentage

As at end of the calendar year:	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[1]
Full-time Education	66	66	65	66	66
Work-based Learning (WBL)	12	11	11	10	10
Part-time Education	5	5	5	4	4
Total in Education and WBL[2]	82	82	80	80	80
Not in Full-time Education	34	34	35	34	34
Not in Education or WBL	18	18	20	20	20

[1] Provisional.
[2] Total of all full-time and part-time education and WBL, less WBL provision in education institutions.
Source:
The latest Statistical First Release "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17-year-olds in each local area in England".

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many hon. Members have written to *(a)* her, *(b)* the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education and *(c)* the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills since February about (i) adult education and (ii) funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges. [23621]

Bill Rammell: Since February *(a)* the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has received 178 letters from hon. Members on adult education and 108 on funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges, *(b)* the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education has received 188 on adult education and 40 on funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges, and *(c)* the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills has received 149 on adult education and 49 on funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in schools and colleges.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the funding of the new National Employer Training programme to be introduced from 2006–07. [27184]

Bill Rammell: The National Employer Training programme (NETP) will be funded through the Learning and Skills Council and will be rolled out across the country from 2006–07. The programme will be a powerful, demand-led mechanism for changing the way in which training for adults is delivered. Employers will have greater choice of high quality provision, and colleges and providers will need to deliver high quality training programmes at a time, place and pace determined by the employer. A sum of £230 million has been made available for the programme for 2006–07 and £399 million for 2007–08.

By 2010 the programme should have delivered over half a million first full level 2 qualifications representing a significant contribution to the PSA target to reduce by 40 per cent. the number of adults without a qualification at that level.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools are part of education improvement partnerships. [27186]

Jacqui Smith: We believe that education improvement partnerships are best run at local level by schools for schools based on local needs. Education improvement partnerships are not a centrally run programme and this Department does not operate a process of official approval, nor maintain records of participating schools.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what improvements to the data collection system have been made as part of the New Relationship with Schools. [27187]

Jacqui Smith: There have been a number of improvements based on the principle of collecting data once and sharing many times, primarily to help reduce burdens. The introduction of the Pupil Level Annual

School Census (PLASC) in 2002 has enabled individual pupil data to be collected electronically from schools and simplified the pupil registration process for national curriculum tests. The quality of data for both local and central use has also improved.

My Department is continuing a programme to streamline data collections and include them wherever possible within an enhanced school census. By 2007, six separate surveys will have been brought within the school census.

My Department has also developed a process by which data can be transferred automatically and securely between schools, local authorities and other agencies. The site is used to transfer statutory returns, national curriculum teacher assessments, and relevant data when a pupil moves to a new school. For the latter the New Relationship with Schools programme has facilitated every school being able to access missing information about their pupils to aid their learning plans.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of the issue by her Department of a non-statutory national framework for teaching religious education. [27192]

Jacqui Smith: The non-statutory national framework for religious education was introduced in October 2004. Local authorities are now working to embed the framework in their locally agreed syllabuses. We expect preliminary data on its implementation to be available by spring 2006.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students who failed to obtain a Level 2 qualification at their first attempt studied *(a)* five, *(b)* six, *(c)* seven, *(d)* eight, *(e)* nine, *(f)* 10, *(g)* 11, *(h)* 12, *(i)* 13, *(j)* 14, *(k)* 15 and *(l)* 16 or more GCSE subjects or equivalent qualifications in the last year for which figures are available. [25036]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not centrally available.

Foreign Language Teaching

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps her Department is taking to promote best practice in the teaching of foreign languages; [28299]

(2) what research has been conducted by her Department into best practice in foreign language teaching. [28300]

Jacqui Smith: The most recent research on foreign language teaching has focused on practice in primary schools—this includes research led by Christ Church University College Canterbury, published in 2004, and research led by the University of Warwick and published last month on the evaluation of our Key Stage 2 Language Pathfinder programmes. The outcomes of this research have informed the development of new materials, and most importantly the Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages which was launched on 27 October. The Framework includes learning objectives, advice on delivering language programmes, and from early 2006 it will be accompanied by a website hosting good practice video clips and planning tools.

At secondary level, a separate modern foreign languages programme forms part of the Secondary National Strategy. It includes a Framework of objectives, accompanied by guidance materials, based on good practice and aimed at strengthening provision. We are also currently tendering for a research project at Key Stage 3, which will look at provision and practice in language learning, in order to understand better the impact of the Key Stage 3 Framework and other current initiatives on the curriculum, and to guide future policy.

Free School Meals

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many pupils in *(a)* city academies, *(b)* city technology colleges, *(c)* foundation schools and *(d)* all other types of school in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by local authority, were entitled to free school meals; [25554]

(2) what proportion of students in *(a)* city academies and *(b)* other schools were entitled to free school meals in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by local authority area. [25555]

Jacqui Smith: *[holding answer 7 November]:* The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many children in *(a)* England and *(b)* Tamworth are eligible for free school meals; and what the take-up rate has been in each of the last five years; [26165]

(2) how many children in *(a)* England, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* Tamworth receive free school meals. [26166]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2], position in January each year: 2001 to 2005—Tamworth parliamentary constituency

Maintained nursery and primary

	Number on roll	*Pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals[3]*	*Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals*
2001	8,860	1,173	13.2	1,390	15.7
2002	8,752	1,116	12.8	1,333	15.2
2003	8,470	914	10.8	1,132	13.4
2004	8,254	888	10.8	1,086	13.2
2005	8,171	868	10.6	1,041	12.7

Maintained secondary

	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	6,079	491	8.1	753	12.4
2002	6,086	481	7.9	720	11.8
2003	6,243	547	8.8	671	10.7
2004	6,191	467	7.5	636	10.3
2005	6,056	396	6.5	587	9.7

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.

[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.

Source:

Annual schools' census

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2], position in January each year: 2001 to 2005—Staffordshire local authority

Maintained nursery and primary

	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	70,610	7,038	10.0	8,509	12.1
2002	69,530	6,756	9.7	8,146	11.7
2003	68,166	6,291	9.2	7,560	11.1
2004	66,862	6,068	9.1	7,333	11.0
2005	65,976	5,694	8.6	7,007	10.6

Maintained secondary

	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	60,934	3,841	6.3	5,625	9.2
2002	61,272	3,851	6.3	5,622	9.2
2003	62,290	3,789	6.1	5,418	8.7
2004	62,381	3,744	6.0	5,310	8.5
2005	61,382	3,644	5.9	4,993	8.1

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll' includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.

[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.

Source:

Annual schools' census

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2], position in January each year: 2001 to 2005 England

Maintained nursery and primary

	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	4,451,220	631,640	14.2	783,510	17.6
2002	4,405,640	616,630	14.0	754,510	17.1
2003	4,350,260	604,910	13.9	731,610	16.8
2004	4,293,180	608,760	14.2	741,150	17.3
2005	4,243,110	568,350	13.4	717,230	16.9

Maintained secondary

	Number on roll	Pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage taking free school meals[3]	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals
2001	3,226,970	353,470	11.0	509,680	15.8
2002	3,260,930	354,260	10.9	486,350	14.9
2003	3,308,490	349,780	10.6	478,920	14.5
2004	3,326,800	351,380	10.6	477,290	14.3
2005	3,317,590	335,140	10.1	465,520	14.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Prior to 2003 'Number on roll1 includes all full and part time pupils who are solely registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003

[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual schools' census

GCSEs

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* boys, *(b)* girls and *(c)* all children aged 15 years at the end of the 2004/05 academic year achieved five A*-C grades at GCSE including mathematics and English, broken down by type of school. [21692]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The information requested can be found in the following table. This is compiled from the provisional data used for Statistical First Release 46/2005 (published on 20 October) and is currently in the process of being checked by schools.

This year a higher volume of GNVQ results were missing from the data initially supplied to the Department. This may affect the GCSE and equivalent indicators—for this reason the provisional nature of these figures should be emphasised and any conclusions drawn from the figures, including comparisons between school types, should be treated with caution.

GCSE and equivalent attempts and achievements of 15-year-old pupils[1] by school type

School type[3]	1998/99[2] Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	1998/99[2] Percentage who achieved at GCSE/GNVQ: 5+ A*-C grades	1998/99[2] Percentage who achieved at GCSE/GNVQ: 5+ A*-C grades inc. English and mathematics	2004/05[2] Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	2004/05[2] Percentage who achieved at GCSE and equivalent: 5+ A*-C grades	2004/05[2] Percentage who achieved at GCSE and equivalent: 5+ A*-C grades inc. English and mathematics
Community Schools						
Boys	174,574	36.9	28.6	186,377	45.6	34.3
Girls	173,459	48.2	36.7	185,952	56.3	43.1
Total	348,033	42.5	32.6	372,329	51.0	38.7
Voluntary Aided Schools						
Boys	37,589	50.2	42.1	41,384	59.3	48.1
Girls	36,755	58.4	46.8	41,021	67.4	54.0
Total	74,344	54.3	44.4	82,405	63.3	51.1
Voluntary Controlled Schools						
Boys	9,597	51.4	43.5	10,648	57.8	48.8
Girls	9,248	60.7	49.5	9,707	67.3	56.2
Total	18,845	56.0	46.5	20,355	62.3	52.3
Foundation Schools						
Boys	42,100	48.8	40.2	49,263	57.4	46.5
Girls	38,329	59.5	47.7	46,483	65.3	53.2
Total	80,429	53.9	43.8	95,746	61.2	49.7
City Technology Colleges						
Boys	1,162	65.1	50.4	1,234	82.7	65.0
Girls	1,232	69.0	52.7	1,255	86.0	66.5
Total	2,394	67.1	51.6	2,489	84.3	65.7
Academies						
Boys	—	—	—	1,071	32.9	14.1
Girls	—	—	—	1,030	37.8	16.7
Total	—	—	—	2,101	35.3	15.4
Community Special Schools						
Boys	6,503	0.2	0.1	6,500	0.4	0.2
Girls	3,011	0.2	0.2	3,014	0.6	0.3
Total	9,514	0.2	0.1	9,514	0.5	0.3
Foundation Special Schools						
Boys	113	0.0	0.0	133	0.0	0.0
Girls	58	0.0	0.0	60	0.0	0.0
Total	171	0.0	0.0	193	0.0	0.0
Non Maintained Special Schools						
Boys	419	5.3	3.8	436	5.7	3.2
Girls	178	10.1	9.6	175	10.9	6.9
Total	597	6.7	5.5	611	7.2	4.3
Independent Special Schools[4]						
Boys	561	3.0	1.8	526	10.6	7.4
Girls	99	2.0	2.0	96	4.2	3.1
Total	660	2.9	1.8	622	9.6	6.8
Independent Schools						
Boys	21,514	81.1	76.5	23,000	82.9	72.0
Girls	20,054	85.5	80.5	22,696	86.3	79.0
Total	41,568	83.2	78.5	45,696	84.6	75.5
Hospital Schools and PRUs[5]						
Boys	2,975	0.6	0.4	3,665	0.6	0.4
Girls	1,442	1.4	1.2	1,468	2.2	1.4
Total	4,417	0.9	0.7	5,133	1.1	0.7
All Schools						
Boys	297,107	42.8	35.0	324,237	50.8	40.0
Girls	283,865	53.4	42.5	312,957	60.8	48.4
Total	580,972	47.9	38.6	637,194	55.7	44.1

[1] Number of pupils on roll aged 15 at the start of the academic year, ie 31 August.

[2] Including attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

[3] Institution type as recorded through Secondary School Achievement and Attainment tables.

[4] Independent Special School approved to take pupils with special educational needs.

[5] Including community and foundation hospital schools and pupil referral units.

Figures for 1998/99 have been provided for comparison (1998/99 is the earliest that this classification of school types can be provided).

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what further progress has been made on the functional skills aspect of GCSEs. [28378]

Jacqui Smith: Achieving functional skills in English, maths and ICT underpins all the reforms for the education of 14 to 19-year-olds. We have been working since the publication of the White Paper with our partners towards a clear definition of what we expect the new functional skills units to cover. We will set out this definition in our forthcoming Implementation Plan.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority have prepared a draft set of standards that set out their recommendations for the content of each skill at each level and they will be consulting on these draft standards in December 2005. The agreed definition and standards for functional skills will then inform the development of new units in functional skills.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with schools about the introduction of the new science GCSE in September 2006. [28379]

Jacqui Smith: The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the National Foundation for Educational Research carried out widespread consultation on proposals to introduce a revised programme of study at Key Stage 4. The science and science education communities and a sample of schools, colleges and universities were included in the consultation. The majority of respondents supported the changes.

The QCA has also recently issued guidance to schools on the Key Stage 4 and GCSE changes and has run, together with other delivery partners, various dissemination conferences. Reactions to the changes have been very positive.

Geography Development Fund

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the allocation to the Geography Development Fund in improving continuing professional development for non-specialist primary teachers. [26780]

Jacqui Smith: The Geography Development Fund was established in 2004, to improve the teaching, learning and status of geography in schools. We judge the allocation to be sufficient to lay the foundations for subject development. The Fund is targeting strategic priorities identified by the subject community. In 2004/05 a significant part of the Fund was devoted to supporting primary teachers. The 'Geography from Square One' project provides accessible teaching ideas, particularly for non-specialists and the pilot 'Primary Geography Quality Mark' helps schools deliver quality geography and be recognised for doing so. These developments have been well received by teachers and will be built on through further work supported by the Geography Development Fund in 2005/06.

Gifted and Talented Youth

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 118W, on gifted and talented youth, how many members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth there are in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency, broken down by school. [28186]

Jacqui Smith: 67 members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth are resident in the Bognor Regis and Littlehampton constituency. These pupils attend The Angmering School in Littlehampton in the neighbouring constituency of Arundel and South Downs.

Holland Park Secondary School

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the plans to sell off Holland Park Secondary School; and whether the governors of Holland Park Secondary School had apprised her Department of their proposal to sell off the school. [27248]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* In January 2004, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea applied, with the knowledge and consent of the Governors of Holland Park Secondary School, to dispose of part of the school site. The land to be sold consists of a hard play court, a gymnasium and a small swimming pool. Only the sale of the hard play court needs the Secretary of State's consent.

The proceeds of sale of this land will be used towards the costs of redeveloping the school on its northern site. The outcome will be a brand new state-of-the art school with some first class sports facilities. Consent was given on 25 March 2004.

Learning and Skills Council

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will ask the regional offices of the Learning and Skills Council to base the allocation of public funding to each qualification level available to adults on an assessment of the skills needs of their respective regions. [23612]

Bill Rammell: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to meet agreed national priorities and targets. We do not agree specific regional budgets with the LSC for adult learning. It is for the LSC to determine for itself the most appropriate balance of investment in adult learning provision, within the funds allocated to it and within the overall framework set by Government. The LSC works closely with Regional Skills Partnerships, whose role is to bring together key partners including the regional development agencies, the Skills for Business Network, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities, and the LSC, to ensure that emerging skills needs are identified and addressed.

As part of its agenda for change work the LSC is considering how it might simplify its processes for allocating regional budgets.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 962W, to the hon. Member

for Fareham (Mr. Hoban), on the Learning and Skills Council, how many learners will be funded in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2007–08 and *(c)* 2008–09. [24985]

Bill Rammell: We are broadly maintaining the overall public funding that the LSC will be able to allocate to support adult learning on average through to 2007–08. But the pattern of that learning will change. To meet our national priorities, we need to shift the pattern so that we provide a greater number of longer and more expensive courses for adults, to equip them with the range of skills they need for employability and further progression to higher levels of training.

As a consequence, the number of publicly funded places on shorter courses which do not lead to national qualifications is likely to fall by around 500,000. But set against this, there will be some 400,000 places available through the National Employer Training Programme and over 260,000 places for adults taking full Level 2 programmes in mainstream further education—which is a total increase of 274,000 full Level 2 places compared with 2005–06. So while maintaining the overall volume of adult training, we estimate there will be a net reduction in publicly-funded places of around 230,000 (about 6 per cent.). That will result in a total of some 3.5 million places available for adults by 2007–08. We expect that this reduction can be offset by colleges and other providers offering a wider range of programmes at full cost. In addition, public funding will support an expected additional 46,000 16 to 19-year-olds in learning in FE colleges and schools by 2007/08 compared with 2005/06, and maintain the numbers on apprenticeships while increasing the numbers successfully completing the full apprenticeship framework.

Offender Learning Schemes

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 124W, on offender learning schemes, when new offender learning and skills delivery arrangements will be extended to the rest of England. [28948]

Phil Hope: The new offender learning and skills delivery arrangements will be extended to the rest of England on 31 July 2006.

Parenting Contracts

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many parenting contracts have been issued in Milton Keynes since their inception. [27203]

Jacqui Smith: My Department began collecting data on parenting contracts (in cases of non-attendance and exclusions from school) from September 2004. Between September 2004 and 31 July 2005 local authorities in England have reported that 5,717 parenting contracts in cases of non-attendance have been agreed with parents. During the same period 418 parenting contracts in cases of exclusion from school were agreed with parents. Milton Keynes local authority has reported no parenting contracts between September 2004 and 31 July 2005. Data for this autumn term will be published in March 2006.

Positive Learning Environment

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to promote a pro-achievement ethos, culture and environment within *(a)* schools and *(b)* communities. [26175]

Jacqui Smith: The Government have introduced a wide range of reforms which have promoted substantial improvements in achievement rates since 1997. These include our Specialist Schools policy which enables some of our best schools to drive innovation and play a leading role in the system; the introduction of Academies to raise attainment in communities in the areas of greatest need; and the targeted challenge and support provided through the National Strategies to raise achievements in the core subjects. These reforms have been supported by an unprecedented level of investment in better teachers' pay; in more support staff; in new computers and other equipment; and in new school buildings.

Real improvements have followed. Compared with 1997, around 84,000 more 11-year-olds started secondary school this year with the basic literacy and numeracy skills to do well; and 50,000 more 14-year-olds achieved the target standard in English and mathematics this year than did so in 2001, when the Key Stage 3 Strategy was introduced. Schools in the most deprived communities have achieved faster than average improvements, especially in the proportion of good passes at GCSE, thanks to programmes such as London Challenge and Excellence in Cities which has also promoted collaboration between schools to raise standards.

The Schools White Paper published last month sets out our plans to improve the school system further, in particular by putting parents and the needs of their children at the heart of it, freeing up schools to innovate and succeed, bringing in new dynamism and external support and ensuring that failure or coasting is not an option for any school.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many calls were made from call centres in her Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment she has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28169]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills does not use predictive diallers within call centres. No calls were made using this facility in 2004–05.

Prison Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding is for 2005–06 courses for prisoners at *(a)* entry level, *(b)* levels 1–3 and *(c)* levels 4–7 separately indicating the amount being spent on Open University courses under *(c)*. [27718]

Phil Hope: Expenditure on learning and skills for offenders in custody is planned to be £110.9 million in financial year 2005–06. Within that total, £1.05 million

is available for higher education and access to higher education courses. The budget is not otherwise hypothecated for provision at particular levels. Actual spend will be determined by the assessed needs of offender learners.

Public Service Agreements

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on progress towards the public service agreement target to raise standards in English and mathematics so that, by 2006, 85 per cent. of 11-year-olds achieve level 4 or above; [26791]

(2) if she will make a statement on progress towards the public service agreement target to raise standards in English, mathematics, ICT and science in secondary education so that by 2007 85 per cent. of 14-year-olds achieve level 5 or above. [26792]

Jacqui Smith: Progress against the Department's outstanding public service agreements (PSAs) was most recently reported in the 2005 departmental report, published in June 2005, together with the Department's assessment towards achievement of the targets. A copy of the report is available from the House of Commons Library.

Provisional results for 2005 key stage 2 tests were published in a Statistical First Release (SFR) on 23 August 2005. The provisional data show 79 per cent. of pupils achieved level 4 and above in English, and 75 per cent. of pupils achieved level 4 and above in mathematics. The corresponding figures for 2004 are 78 per cent. and 74 per cent. respectively. In 1997, 63 per cent. of pupils achieved level 4 and above in English, and 62 per cent. of pupils achieved level 4 and above in mathematics. This year's results mean that compared with 1997, around 84,000 more 11-year-olds started secondary school this year with the basic literacy and numeracy skills to do well.

Provisional results for 2005 key stage 3 tests were published in an SFR on 8 September 2005. The provisional data show: 74 per cent. of pupils achieved level 5 and above in English; 74 per cent. in mathematics; 70 per cent. in science; and 69 per cent. in ICT. The corresponding figures for 2004 are: 71 per cent.; 73 per cent.; 66 per cent. and 67 per cent. respectively. In 1997, 57 per cent. of pupils achieved level 5 and above in English; 60 per cent. in mathematics; 60 per cent. in science; and 50 per cent. in ICT. Approximately 103,000 more 14-year-olds in English and 86,000 more in maths achieved the target level at key stage 3 this year than did so in 1997.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the steps she is taking to ensure the public service agreement target for the percentage of children in all schools achieving five GCSEs at grades A*-C is met. [26793]

Jacqui Smith: Provisional 2005 results show that 55.7 per cent. of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C. This represents an increase of two percentage points compared with 2004 and an increase of 10.6 percentage points compared with 1997. The Department has a number of initiatives to ensure that schools receive the resources, advice and support that they need to raise attainment further at key stage 4. The key stage 3 national strategy has extended to become a full secondary national strategy for school improvement designed to raise standards, particularly in the core subjects, for all secondary school pupils. It is introducing excellent teaching and learning practices into every classroom through CPD, teaching materials and consultancy support. In addition, the secondary performance project draws on the expertise of successful schools and the Specialist Schools Trust to work in partnership with around 400 schools underperforming in value added terms.

The White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" published last month sets out our plans to improve standards further, particularly by providing significant new incentives for schools to tailor education to the needs of every child and focus on the basics of English and mathematics.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will assess progress on the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of 19-year-olds who achieve at least level 2 by three percentage points between 2004 and 2006. [26794]

Bill Rammell: The next formal assessment of this PSA target is due in February 2006. Final reporting on the target will be due in February 2007, when we will have matched data on level 2 attainment for all qualification types for young people who will be 19 in 2006.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure the target is met in respect of science in the public service agreement target to raise standards in secondary schools. [26796]

Jacqui Smith: Through the secondary national strategy we are providing all schools with advice, guidance and teaching materials together with training and targeted consultancy support to improve the quality of teaching and learning in science and to raise standards. In partnership with the Welcome Trust, we have also established a network of science learning centres to enable teachers to enhance their professional skills.

New programmes of study for science are also being introduced at key stages 3 and 4, which are intended to maintain the breadth, depth and challenge of the current curriculum, while ensuring that science teaching is effective, motivating and relevant.

At key stage 3, provisional 2005 results show that 70 per cent. of pupils achieved level 5 and above in science. Provisional 2005 figures at key stage 4 show 50 per cent. of pupils achieved grade A*-C in science. The corresponding figures for 2004 are 66 per cent. and 48.2 per cent. respectively.

Register of Learning Providers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what procedures are in place to ensure only genuine *(a)* language schools and *(b)* education providers are admitted into the UK Register of Learning Providers. [28162]

Phil Hope: The UK Register of Learning Providers is a voluntary register and has a robust system in place to validate all learning providers who wish to register. Learning providers, including language schools, must

be a legal entity and their status is checked through the appropriate channel such as Companies House and the Charity Commission.

Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to publish draft regulations for the implementation for the proposed new School Admissions Code of Practice. [28234]

Jacqui Smith: We have recently consulted on changes to the School Admissions Code of Practice and on Regulations covering the admission of looked after children, infant class size appeals and selection by aptitude. We expect to lay the regulations and the code before Parliament later this month, with both coming in to force in the new year.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria were used to assess the bids from *(a)* Rednock and *(b)* Cleeve school in Gloucestershire for the last round of Building Schools for the Future; and if she will make a statement. [25375]

Jacqui Smith: Gloucestershire county council bid to our Targeted Capital Fund for projects at Cleeve and Rednock schools. The Cleeve bid was successful and the Rednock bid, unsuccessful. I am putting a copy of the bidding guidance, which contains the criteria, in the House Libraries. We have provided feedback to the authority on its unsuccessful bid.

We increased the size of the fund from £493 million to £1.1 billion over two years and this enabled us to support about 45 per cent. of local authority bids, compared to 33 per cent. in the previous round. The fund is, however, very competitive and it is not possible to support all the worthwhile bids we receive.

Building Schools for the Future is our long-term strategic programme to transform the facilities for all secondary pupils over 15 years, subject to future public spending decisions. It does not involve bidding either by local authorities or individual schools. As Gloucestershire does not start in the programme until after 2011, we have just allocated the authority around £20 million to rebuild one of its worst condition schools as a 'school of the future'.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the subjects that are compulsory in secondary schools for each year group. [28184]

Jacqui Smith: The compulsory subjects of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3, years 7–9, are: English; Mathematics; Science; Design and Technology; Information and Communication Technology; History; Geography; Modern Foreign Languages: Art and Design; Music; Physical Education; and Citizenship. Schools must also provide Religious Education, Careers Education and Sex Education.

The compulsory subjects of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4, years 10–11, are: English; Mathematics; Science; Information and Communication Technology; Physical Education; and Citizenship. Schools must also provide Religious Education, Careers Education, and Sex Education. In addition at Key Stage 4, all pupils must undertake work-related learning. Pupils are also entitled if they wish to follow a course in one or more of the four entitlement areas of the arts, design and technology, humanities and modern foreign languages.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list *(a)* infant, *(b)* primary and *(c)* secondary schools which had a deficit in 2004–05; what estimate she has made of the number of schools likely to have a deficit by the end of 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [24614]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not yet available. The Department is awaiting a complete dataset relating to the 2004–05 financial year. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as the information is to hand.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils did not have a school place on (i) 1 August, (ii) 1 September and (iii) 1 October in each London borough. [24474]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally. However, we do know that co-ordination of the secondary admissions process has resulted in fewer parents receiving multiple offers of school places and fewer being left with no offer at all. By giving local authorities a central role in co-ordinating the process for their areas, we have enabled them to obtain better information on children who have not had any offer, and this has led to them being able to intervene earlier to find school places. Local authorities estimated that, compared with the same stage in the process last year, on 1 March 2005 (the national offer date for secondary schools) the number of children in London without an offer of a school place had reduced by 40 per cent.

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that schools have adequate printing facilities which allow them to print out documents for use in classrooms. [19696]

Jacqui Smith: Each maintained school has the freedom to choose the solution that best meets its local needs for printing out documents for use in the classroom. Such facilities will form part of the school's information and communications technology package, which is currently funded through the ICT in Schools Standards Fund, Devolved Formula Capital Grant and other funding that the school or local authority chooses to make available.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills further to her oral statement of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 171, on the Schools White Paper, if she will set out her proposals for improving transport to schools, with particular reference to the cost barriers for the most deprived pupils; and what estimate she has made of the cost of such proposals. [23713]

Jacqui Smith: Research published by my Department in 2004 suggests that nearly two thirds of pupils who currently travel to school by bus or taxi have their fares paid by their family, not their local authority, at an average cost of £7.29 per pupil per week. Only around

10 per cent. of children entitled to free school meals travel three or more miles to school compared to 18 per cent. of children not entitled to free school meals.

The White Paper proposes to improve transport arrangements for the most deprived pupils by extending entitlement to free home to school transport for secondary aged pupils to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is between two and six miles. For the most deprived primary aged pupils, the entitlement to free transport will be extended so that they will receive free transport to their nearest school where this is more than two miles from their home. The estimated cost of these two extensions of entitlement is £40 million per annum. Full costings and related assumptions will be included in the regulatory impact assessment that will accompany the Bill.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of school-age children who reside within six miles of three secondary schools. [25668]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Number of school-age children who reside within six miles[1] of three secondary schools[2]—England

	Number	*Percentage*
5 to 10-year-olds	3,163,619	91.7
11 to 15-year-olds	2,738,714	91.5
5 to 15-year-olds	5,902,333	91.6

[1] Distances calculated are straight line and take no account of the route pupils follow in order to get to school.

[2] Includes maintained secondary schools, CTCs and Academies.

Source:

Annual School Census 2005 Final.

Science

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answers to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire, of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1203–04W, on science, whether the figures in Table 2 are included in the figures in Table 1. [28940]

Jacqui Smith: The figures in Table 2 were not included in Table 1. Table 1 includes recruitment to initial teacher training in universities and other higher education institutions, school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and the Open university but excludes recruitment to employment based routes.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many science departments there have been in state schools in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [23283]

Jacqui Smith: All secondary schools have a science department. Primary schools are not organised by subject departments. Most primary schools appoint a science coordinator to lead, manage and guide the teaching of science in their schools.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 131W, on special schools, what the complex issues are; and if she will make a statement. [28267]

Maria Eagle: There are clear advantages to special schools acquiring trust status but we also need to consider carefully the role of local authorities given that they have statutory responsibilities for identifying, assessing and making provision for children with SEN. We intend to consult special school head teachers, local authority and other representative bodies before coming to a final decision on this issue. We will announce how we intend to proceed in due course.

Selection

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition of *(a)* selection by aptitude and *(b)* selection by ability she used in her recent White Paper. [25664]

Jacqui Smith: 'Ability' is defined in statute by section 99(5)*(b)* of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as

"either general ability or ability in any particular subject or subjects".

Paragraph 7.11 of the statutory school admissions code of practice defines a pupil with aptitude as

"one who is identified as being able to benefit from teaching in a specific subject, or who demonstrates a particular capacity to succeed in that subject".

Sure Start

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effects of Sure Start on *(a)* parents and *(b)* children. [18841]

Beverley Hughes: There is a comprehensive national level evaluation of Sure Start local programmes in place which began in January 2001. It examines the impact of Sure Start on children, parents, families and communities, both in the short, medium and long term by tracking a sample of 8,000 children and their families over time. The first information on the effects of Sure Start on children and families will be available by the end of the year.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the steps she is taking to meet the Sure Start target to reduce the proportion of young children living in households where no one is working. [26784]

Beverley Hughes: Sure Start Local Programmes (and now children's centres) work closely with Jobcentre Plus in providing a range of initiatives to encourage and support parents of young children in moving towards the labour market. Childcare Partnership Managers in all Jobcentre Plus districts are fostering closer working in all local authority areas, including focusing on meeting the childcare needs of unemployed parents. Progress is good with the most recent data (2003–04) showing a 7.3 per cent. drop against the overall target of a 12 per cent. drop by March 2006.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on progress towards the Sure Start target to reduce the proportion of mothers who smoke during pregnancy. [26785]

Beverley Hughes: Our target is to reduce the number of women in Sure Start local programme areas who smoke during pregnancy by 6 per cent. between 2003 and 2006. Up until March 2004 we have achieved a reduction of 1.4 per cent.

Programmes carry out a wide range of activities to reduce smoking from work with pregnant mothers to "smoke free homes initiatives" and preventative work with school children. Some programmes have performed particularly well, reporting up to 25 per cent. reductions in some areas and we are encouraging them to share good practice. This is a challenging target with many programmes working in communities where smoking is the cultural norm. We know that programmes find this work easier where the PCT takes a strong strategic lead, for example, by providing training, advice or help with funding for programmes smoking cessation workers or midwives.

Teaching Standards

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of schools have had unsatisfactory standards of teaching in each of the last five years. [26084]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his letter has been placed in the House Libraries.

*Letter from David Bell to Mr. John Bercow, dated * November 2005:*

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

Attached is a table which shows the percentage of schools judged to have the unsatisfactory/poor teaching, for the academic years 2000/01 to 2004/05.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

Table 1: Percentage of schools with unsatisfactory/poor teaching: 2000/01 to 2004/05

	Percentage of primary schools	*Percentage of secondary schools*
2000/01	4	4
2001/02	3	4
2002/03	3	5
2003/04	3	9
2004/05	3	5

Note:
Framework changes occurred in January 2000 and September 2003. These changes mean that the data are not fully comparable from one framework to another.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the accessibility of extra-curricular activities, including sports, upon under-achievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26029]

Jacqui Smith: Research shows that there are significant benefits for young people participating in study support (out of school hours learning) activities. In June 2001, my Department published "The Impact of Study Support", which set out the findings of a three-year longitudinal study of around 8,000 pupils in 52 secondary schools. The research found that pupils participating in study support do better than their peers who do not in three key areas—attainment, attitudes to school and attendance at school. The study also indicated that minority ethnic pupils and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds gain most benefit, and that participation increases the likeljhood of subsequent participation. Young people can benefit from a wide range of activities, not just those which are linked to curriculum subjects.

A recent MORI survey by my Department showed that the most popular study support activities are PE and sport. In addition to the health and fitness benefits, the medium of sport can be used to enhance young people's numeracy and literacy skills, as well as contributing to improved motivation and behaviour.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of a positive learning environment upon under-achievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26030]

Jacqui Smith: There are a range of factors, in both the home and school, which are shown to influence a positive learning environment. Many of these factors are shown to particularly focus on supporting low achieving children, who disproportionately tend to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Research shows that the quality of the home environment in the pre-school years has the strongest impact on child development at start of school and beyond, and is therefore the most important influence on child development in the pre-school period. The Department's effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) study has shown that, for all children, the type and range of learning activities that parents undertake with their pre-school children (for example, reading, singing nursery rhymes and playing with numbers) are more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income.

Research also highlights that school related factors such as, personalisation of learning, mentoring and tailoring the curriculum for pupils who are gifted and talented all contribute to a positive learning environment. Early findings from the excellence in cities programme and pupil learning credits pilot suggest an impact on attitudes, attendance and key stage 3 mathematics results. The research shows that the most progress in mathematics was made by pupils from the most deprived schools.

School organisation and ethos is also important in developing a positive learning environment. The behaviour improvement programme indicates that effective combinations of measures including behaviour

audits, development of behaviour and attendance strategies, learning mentors, learning support units and multi-agency working, are effective in improving behaviour and attendance.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of low level classroom disruption on under-achievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26040]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has made no formal assessment of the impact of low level classroom disruption on under-achievement However, research evidence indicates that there is a complex relationship between behaviour, attainment and social class. Research shows that being in a school where there are high levels of disruption can impact negatively on pupils' learning and there is some evidence that it may have more of an impact on pupils from low socio-economic groups. In addition the Department's data shows that schools with higher levels of permanent exclusions tend to have lower levels of attainment as do young people who have been excluded.

Evidence also suggests that there is a link between social class and behaviour both at an individual and a school level. Pupils from low socio-economic groups are more likely to report having been punished or excluded from school; and evidence from teachers suggests that schools with high levels of children on free school meals have higher levels of classroom disruption.

We have made clear our support for schools to take a zero tolerance approach in tackling low level disruption in the classroom. We are further strengthening our programme of work to combat such disruption by taking forward the recommendations of an experienced group of heads and teachers, led by Sir Alan Steer, who had a specific remit to address the impact of low level disorder on teaching and learning. A number of these recommendations feature in the recent Schools White Paper.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the potential impact of setting by ability upon underachievement by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26054]

Jacqui Smith: Effective grouping of pupils by ability can raise standards and better engage pupils in their own learning. Putting children in different ability groups within a class is now commonplace in primary schools and over a third of classes are set by ability in secondary schools including the majority of lessons in English, maths, science and modern foreign languages.

It is for schools to use their own professional judgment to determine for themselves how and when to set or group pupils so as to ensure that it helps to raise the attainment of all pupils, including those from low socio-economic backgrounds. We set out proposals in our recent schools' White Paper, for support for schools to tailor education so that no child falls behind and no child is held back from achieving their potential. Our proposals include helping schools to learn from the best practices around setting and grouping as well as investing an additional £60 million a year, and targeting £335 million within the new dedicated schools grant to support personalisation in key stage 3, over the next two years.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the capacity of schools to provide one-to-one teaching to tackle under-achievement by pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds; [26063]

(2) what assessment she has made of the potential impact of one-to-one teaching upon under-achievement by pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds; [26058]

(3) what assessment she has made of the potential impact of tailored teaching upon under-achievement by pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds; [26049]

(4) what assessment she has made of the potential impact of personalised learning upon under-achievement by pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds; [26048]

(5) what action is being taken by her Department to ensure that children from low socio-economic backgrounds in secondary education *(a)* attain the necessary skills and *(b)* achieve the best possible results; [26035]

(6) what action is being taken by her Department to promote opportunity for children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26034]

Jacqui Smith: Good schools have been personalising their teaching and learning, with great success for many years to raise standards and meet the learning needs of their pupils. We know that personalising learning, which includes assessment for learning; high quality tailored whole class, small group and one-to-one teaching; a flexible curriculum, effective school organisation and strong partnerships beyond the school, can raise pupil achievement particularly for low achieving pupils who disproportionately tend to be from low socio-economic backgrounds. We now want this to be common practice across all schools, particularly for children at either end of the ability spectrum whose needs can be the most challenging to meet.

We will therefore allocate £335 million by 2007–08, specifically earmarked within our Dedicated Schools Grant, to provide the resources secondary schools need to start delivering personalised learning for pupils in Key Stage 3, focusing funding on deprived areas, particularly for those who have fallen behind in literacy and numeracy and for those who are gifted or talented. For those schools with the highest numbers of children who have fallen behind we will provide a further targeted £60 million in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08, shared across the primary and secondary sectors, to provide more effective one-to-one and small group tuition. We will also provide all schools with best practice materials, guidance and access to training on the most effective teaching and learning strategies to personalise learning to the needs of each pupil.

Through School Improvement Partners and the new OFSTED inspection regime we will challenge every school to demonstrate they are planning and delivering effective tailored teaching and learning for every child,

particularly for under-achieving groups of pupils, including those from low socio-economic backgrounds, as well as overall school performance.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what problems are faced by her Department when trying to increase parental involvement in education. [26081]

Jacqui Smith: We know that the way schools currently involve parents is varied. For example, we know that in primary schools there is a much more inclusive approach to parents, resulting in parents of primary school children feeling more confident about engaging with their child's school. However, we know this is not always the case with secondary schools, where establishing such a relationship is more difficult. Further, we know that some parents, due to the complexities of their own lives or their own educational history, are more reluctant to engage with their children's school.

We want to help parents and schools to work well together and raise children's achievement. We know that the key to improving parental involvement in children's education is changing attitudes and moving towards a situation where parents are accepted as co-educators and partners in their children's learning, not only in schools but also in local authorities. It is crucial we ensure that the importance of parental involvement is embedded throughout the education chain to establish a culture of parental involvement and encourage a positive, two-way partnership.

To enable this, we are actively encouraging parents to become more closely involved in their children's education and learning at home and at school. Since 1997, we have sought to enhance parental involvement through a range of measures. These include information for parents such as videos, DVDs, the "Learning Journey" guides and the Parents Centre website; and materials for schools such as the Involving Parents, Raising Achievement toolkit.

Parental involvement is not only key to the standards agenda, but is equally central to creating a culture of lifelong learning and high aspirations in communities and families, regardless of background. This message has been reinforced by the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All".

Universities (Bureaucracy)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pages of *(a)* guidance and *(b)* other paperwork universities received from (i) her Department and (ii) non-departmental public bodies in the sector on each day in 2004. [25093]

Bill Rammell: It is not possible to provide information for each day in 2004, so I am providing the information on an annual basis.

The Government conducts their relationship with the university sector in England through three non-departmental public bodies: the Student Loans Company (SLC), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).

During 2004, the SLC issued 5,000 posters to universities about the move paying loans by direct credit to student bank accounts instead of by payment by cheque, asking that these should be displayed to help students.

HEFCE issued in printed form 11 guidance documents; 26 other publications, concerning different aspects of university core business and policy development; six HEFCE newsletters; four newsletters from the Joint Costing and Pricing Group; three Research Assessment Exercise documents; and 21 Circular letters to Vice-Chancellors and heads of HEIs. This came to a total of 1,573 pages.

OFFA issued one guidance document 2004, totalling 18 pages in length.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Abdel Karim Taghouti

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what account his Department has taken of the recommendation of immigration Judge Maurice Cohen given in his determination of 14 September 2005, Appeal No. OA/00652/2005, in respect of the appeal of Abdel Karim Taghouti that entry clearance be granted to the appellant without further delay; and if he will make a statement; [28022]

(2) for what reasons the decision of Asylum and Immigration Tribunal determined on 14 September 2005 in respect of Mr. Abdel Karim Taghouti, Appeal No. OA/00652/2005, has not yet been sent by the Government to the UK embassy in Tunis; when it will be sent; when a spouse's visa will be issued; and if he will make a statement. [28023]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The visa section at our embassy in Tunis received Mr. Taghouti's appeal determination from the Home Office on 31 October 2005. There was a public holiday between 3–7 November 2005, which prevented the embassy from contacting Mr. Taghouti. However, he approached the visa section on 8 November 2005 with his passport and was issued with his spouse visa.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons the UK embassy entry clearance office in Tunis has disregarded the submission of two faxed copies of the successful appeal of Abdel Karim Taghouti, Appeal No. OA/00652/2005, against their refusal to grant him a spouse's visa submitted to them by Messrs. Marziano Khatry Mak Solicitors; and if he will make a statement. [28024]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The visa section at our embassy in Tunis received faxed copies of Mr. Taghouti's appeal determination from Marziano Khatry Mak Solicitors on 15 September 2005 and 25 October 2005. On receipt of the first fax, the visa section replied by e-mail to explain that an entry clearance officer must receive an appeal determination directly from the Home Office.

The visa section received Mr. Taghouti's appeal determination from the Home Office on 31 October 2005. There was a public holiday between 3–7 November 2005, which prevented the embassy from contacting Mr. Taghouti. However, he approached the visa section on 8 November 2005 with his passport and was issued with his spouse visa.

China

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he plans to have with President Hu of China during his visit to the UK regarding China's use of political psychiatry. [27024]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister raised human rights issues with President Hu during his visit. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did not hold a separate meeting with the President.

Craig Alden

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department has provided to Mr. Craig Alden, a British citizen imprisoned in Brazil; and if he will make a statement. [26087]

Dr. Howells: British embassy officials visit Craig Alden on a regular basis. The British consul last visited him on 3 November 2005. In addition embassy officials regularly speak to Mr. Alden by telephone.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met Craig Alden's mother in 2004 and my noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met Mrs. Alden in July 2005. Consular officials in London and Brasilia have met Mrs. Alden on a number of occasions.

As a result of concerns about the fairness of the trial proceedings leading to Craig Alden's conviction in 2002, the FCO offered Craig Alden the services of a member of the FCO pro bono lawyers panel, Jeremy Richardson QC.

Jeremy Richardson produced two reports on the Alden case, as a result of which the Foreign Secretary made a decision to support an application to the Brazilian Government, for presidential expulsion. He wrote to the Brazilian Foreign Minister in March 2005 referring to some of the concerns highlighted by Jeremy Richardson. In August 2005, the Brazilian authorities informed British embassy officials of their intention to reject Craig Alden's request for presidential expulsion. The British ambassador in Brasilia continues to press the Brazilian authorities for a full response.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department from May 1997 up to and including April 2005, broken down by Act. [27588]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 11 November 2005]*: The following criminal offences have been created in legislation for which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been responsible from May 1997 to April 2005:

International Criminal Court Act 2001: Sections 51, 52, 54, 58, 59 and 61; genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, ancillary offences, offences in relation to the International Criminal Court.

Landmines Act 1998: Sections 2, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 19; offences relating to anti-personnel landmines, offences relating to destruction, fact finding missions, notices, unlawful obstruction and disclosure of information.

Nuclear Explosions (Prohibition and Inspections) Act 1998: Sections 1 and 7; causing a nuclear explosion, offences in connection with on-site inspections.

Indonesia

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the UK Government has made to the Indonesian Government over incidents of violence against the Christian community in Central Sulawesi. [27198]

Ian Pearson: Immediately after the recent beheadings in Central Sulawesi, President Yudhoyono condemned what he described as a "sadistic crime", and sent extra police to the area to ensure that violence did not flare up. The British ambassador in Jakarta has discussed the issue with senior Indonesian officials and expressed the UK's shock at the incident.

In September this year, President Yudhoyono stressed that the state guaranteed every citizen religious freedom and called on the police and members of the public to act to prevent violence against any faith. We co-sponsored, with the Indonesian Government in Bali in July, an international conference to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony. We will continue to co-operate with them on this important objective.

Iran

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from which organisations the Government have received intelligence reports on the situation in Iran. [28325]

Dr. Howells: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Somalia

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the ambush of Somalian interim Prime Minister Ali Muhammad Gedi in Mogadishu on 7 November. [27224]

Ian Pearson: As EU presidency we issued a statement condemning in the strongest terms the attack, deeply regretting the killing and wounding of several people and conveying condolences to the families of the victims.

We continue to engage with partners in the international community to support the Transitional Federal Institutions and urge the Somalis to resolve their differences peacefully and return to good governance.

Sudan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the US Administration regarding the decision to reduce US funding for the African Union mission in Darfur. [26971]

Ian Pearson: We have raised this issue with the US Administration who have told us that no decision has been taken to reduce funding for the African Union mission in Darfur, contrary to press accounts.

United States (Prince of Wales's Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 754W, on HRH Prince of Wales (US visit), whether it is intended that, in respect of the 60 per cent. balance of other costs referred to in his reply, *(a)* HRH the Prince of Wales' Household shall be billed for these amounts and *(b)* the charities shall be billed directly for these amounts; and what amounts will be paid by each charity. [26870]

Mr. Straw: The estimated costs included in the 60 per cent. have been or will be met directly by The Prince of Wales' Household or associated charities and no recharging is therefore required. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have details of the amounts incurred by individual charities.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 754W, on HRH the Prince of Wales (US visit), what the *(a)* details and *(b)* amounts are of the other costs referred to in his reply; and if he will make a statement. [26873]

Mr. Straw: Exact costs of the visit will not be known until the final accounts are completed. However, we estimate that the total costs to be met by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from public funds to be £180,000.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much of the cost of HRH the Prince of Wales's visit to the US was met out of the UK ambassador's frais allowance. [26874]

Mr. Straw: We are unable to provide this breakdown until all the final costs of the visit are accounted for. I will write to my hon. Friend once the figures are available, which will be by the end of December, and will place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of the UK Embassy's press office staff accompanied HRH the Prince of Wales during his official visit to the US; on what occasions; how many person hours were involved; what proportion of the press office person hours were in connection with events relating to the Prince's charities; on what occasions; and if he will make a statement. [26875]

Ian Pearson: Two out of the five Press Office staff from the British Embassy in Washington accompanied Their Royal Highnesses at all times throughout the tour. The following elements required additional support from the press office: White House dinner and reception—1 additional press officer; Visit to SEED school—2 additional press officers; Visit to National Institutes of Health—1 additional press officer; Seminar at Georgetown University—1 additional press officer; Reception at the Ambassador's Residence—1 additional press officer; and visit to Folger Shakespeare Library—1 additional press officer.

The Embassy estimates that 177 hours were spent in total on the press element for the duration of the visit. There were three events with which His Royal Highnesses' Foundations were associated: The National Building Museum event, the Reception hosted by Her Majesty's Ambassador and the Business and Environment Event in San Francisco. Seven hours were spent doing press work for these events.

CABINET OFFICE

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27739]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The last year for which figures are available is 2004–05. During that period, four cases of injury claims were settled by the Department. The amounts involved were:

£65,629.30

£6,258.70

£2,125.00

£700.64

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27390]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The top five most valuable movable assets are information technology hardware and software relating to e-Government projects (development of the Government Gateway, Delivering on the Promise, Knowledge Network and Directgov) and to Scope (cross-departmental information strategy.)

The next five most valuable movable assets are items of art and antique furniture located in buildings within the Cabinet Office's estate.

The top 10 most valuable immovable assets are freehold properties on the Cabinet Office's estate.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27570]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Details of the remuneration of the senior management in the Cabinet Office are published in the Department's Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2004–05 at paragraph 3.3, beginning on page 35. A copy is available in the Library.

Smoking

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish the findings of the Better Regulation Task Force on the provisions on smoking in public places contained in the Health Bill; and if he will make a statement. [28069]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) is an independent body, set up to advise Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement comply with the five principles of good regulation. The Cabinet Office sponsors the BRTF but does not speak for it.

HEALTH

Alliance Medical

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average amount of time taken is for Alliance Medical to provide extra scanning capacity in the NHS from winning the contract for the service to the services coming on-line. [19846]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The contract was awarded to Alliance Medical Limited in June 2004. The first unit was scanning national health service patients five weeks later and the full service of 12 mobile scanners became operational by December 2004.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 573W, on carbon monoxide poisoning, how many leaflets will be available for distribution to general practitioner surgeries. [25063]

Caroline Flint: 186,500 leaflets will be printed in total and 20 leaflets will be distributed to each of the approximately 93,000 general practitioner surgeries in England. 50 leaflets will be provided for each of the endorsers and 100 will be provided for CO-Gas safety. The remainder will be stored for distribution in response to individual requests. The leaflet is also being made available on the Department's website.

Correspondence

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will respond to the letter of 12 September 2005 from Mr. Hewson of Ashley Lane, New Milton, regarding his family's recent experience of NHS provision. [23816]

Jane Kennedy: We have no record of receiving Mr. Hewson's original letter; however he did send a copy of the letter on 25 October 2005 and a reply was sent on 1 November 2005.

Data Protection

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will investigate the Royal Free hospital's complaints handling arrangements; and if she will take steps *(a)* to remind the hospital authorities of the exemption of hon. Members from data protection rules

concerning patient confidentiality and *(b)* to encourage them to deal with hon. Members' complaints more promptly. [26095]

Jane Kennedy: While Members of Parliament are not prevented from accessing patient records by the Data Protection Act 1998, it is important to distinguish between this Act and the separate common law obligations of confidentiality under which patients records are held. Access to records held in confidence must be with the consent of the patient concerned. Right hon. and hon. Members should ensure that they have this consent prior to undertaking investigations on behalf of their constituents.

The Department has published a code of practice on confidentiality for the national health service that provides comprehensive guidance on the use and disclosure of patient health information. This states that:

"Careful consideration of any written authorisation and prompt action are key, e.g. where an MP states, in writing, that she/he has a patient's consent this may be accepted without further resort to the patient."

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24383]

Jane Kenpedy *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Northfield House at Kettering General Hospital is in the ownership of the Secretary of State for Health.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which individual is responsible for developing and implementing her Department's Skills Development Plan. [23843]

Jane Kennedy: The Director of Human Resources is responsible for developing and implementing the skills development plan.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of her Department's Skills Development Plan. [23867]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new staff started employment in the Department during the year ending 31 March 2005 *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003, *(d)* 2004 and *(e)* 2005; and if she will make a statement. [24663]

Jane Kennedy: The number of staff who joined the Department over the last five years is shown in the table. Many of these staff would have been on a fixed term contract, or on loan/secondment into the Department, therefore the number of staff who remain employed by the Department is also shown.

As at 1 February to 31 March:	*Total number of new staff in Department of Health*	*Still employed*	*No longer employed*
2000–01	815	168	647
2001–02	738	188	550
2002–03	635	201	434
2003–04	369	114	255
2004–05	263	170	93

As at 1 February to 31 March:	*Total number of new staff in Department of Health*	*Still employed (percentage)*
2000–01	815	20.6
2001–02	738	25.5
2002–03	635	31.7
2003–04	369	30.9
2004–05	263	64.6

Total number of full-time equivalent staff in Department of Health[1]

As at 31 March:	
2001	3,632
2002	3,809
2003	3,390
2004	2,964
2005	2,189

[1] Figures taken from 2005 departmental report.

Diabetes

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many insulin pumps have been prescribed to NHS patients since the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Guidance was issued in February 2003. [25953]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* This information is not held centrally.

HIV/AIDS

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the cost-effectiveness of the refusal to grant free HIV treatment of some migrants; [25845]

(2) what representations she has received regarding the provision of free HIV treatment to migrants in the UK. [25911]

Jane Kennedy: Diagnostic testing for HIV, and any associated counselling is free to all. However, subsequent treatment should the test prove positive is not and those people who are not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, or otherwise exempt from charges, are expected to pay for any national health service hospital treatment provided. This has always been the case since the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations were introduced in 1989. We believe that the overseas visitors charging regime is about more than just the protection of NHS resources. Equally important is the protection of the principle that the NHS exists primarily for the benefit of those who are living legally in the UK, and not for those who are not. The Government have to balance public health responsibilities, and

responsibilities to individual patients, with its wider responsibilities in terms of immigration and asylum policy. Such responsibilities cannot be assessed in purely monetary terms.

A number of voluntary bodies and other organisations with an interest in HIV/AIDS have written to Ministers on this matter in recent months. In addition, the Health Select Committee covered this issue in its report "New Developments in Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Policy" published in March 2005, to which the Government responded in July 2005.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to update the HIV Testing Kits and Services Regulations 1992 to *(a)* legalise and *(b)* regulate home testing for HIV/AIDS; and what representations she has received on this subject. [26006]

Caroline Flint: We have no current plans to update the HIV Testing Kits and Services Regulations 1992 and have received no representations on this subject. We keep policy on HIV testing under ongoing review.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to evaluate the costs and benefits to the NHS of exempting the continuing treatment of HIV/AIDS on the NHS from charges for those who are not otherwise entitled to treatment free of charge. [26020]

Jane Kennedy: The national health service is first and foremost for people who live in the United Kingdom (UK). Anyone who is not ordinarily resident in the UK is subject to the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended, and will be liable to pay for any hospital treatment they receive, including HIV treatment, unless they meet the criteria for one of many exemption categories listed in the regulations. This has always been the case since these regulations were introduced in 1989.

We have no plans to carry out a specific cost/benefit analysis of this long-standing policy at this time. We believe that the overseas visitors charging regime is about more than just the protection of NHS resources. Equally important is the protection of the principle that the NHS exists primarily for the benefit of those who are living legally in the UK, and not for those who are not. The Government has to balance public health responsibilities, and responsibilities to individual patients, with its wider responsibilities in terms of immigration and asylum policy. Such responsibilities cannot be assessed in purely monetary terms.

Hospital Acquired Infection

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made by the Office for National Statistics and the Health Protection Agency in the study of the proportion of deaths which may be associated with hospital acquired infections. [25288]

Jane Kennedy: The Health Protection Agency and the Office for National Statistics are undertaking this national study of deaths associated with healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs). The study will investigate a proportion of the deaths that occur, to identify potentially avoidable factors and lessons to be learned from them.

This study consists of two main parts, a confidential study of deaths following HCAI and a separate quantitative analysis to estimate the proportion of patients with a defined HCAI who die within specified periods. A six-month pilot phase of the confidential qualitative study is underway and an interim report is expected next year. The main phase will be completed in the 18 months following and a report will be submitted to the Department and published at the end of the study. The quantitative study will be undertaken over the same period.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals are proposed for closure in England; and if she will make a statement. [17744]

Mr. Byrne: It is for local national health service organisations to decide on hospital closures. This Government has given local authority overview and scrutiny committees the power to review and scrutinise health services from the perspective of their local populations. NHS bodies are under a duty to consult overview and scrutiny committees on any plans to make substantial variation to NHS services. Those committees have the powers to refer any proposal to the Secretary of State if they believe the plans are not in the interests of the health service.

Hospital Restaurants

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been offered a hospital subsidy to visit the hospital restaurant in each year since 1997; and how many of these patients were waiting in the accident and emergency department. [25877]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not collected by the Department. It is for local determination to decide if, and when, it is appropriate to offer patients the means to purchase food from the hospital restaurant. Clinical advice will influence any decisions taken with regard to patients within accident and emergency departments.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of her Department. [23789]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 250W. Where a numeracy test is carried out, it usually takes the form of a written paper comprising a set of numerical questions. Where literacy tests are carried out, they usually comprise a spelling test, a word usage test, a drafting test and an English comprehension test.

Locum Doctors

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of locum doctors working in the NHS in each year since 1997. [18356]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 131W to the Member for North Southwark and Bermondsey (Simon Hughes).

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in her Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation; to which place they have been relocated; and if she will make a statement. [24330]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Department has committed to relocate at least 1,110 posts by March 2010, with 80 from the core Department and 1,030 from arms length bodies.

No Departmental staff were relocated from London to Leeds during 2004–05 as a result of the Lyons Review and none are expected to relocate during 2005–06. However, the following posts have been relocated, or are expected to relocate, from our arms length bodies in those periods, which is shown in the table.

Posts relocated from arm's length bodies

2004–05	*Number*
Healthcare Commission	165
General Social Care Council	88
Total	253
2005–06	
NHS Connecting for Health	75
Health and Social Care Information Centre	76
NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement	170
NHS Professionals	40
Total	361

Malnourishment (Portsmouth)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the number of people suffering from malnourishment in Portsmouth; and if she will make a statement. [26134]

Caroline Flint: There has been no specifically commissioned research into malnourishment in Portsmouth or the number of people affected by this. However, there is a strong local awareness of this issue and a range of initiatives has been introduced in the city accordingly. Work is in progress to evaluate a fruit and vegetable delivery scheme in one of the city's target regeneration areas. Work is also under way, again in targeted regeneration areas, to increase cookery skills through schools and community centres.

NHS Direct

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effects of NHS Direct on recruitment in accident and emergency. [18314]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to her on 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1521W.

NHS Property

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total value is of property owned by the NHS which is allocated for sale but has not yet been sold; and what the total cost is per month of retaining this property in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority. [26288]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not held centrally by the Department.

NICE (Drug Approvals)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) can undertake before final market authorisation has been granted to a drug by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency in order that final approval by NICE can be accelerated. [19912]

Jane Kennedy: Information about the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) processes is available on their website at www.nice.org.uk. Once a drug is formally referred to NICE, the Institute can begin the initial stages of the appraisal process before United Kingdom approval is given. However, I understand that NICE is not able to produce guidance or release consultation documents on any drug that has not received UK regulatory approval.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that appraisals of new drugs are carried out in a timely and expeditious manner. [26581]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Ministerial Statement I gave on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 51–52SW.

Obesity Clinics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialist obesity clinics are operated by the national health service in England, broken down by region; what the *(a)* address and *(b)* contact details of each are; whether contact information will be included within the forthcoming Weight Loss Guide; and what steps she intends to take to encourage the development of further clinics. [26683]

Caroline Flint: Details of national health service operated obesity clinics for children and adults are shown in the tables.

Health professionals are made aware of these clinics by their primary care trusts (PCTs). It is also up to PCTs as local commissioners and providers of services to determine the most appropriate methods to deliver health care to their populations, based on clinical need and effectiveness, as well as local circumstance, drawing on the available evidence.

Obesity clinics for children in England

Government region	*Clinic*	*Address/Contact*
London	The Royal London Hospital	Nutrition and Dietetic Department 59 Philpot Street London E1
London	Great Ormond Street Hospital	Great Ormond Street, London WC1N 3JH

Obesity clinics for children in England

Government region	*Clinic*	*Address/Contact*
South East	Surrey Hampshire Borders NHS Trust	Jarvis Centre 60 Stoughton Road Guilford Surrey GU1 1U
South West	Royal Hospital for Sick Children	St. Michael's Hill Bristol BS2 8BJ
West Midlands	Birmingham Heartlands Hospital	Department of Paediatrics Bordersley Green East Birmingham B95SS
North West	Alder Hey Hospital	Eaton Road Liverpool L12 2AP
Yorkshire/Humber	University of Leeds	Belmont House 3-5 Belmont Grove Leeds LS2 9DE

NHS operated obesity clinics for adults in England

Region	*Centre*	*Address/Contact*
North West	University Hospital Aintree	University Clinical Department Longmoor Lane Liverpool L97AL
Yorkshire/Humber	Leeds General Infirmary	Great George Street Leeds LS1 BEX
West Midlands	Birmingham Heartlands Hospital	Department of Medicine, Diabetes and Endocrinology Bordersley Green East Birmingham B9 5SS
East Midlands	Queens Medical Centre	The Clinical Nutrition Unit Nottingham NG2 7HU
London	The Royal Hospitals NHS Trust	Medical Unit Whitechapel London E1 1BB
East of England	Luton and Dunstable Hospital	Centre for Obesity Research Lewsey Road Luton LU4 ODZ
East of England	Addenbrooke's Hospital	Hills Road Cambridge CB2 2QQ

Primary Care Trusts (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions there were between her Department and the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority on putting primary care trust commissioning in Oxfordshire out to tender prior to its announcement. [26270]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* No discussions were held with Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority (SHA) regarding their proposals prior to their submissions. We wanted SHAs, in partnership with local stakeholders, to identify various options for the reconfiguration of PCTs locally, which would then be assessed by the external panel against the criteria in "Commissioning a Patient-led NHS". If the proposals are adjudged to meet these, they will be subject to full public consultation.

Primary Schools

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's policy is on healthy eating in primary schools. [25211]

Caroline Flint: The Department encourages both primary and secondary schools to take a whole school approach to healthy eating and drinking and would like to see all schools become healthy schools. A number of initiatives are in place to support primary schools in achieving this.

The Department is supporting the Department for Education and Skills led work to develop new school food standards. Proposals which set out new nutrient and food based standards for school lunches are currently out for consultation. There is also an intention to extend these standards to cover other food and drink across the school day. The Government are investing £235 million over the next three years to support the transformation in school food—£130 million for local authorities, £90 million for schools and £15 million for a new school food trust, to provide independent advice and support to schools.

The national healthy schools programme has been strengthened to include healthy eating and physical activity as core components. 50 per cent. of schools should achieve the new national healthy school status by December 2006, with all schools participating in the programme by 2009.

The recently launched food in schools toolkit provides resources and guidance to inspire and support schools in developing a range of healthy eating initiatives such as healthier breakfast clubs, vending machines, lunch boxes through to after school cookery and growing clubs. Healthy schools coordinators have been trained on the toolkit, and are now supporting schools through local training events.

As part of the school fruit and vegetable scheme all four to six-year-old children in local education authority maintained infant, primary and special schools throughout England are now eligible to receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable.

Silicone Ankle Foot Orthoses

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether silicone ankle foot orthoses are available free of charge to sufferers of Charcot Marie Tooth disease; and if she will make a statement. [27210]

Jane Kennedy: Orthoses, including silicone ankle foot orthoses, are provided free of charge to users on the national health service on the basis of assessed clinical need. Patients are encouraged to discuss their orthoses prescription with the orthotist and health care professional team concerned.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Sales

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many alcohol retailers have lost their licences in each of the last five years as a result of selling alcohol to children. [18846]

James Purnell: I have been asked to reply.

These statistics are not held centrally. Licensing statistics are collected from the courts every three years and the last DCMS Statistical Bulletin on liquor licensing in England and Wales covers the period 2003 to 2004. Prior to 2004, these statistics were collated and published by the Home Office. Figures for the number of alcohol licences revoked in the year to 30 June for 2001 and 2004 are available and shown in the table.

Year to 30 June	Total on-licensed premises	Total off-licensed premises	Total on- and off-licensed premises
2001	132	51	183
2004	273	81	354

No breakdown is available for the reasons why the licensing justices decided to revoke these licences and it is not therefore known what percentage were the result of selling alcohol to children.

In addition, under the Licensing Act 1964, following a second or subsequent conviction of a justices' licence holder for selling alcohol to children, the convicting court may declare the licence forfeit. There are no centrally held records of the number of licences forfeited for this reason.

Asylum Seekers/Immigration

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many juvenile asylum seekers are being held in *(a)* reception centres, *(b)* detention centres and *(c)* removal centres. [19033]

Mr. McNulty: The number of children detained with their families under Immigration Act powers will change from day to day. However, internal management information shows that, as at 12 October, there were 53 children detained with their families under Immigration Act powers. These figures are not broken down into asylum and non-asylum cases.

The Home Office produces a quarterly snapshot of the number of persons held under Immigration Act powers for the last Saturday of each quarter. The number of persons who had claimed asylum at some stage and were under the age of 18 on 25 June 2005, and where they were detained, is shown in the table.

Information on the total number of persons detained under Immigration Act powers are published on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Asylum seekers under 18 recorded as being in detention in the United Kingdom solely under Immigration Act powers as at 25 June 2005, by place of detention[1,2]

Place of detention	Total detainees
Immigration Service removal centres	
Yarl's Wood	40
Oakington Reception Centre	30
Immigration short term holding facilities	
Manchester airport	*
Total	70

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest five, with * = 1 or 2, and exclude persons detained in police cells and those in dual detention.
[2] Persons detained under Immigration Act powers who are recorded as having sought asylum at some stage.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the quality assurance systems for management of the asylum process, referred to on page 107 of the 2005 departmental report. [26644]

Mr. McNulty: A comprehensive Decision Quality Action Plan is in place to address identified needs for improvement in the quality of initial asylum decisions. Additionally, we are working closely with the UNHCR, through the Quality Initiative Project, to further improve the decision-making processes. Information on the quality of initial asylum decisions is published annually. Information relating to asylum decisions in 2004 was published in the annual bulletin Asylum Statistics 2004. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html >

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of asylum applications are being considered through fast-track detained processes. [26669]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the percentage of asylum claims being considered through fast-track detained processes is not currently available. However, the maximum capacity of the detained fast track is approximately 988 a month.

Information on cases accepted at Oakington Reception Centre and Harmondsworth Fast Track are published quarterly and annually. Copies of which are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dawn raids have been undertaken in asylum cases in Scotland in each of the last four years. [25314]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Records relating to the number of enforcement visits conducted are only readily available since 1 April 2005.

Between 1 April 2005 and 30 September 2005 records show that 112 enforcement home visits were conducted in Scotland. The vast majority of these relate to failed asylum seekers. The times when the actual visits conducted will occur after the teams have commenced their duties and this will vary from operation to operation.

Enforcement operations are intelligence led. The time at which they are conducted is decided on a case by case basis and is designed to give maximum opportunity of locating the individual.

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of people who have settled permanently *(a)* legally and *(b)* illegally in the UK in each year since 1980. [25448]

Mr. McNulty: Statistics on persons granted settlement in the United Kingdom since 1960 was published in Table 5.6 of the annual Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2003". Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

The 2004 edition is due to be published on 22 November 2005.

No government has ever been able to produce an accurate figure for the number of people who settle in the UK illegally, during the course of a year.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the level of working by illegal immigrants in the Kettering constituency. [17680]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* Information on the numbers or level of illegal migrants working in the Kettering area is not available. It is not possible to collect data on illegal migrants as by their very nature they remain hidden.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many employers have been prosecuted for employing illegal immigrants in each year since 1997. [21841]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Information on the number of persons proceeded against under section 8 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1996 for employing a person subject to immigration control is published annually in the Control of Immigration Command Paper. The 2004 Command Paper, which will contain the number of persons proceeded against in 2004 will be published on 22 November.

The published statistics are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

China

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ensure that peaceful protests on human rights abuses in China are allowed during the state visit of the President of China; and if he will make a statement. [22231]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The policing of the state visit of the President of China is operational matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. He tells me that it is the intention of the Metropolitan police to facilitate lawful assembly and legitimate protest during the visit.

Correspondence

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many letters to his Department from hon. Members in session *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 remain unanswered, broken down by those which are (i) one month old, (ii) two months old, (iii) three months old, (iv) four months old and (v) over six months old. [13865]

Mr. Charles Clarke: No centrally tracked correspondence from MPs received by the Home Office in 2004 or earlier remains outstanding. In the period 1 January to 30 September 2005 the Home Office (including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate but excluding agencies) had received 37,348 items of correspondence from MPs which required a reply from the Home Office and as at 19 October 2,487 (7 per cent.) are overdue and remain outstanding as follows:

391 letters received in September (one month old); 619 letters received in August (two months old); 841 letters received in July (three month old); 614 letters received in June (four months old) ; 21 letters received in May (five months old); one letter received in April or earlier (six months or older).The remainder of the letters received in 2005 are less than one month old. The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of departments in replying to Members/ Peers correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS).

Court Orders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons in Greater London have been issued with a detention and training order in each of the last five years; and how many 12 to 17-year-olds have breached antisocial behaviour orders in Greater London in each year. [26440]

Hazel Blears: The information on detention and training orders in each of the last five years for Greater London is shown in the table.

Data on convictions for breach of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 and for juvenile and adult age groups only. Within Greater London during this period, of the 53 ASBOs issued to persons aged 10 to 17 years, as reported to the Home Office, 11 breached their ASBO on one or more occasion.

Persons sentenced to detention and training orders (DTOs) in Greater London[1] 2000–04

	Number sentenced to DTOs
2000	738
2001	980
2002	1,023
2003	759
2004	794

[1] The data shown for Greater London is made up from the two police force areas of Metropolitan police and City of London.

Source:
RDS NOMS 8/11/2005

Crimestoppers

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of the Crimestoppers scheme has been in each year since its inception. [24477]

Paul Goggins: The Crimestoppers Trust is an independent charitable organisation and its general financial position is a matter for its trustees and senior management. Since its inception in 1988 it has been funded by private donors and business. The Government have contributed core funding since 2001, as set out in the table:

	Amount (£)
2001–02	341,000
2002–03	826,000
2003–04	846,000
2004–05	846,000
2005–06	900,000

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rates of employee absence in his Department have been in each year since 1997. [21018]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Library. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22570]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Updated information on Home Office formal consultation may be found on the Home Office website:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/haveyoursay/

As at 31st October, the information was as follows:

	Publication date	*Closing date for responses*
Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending	27 October 2005	20 December 2005
Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship	6 October 2005	11 November 2005
Consultation on Standard Powers for Community Support Officers	31 August 2005	26 October 2005
Possession of Extreme Pornographic material	30 August 2005	2 December 2005
Private Security Industry Act 2091:Approved Contractor Scheme—Partial RIA	25 August 2005	—
Cross Government Guidance—Sharing Information on Children and Young People	23 August 2005	15 November 2005
Consultation on European Commission proposal for a Council Framework Decision on taking account of convictions in the course of new criminal proceedings	17 August 2005	17 November 2005
Non-statutory consultation on broadening exclusion and deportation powers	5 August 2005	19 August 2005
Proposed Changes to the Misuse of Drugs Legislation	28 July 2005	21 October 2005
Selective Admission: Making Migration Work for Britain	19 July 2005	7 November 2005

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17986]

Mr. Charles Clarke: For information on the use of retread tyres in vehicles provided to the Department by the Government Car and Despatch Agency I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he received from the Chief Executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15087 & UIN15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22453]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The tables show consumption data and expenditure on energy for the years 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Energy Costs

£

	Home Office (non prisons)[1]	*Public sector prisons*	*Total*
2000–01	2,853,523	23,778,727	26,632,250
2001–02	3,499,541	27,234,995	30,734,536
2002–03	3,446,772	28,745,834	32,192,606
2003–04	3,540,139	32,579,862	36,120,001
2004–05	4,469,782	34,462,450	38,932,232

Energy consumption (weather corrected kWh)

	Home Office (non prisons)[1]	*Public sector prisons*	*Total*
2000–01	102,714,825	1,362,678,852	,465,393,677
2001–02	127,394,562	1,369,096,678	11,496,491,240
2002–03	92,893,512	1,541,275,375	1,634,168,887
2003–04	100,125,828	1,358,398,490	1,458,524,318
2004–05	104,814,403	1,413,544,834	1,518,359,237

[1] These figures relate to key buildings only and the total number of properties varies from year to year.

Detention

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by whom he was advised that the proposals for detention without charge for 90 days would be compliant with the European convention on human rights. [27119]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It has been a long standing convention that Governments do not disclose the legal advice that they have received.

Driving Prosecutions

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drivers were prosecuted for driving without insurance in each police authority area in each year since 1997. [25039]

Paul Goggins: Available data taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database for the offence of using a motor vehicle uninsured against third party risks, 1997 to 2003 (latest available) is given in the table. Data for 2004 will not be available until early in 2006.

Proceedings at magistrates courts for the offence of using a motor vehicle uninsured against third party risks[1], England and Wales 1997 to 2003

Number of offences

Police force area	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Avon and Somerset	15,354	16,992	15,098	14,609	13,022	15,124	17,163
Bedfordshire	4,724	4,449	3,479	3,594	4,651	4,731	5,041
Cambridgeshire	3,440	3,425	3,058	2,929	2,508	2,875	3,301
Cheshire	4,838	4,961	5,463	5,729	4,975	5,765	6,385
Cleveland	3,925	4,204	4,331	4,793	4,789	5,994	5,575
Cumbria	4,223	3,787	3,597	3,507	3,595	3,540	3,488
Derbyshire	5,565	5,137	5,120	5,318	5,429	5,614	5,793
Devon and Cornwall	8,422	7,232	7,493	9,234	8,648	9,598	9,676
Dorset	5,271	4,198	4,776	6,035	5,262	6,176	7,034
Durham	3,992	4,261	5,899	5,470	5,394	5,840	5,802
Essex	7,161	7,025	7,336	7,898	7,708	7,811	7,489
Gloucestershire	3,577	4,465	4,443	4,174	4,683	4,417	4,412
Greater Manchester	30,655	30,836	33,228	33,783	37,088	36,337	38,208
Hampshire	11,768	11,557	11,553	10,559	10,349	10,912	10,619
Hertfordshire	4,580	5,799	4,748	5,258	5,816	6,612	7,216
Humberside	4,408	4,279	4,894	5,024	4,730	4,464	5,509
Kent	6,935	6,958	6,151	9,033	9,592	10,059	9,788
Lancashire	20,334	18,794	18,111	18,354	16,280	17,555	21,229
Leicestershire	9,706	9,481	11,054	10,263	10,475	10,699	11,304
Lincolnshire	4,589	5,000	5,345	4,500	4,083	4,242	5,883
London, City of	2,671	3,127	2,521	1,738	1,826	2,353	2,563
Merseyside	10,896	9,747	8,932	10,054	9,467	10,360	12,776
Metropolitan Police	42,283	35,064	31,285	29,649	32,032	36,485	43,100
Norfolk	3,932	3,434	3,468	3,951	4,744	5,563	6,322
Northamptonshire	4,999	4,849	5,571	3,926	2,028	1,211	4,157
Northumbria	12,470	11,837	13,296	13,195	12,504	12, 309	12,951
North Yorkshire	3,926	3,744	4,003	3,905	3,545	3,340	3,774
Nottinghamshire	8,078	8,726	7,957	7,748	7,856	7,460	9,224
South Yorkshire	11,228	11,553	11,763	12,690	14,623	13,859	13,745
Staffordshire	8,180	8,210	8,021	8,777	6,027	7,056	7,214
Suffolk	3,258	3,743	4,189	3,923	4,123	4,759	5,808
Surrey	4,942	3,908	4,436	4,941	5,101	5,554	4,657
Sussex	9,333	8,202	7,415	6,796	6,814	6,413	5,808
Thames Valley	11,887	11,948	13,543	12,816	11,728	12,842	14,516
Warwickshire	4,316	3,769	3,523	4,135	4,204	3,711	3,756
West Mercia	7,082	8,207	7,450	7,686	7,787	7,849	7,735
West Midlands	29,878	30,928	27,409	28,148	27,010	32,339	36,409
West Yorkshire	23,980	23,549	25,776	26,529	27,618	24,873	26,966
Wiltshire	3,463	4,820	4,788	4,901	5,292	5,326	4,794
Dyfed-Powys	3,079	2,852	3,017	3,072	2,953	3,316	3,094
Gwent	4,097	4,478	4,451	4,680	4,758	4,508	4,083
North Wales	4,859	4,452	4,102	3,697	3,376	4,048	5,968
South Wales	14,829	16,187	15,406	14,615	13,805	16,499	16,932
England and Wales	397,133	390,074	387,419	391,659	388,298	410,398	447,267

[1] An offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s. 143 (2)

Sir Alan Haselhurst: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were prosecuted for *(a)* driving while uninsured *(b)* driving while banned and *(c)* driving without having passed a test in the Humberside police area in each of the past five years. [24760]

Paul Goggins: The available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on prosecutions for the specific offences of, using a motor vehicle uninsured against third party risks, driving while disqualified and driving or causing or permitting another person to drive other than in accordance with a licence within the Humberside police force area 1999 to 2003 (latest available) is given in the table. 2004 data will not be available until early in 2006.

Proceedings at magistrates courts for specific motoring offences1 within Humberside police force area, 1999 to 2003

Offence type	Number of defendants 1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
(a) Using motor vehicle uninsured against third party risks [RTA88 s. 143 (2)]	4,894	5,024	4,730	4,464	5,509
(b) Driving whilst disqualified from holding or obtaining a licence [RTA88 s. 103 (1)]	895	888	783	888	1,195
(c) Driving or causing or permitting another person to drive other than in accordance with a licence (full or provisional) [RTA88 s. 87 (1) and (2) as amended]	2,779	3,040	3,082	2,984	3,567

[1] Covers offences under legislation pertaining to the involvement of a motor vehicle (i.e. mechanically propelled vehicle intended or adapted for use on roads, and includes motor cycles, motor scooters, mechanically propelled invalid carriages, road rollers and tractors).

E-borders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have fully implemented e-borders in *(a)* seaports and *(b)* airports. [21851]

Mr. Charles Clarke: e-Borders capabilities began to roll out to selected air routes through Project Semaphore in December 2004. They will roll out incrementally to major air sea and rail ports to ensure complete coverage of international services in and out of the UK by 2010.

The remaining small air and sea ports will be covered in the last stage of the programme from 2010–14. Full coverage of all ports will be achieved by March 2014.

Fixed Penalty Fines

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of fixed penalty fines issued by the police were unpaid in the Tendring district in the most recent 12 month period for which data are available. [25445]

Hazel Blears: It is not possible to identify the number of fixed penalty notices which were unpaid in the Tendring district as figures are not collected at this level of detail.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23411]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department offers a wide range of job related training which includes both literacy and numeracy skills development relevant to staff jobs.

Staff in the main Home Office have access to a range of 'Key skills for work courses' which embed literacy and numeracy skills to at least level 2 national standard.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate have offered basic skills courses for some time as part of its ongoing programme of development offered to all staff.

Prison Service staff are encouraged to use either a Prison Officer Association (POA) or HMPS learning centre, or a local provider, to address any developmental needs arising from a formal assessment, including, when appropriate, the promotion of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002; [23419]

(2) what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21116]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Departments internal training providers IND College and the Centre for Learning and Development keep records of attendees on their courses but do not keep central records of training arranged locally through external providers.

The Department seeks to embed literacy and numeracy as part of the job related development opportunities available to staff. It is therefore difficult to assess all staff development offered that embed literacy and numeracy skills but details of the numbers of staff who have attended training for 2002 to 2004 are in the following table.

Table 1: Applications for internal provision of literacy development opportunities

	Course type	Number of applications 2002	2003	2004
IND	"Back to Basics"[1]	150	108	72
Non-IND, Non-Agency	"Key Skills for Work-courses[1]	136	129	82

[1] These courses have a core literacy element.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23774]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office does not maintain a central record of staff qualifications. The information required therefore could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23790]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In accordance with Cabinet Office guidance, the Home Office uses a variety of methods to assess an applicant's literacy and numeracy skills during the recruitment process. These include competency based application forms, the use of specific tests of ability, aptitude or potential and assessment centres for staff entering the service at Higher Executive Officer (HEO) and grade 7 level. For both of our assessment centres, candidates are presented with materials in written form and this provides a substantial test of literacy skills. Certain of the exercises we also use include numerical material.

London Bombings

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been arrested in connection with the 7 July attacks; how many were

(a) detained for between seven and 14 days, *(b)* charged and *(c)* released without charge in each case, broken down by (i) age, (ii) sex, (iii) ethnicity and (iv) religion. [24950]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In the period immediately following the London attacks on 7 July 2005, five males were arrested. One aged 29 was released after 10 days. Four aged 26, 27, 31 and 41 were released in less than seven days. None were charged.

At a later date, a sixth male, aged 26, was arrested in connection with the ongoing investigation. He was charged with wasting police time.

The Home Office does not have information on the individuals' ethnicity and religion.

Management Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the consultants employed by his Department in each of the last three years. [13569]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Information on individual consultants employed by the Department is not held centrally and to obtain this information would incur disproportionate cost.

The Department awards contracts in open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations based on best value for money. The use of external consultants in the Home Office provides the Department with specialist knowledge, skill, capacity and technical expertise that is not otherwise available in-house.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many air miles were accrued through departmental ministerial travel in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17331]

Mr. Charles Clarke: No Ministers accrued air miles through ministerial travel. Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers. Guidance for Ministers on the use of Air Miles is set out in the Ministerial Code. The guidance makes clear that Air Miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone.

However, if it is impracticable to use the benefits for Government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity if this is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

Neighbourhood Policing

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to promote neighbourhood policing; and if he will make a statement. [26403]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to every area in England and Wales benefiting from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams by 2008. A key aim of these teams will be to build more effective engagement with the public, and for the public to know who their local police officer is and how to contact them.

The Government are working closely with the Police Service to develop neighbourhood policing, initially within 43 pathfinder areas—one per force in England and Wales. The Neighbourhood Policing Fund will support the recruitment of Community Support Officers—we expect their numbers to reach 24,000 by 2008. To support this the Home Office and the Association of Police Authorities convened the National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement in Policing.

The panel has created a Guide to Community Engagement which is a resource for all policing practitioners.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken in 2005 to support the spread of dedicated neighbourhood policing teams. [26695]

Hazel Blears: The Government have been working closely with a police-led neighbourhood policing programme team to implement neighbourhood policing in every area in England and Wales by 2008. Initially there will be a pathfinder basic command unit in each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. The £465 million Neighbourhood Policing Fund has been set up to help provide for up to 24,000 CSOs by 2008. In addition, a full evaluation of the neighbourhood policing programme has been designed and is underway.

Following the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on improving protective services, I have also asked police forces and police authorities to develop options for restructuring forces and to submit their final reports, including their final options, to the Home Office by 23 December 2005. Larger, more strategic forces will support neighbourhood policing as they will have the resilience to prevent the abstraction of neighbourhood policing teams to major incidents. To support neighbourhood policing further, the Home Office and the Association of Police Authorities convened the National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement in Policing. The panel has created a Guide to Community Engagement which is a resource for all policing practitioners.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department have a statutory base; which *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is a statutory requirement in each case. [20097]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is given in the table.

Name of Advisory NDPB	(a) statutory base on which to publish their advice to Government	and whether it is a statutory requirement	(b) statutory base to publish an annual report	and whether it is a statutory requirement	(c) statutory base to lay an annual report before Parliament	and whether it is a statutory requirement
Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Advisory Panel on Country Information	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Animal Procedures Committee	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Correctional Services Accreditation Panel	No	No	No	No	No	No
Futurebuilders Advisory Panel	No	No	No	No	No	No
Immigration & Nationality Directorate Complaint Audit Committee	No	No	No	No	No	No
National Victims Advisory Panel	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Police Advisory Board for England & Wales	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Police Negotiating Board	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Prison Service Pay Review Body for England & Wales	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sentencing Advisory Panel	No	No	No—Joint Annual Report with Sentencing Guide Council	No—Joint Annual Report with Sentencing Guide Council	No—Joint Annual Report with Sentencing Guide Council	No—Joint Annual Report with Sentencing Guide Council
Sentencing Guidelines Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Technical Advisory Body for the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

Offensive Weapons

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* fined or *(b)* imprisoned for (i) illegally selling knives to under 16-year-olds and (ii) marketing a bladed product in a manner which (A) indicates that it is suitable for combat and (B) likely to promote the simulation of violent behaviour since the Knives Act 1997. [25882]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information available is shown in the table.

Defendants sentenced to fines and imprisonment for offences under the Knives Act 1997 (England and Wales)

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Unlawful marketing of knives (selling or hiring)[1]	Sentenced	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Fine	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Immediate custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unlawful marketing of knives (offering or exposing to sell or hire)[1]	Sentenced	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Fine	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Immediate custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unlawful marketing of knives—having in possession for the purpose of sale or hire[1]	Sentenced	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Immediate custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Publication of any written pictorial or other material in connection with the marketing of any knife—the material suggesting/indicating knife suitable for combat September 1997[1]	Sentenced	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Immediate custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Publication of any written pictorial or other material in connection with the marketing of any knife—the material is otherwise likely to stimulate or encourage violent behaviour involving use of the knife as a weapon[1]	Sentenced	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fine	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Immediate custody	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selling a knife etc. to a person under 16 years[2]	Sentenced	2	2	2	0	8	10	17	9
	Fine	1	2	1	0	8	10	14	6
	Immediate custody	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] These sections of the Act came into force in September 1997.

[2] This offence is not included in the Knives Act 1997. It is covered by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 s. 6.

Source:

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Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many knives designed for use in hunting and leisure pursuits have been used in violent crimes since the coming into force of the Knives Act 1997. [25893]

Hazel Blears: The types of weapon used in violent crime cannot be separately identified on the Home Office Court Proceedings Database.

Party Conferences

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on publicly-funded security measures in the current year's *(a)* Labour party conference, *(b)* Conservative party conference and *(c)* Liberal Democrat party conference. [19015]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have approved special police grants of up to £3.692 million for Sussex police and up to £1.4 million for Lancashire constabulary, as a contribution to the additional costs incurred in policing this year's Labour party and Conservative party conferences.

Any other security costs incurred cannot be disclosed in line with the standard policy not to release these.

Passports

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what compensation is available to foreign nationals whose passports or identity cards have been lost by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [18971]

Mr. McNulty: Where the Immigration and Nationality Directorate has lost passports or other valuable documents belonging to applicants, we will offer an ex-gratia payment for the cost of replacing the documents and any additional costs associated with their replacement or arising from the loss of the documents. We would also consider whether it was appropriate to offer a consolatory payment for any distress or inconvenience caused by the loss of the documents.

Police

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police *(a)* handguns and *(b)* rifles went missing in the UK during the last year for which figures are available; and how many were recovered in the same period. [25864]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 November 2005]*: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many IT systems for recording and collating information are deployed by police forces in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [26405]

Hazel Blears: The Home Department together with the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) as part of the Police Science and Technology Strategy have developed a Police Technology Database (PTD) to allow for the sharing of information on IT projects and programmes across the criminal justice community. Presently PITO have developed and provided at least 10 national IT systems for recording and collating information to police forces in England and Wales.

Decisions relating to the development and deployment of IT systems for recording and collating information are based on local operational needs of the individual forces.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on advertising for the recruitment of police officers for each of the last 10 years. [26448]

Hazel Blears: Home Office spend on police recruitment advertising including regulars and special constables for each of the last 10 years (there was no spend in 1995–96) is as follows.

£

	Spend
1996–97	1,765,748
1997–98	370,049
1998–99	315,261
1999–2000	845,771
2000–01	6,020,844
2001–02	5,917,686
2002–03	4,360,476
2003–04	4,169,590
2004–05	1,885,559

Police Employees (Muslim Women)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Muslim women are employed by police forces in England as *(a)* police officers and *(b)* civilian employees. [26835]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

Prisons

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to tackle the incidence of escapes from Springhill prison. [25851]

Fiona Mactaggart: Given that there is no physical security to prevent prisoners leaving Springhill, prisoners abscond rather than escape from the open estate. In the last three years the trend for absconds from Springhill has reduced significantly. During 2003–04, 64 prisoners absconded, during 2004–05 42 prisoners absconded and so far this year 28 prisoners have absconded.

During the last two years, management at Springhill has taken a number of measures to seek to reduce absconds. For instance, all prisoners are seen on induction by a governor who warns them about the implications of absconding. In addition, a protocol has been introduced with Thames Valley Police to prosecute through the courts all prisoners who abscond. Moreover, significant improvements have been made to the regime with the opening of a job club and two vocational learning centres offering industrial based qualifications in computing and bricklaying. Vocational qualifications have been introduced in catering and horticulture.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding the granting of open conditions to unsuitable prisoners. [25858]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are approximately 5,000 prisoners held in open conditions or resettlement prisons where a significant number of prisoners spend time outside the prison. To establish what representations there have been would therefore involve disproportionate cost. Prisoners are moved to open conditions only after a rigorous risk assessment, which determines whether a prisoner is suitable for open conditions.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from his Department *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20092]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is not collected.

Road Safety

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unpaid speeding fines in Hertfordshire are owed by people who are not British citizens. [25748]

Paul Goggins: Information is not collected centrally on the nationality of offenders who are given speeding fines.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many road safety violations by *(a)* domestic and *(b)* non-domestic heavy goods vehicles in England and Wales were recorded by the police in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004. [25133]

Paul Goggins: Information collected by my Department on motoring offences recorded by the police does not distinguish between the characteristics of the vehicles involved.

Sex Offenders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what punishments are available for serious sex offenders. [25263]

Paul Goggins: The punishments available for serious sexual offences are set out in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

They include the possibility of life imprisonment for the offences of rape, rape of a child under 13 and assault by penetration; up to 14 years imprisonment for sexual activity with a child and trafficking for sexual exploitation; and up to 10 years for meeting a child following sexual grooming and engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child.

The Act can be accessed through www.ospi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030042.htm

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sex offenders have been in prison in each year since 1997. [25264]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information for England and Wales is given in the following table, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

Population of sex offenders in prison establishments by type of custody and year England and Wales 30 June

	Remand	*Immediate custodial sentence*
1997	629	4,077
1998	761	4,795
1999	702	4,946
2000	588	5,090
2001	492	5,107
2002	590	5,294
2003	559	5,540
2004	623	5,773

Terrorism

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the people held for more than seven days under Schedule 8 to the Terrorism Act 2000 were arrested for activity related to terrorism in Northern Ireland. [24053]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Police records show that since 20 January 2004, when the maximum period available to police to detain suspects without charge under the Terrorism Act 2000 was increased from seven to 14 days, 25 persons have been detained in Great Britain for periods between seven and 14 days. I can confirm that none of these were for activity related to terrorism in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office has confirmed that the same question has been asked to them and they will reply regarding arrests there.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the opinion he received from the Attorney General on whether the 90-day detention provisions of the Terrorism Bill are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. [25612]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* It has been a longstanding convention over many Governments that the fact that the Law Officers have or have not advised on any matter and the content of their advice should not be disclosed.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the number of criminal prosecutions that have resulted from arrests made under section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000. [16376]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The latest figures requested are published on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act/

These statistics have been supplied by the police. They are compiled from recent police records and are therefore subject to adjustment as cases go through the system.

Many terrorist offences are outside the scope of the Terrorism Act. Offences such as murder, grievous bodily harm, use of firearms or explosives are covered by general criminal law. A simplistic quote from the Terrorism Act statistics is therefore not the best way to evaluate the success of the police and the security services.

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department undertook on the nature of activities which constitute glorifying, exalting or celebrating the instigation of acts of terrorism in drawing up the draft Terrorism Bill. [16923]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Terrorism Bill which was introduced on 12 October, makes it clear that the offence of glorification of terrorism is only committed if a person making a statement believes, or has reasonable grounds for believing that the statement in question will be seen by those to whom it is made as a direct or indirect inducement to commit acts of terrorism.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the advice he has received from the Attorney General regarding the legality of the Government's proposed anti-terrorism legislation. [18259]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to disclose the content of Law Officer advice or whether or not such advice exists.

Visas

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of applications for indefinite leave to remain under the ancestral visa scheme has been successful in each of the last five years, broken down by Commonwealth country of origin. [25344]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the number of decisions made on UK ancestry indefinite leave to remain applications is only available since 2003. The number of decisions made since 2003 and the total number of applicants granted settlement is given in the accompanying table.

Decisions on UK ancestry[1] applications for settlement, by nationality, excluding dependants, 2000–04[2]—United Kingdom

Geographical region and nationality	Number of decisions					Total granted				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
All nationalities	[3]	[3]	[3]	5,295	4,815	2,580	3,255	4,060	5,275	4,755
Australia	[3]	[3]	[3]	1,220	1,090	730	905	1,010	1,215	1,080
Bangladesh	[3]	[3]	[3]	[4]	5	5	[4]	—	[4]	[4]
Canada	[3]	[3]	[3]	255	240	175	220	220	255	240
Ghana	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	5	[4]	5	5	5	5
India	[3]	[3]	[3]	55	30	30	25	25	55	30
Kenya	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	15	5	5	5	5	5
Malaysia	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	[4]	5	[4]	—	5	[4]
New Zealand	[3]	[3]	[3]	1,390	1,160	765	980	1,195	1,390	1,150
Nigeria	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	5	5	5	10	5	5
Pakistan	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	[4]	5	5	5	5	[4]
South Africa	[3]	[3]	[3]	1,995	1,910	680	950	1,360	1,985	1,895
Sri Lanka	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	5	5	—	[4]	5	[4]
Uganda	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	5	[4]
Zambia	[3]	[3]	[3]	5	5	25	15	15	5	5
Zimbabwe	[3]	[3]	[3]	305	310	65	90	170	305	305
Other nationalities	[3]	[3]	[3]	40	35	80	45	35	35	35
Total	[3]	[3]	[3]	5,295	4,815	2,580	3,255	4,060	5,275	4,755

Geographical region and nationality	Percentage granted				
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
All nationalities	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	99
Australia	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	99
Bangladesh	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	33
Canada	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	99
Ghana	[3]	[3]	[3]	75	75
India	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	100
Kenya	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	57
Malaysia	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	100
New Zealand	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	99
Nigeria	[3]	[3]	[3]	86	100
Pakistan	[3]	[3]	[3]	80	100
South Africa	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	99
Sri Lanka	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	67
Uganda	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	100
Zambia	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	100
Zimbabwe	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	98
Other nationalities	[3]	[3]	[3]	90	100
Total	[3]	[3]	[3]	100	99

[1] Commonwealth citizens with a United Kingdom-born grandparent, taking or seeking employment.
[2] Provisional
[3] Not available
[4] Negligible
Note: Data rounded to the nearest 5.

Work Permits

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits have been issued in each of the last eight years. [21849]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of work permits issued by Work Permits (UK) in each of the last eight years is displayed in the table. These figures exclude approvals of extension and change of employment applications for existing permit holders.

	Total
1997	31,734
1998	37,564
1999	41,965
2000	64,570
2001	85,144
2002	88,622
2003	93,021
2004	105,205
Total	547,825

Worker Registration Scheme

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people have come to the UK under the Worker Registration Scheme; [19159]

(2) if he will list employment sectors in which successful applicants under the Worker Registration Scheme are employed. [19160]

Mr. McNulty: On 1 May 2004 the Government set up the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) to regulate Accession eight nationals' access to the labour market and to restrict access to benefits.

The Government committed to publish data from the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) on a quarterly basis. The latest quarterly statistics for the period 1 May 2004 to 30 June 2005 were published on 23 August 2005. The report includes the number of people registering on the WRS and gives details of the employment sectors in which Accession nationals are registered.

A copy of the report is available on the IND website: http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

Youth Justice Board

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the study undertaken by the Youth Justice Board with the courts to explore the factors that influence sentences. [26672]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The Youth Justice Board has commissioned research which seeks to identify:

(a) best practice by Youth Offending Teams in the provision of pre-sentence reports to judges and magistrates when young people under 18 are sentenced;

(b) the factors influencing custodial or community sentences being given, especially in cases which are on the "cusp" of custody; and to

(c) understand any regional differences in sentencing in cases which appear similar.

The research is being undertaken by the Policy Research Bureau working with MACRO. It is taking place in 16 Youth Offending Team areas and includes interviews with magistrates and judges in those areas. It is similar in nature to earlier research undertaken in the adult criminal courts by Professor Mike Hough, Dr. Andrew Millie and Dr. Jessica Jacobson. Their findings were published in the report "The Decision to Imprison, Sentencing and the Prison Population" in 2003 by the Prison Reform Trust. It also supports a three year longitudinal study being undertaken by RDS section of the Home Office, using court records to explore the factors influencing sentencing decisions within both adult and youth courts. This study will be tracked to examine the relationship between offender characteristics, sentence content and outcome.

It is expected that the Youth Justice Board will publish the findings of the current research in the autumn of 2006.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Agency Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many agency staff are employed by her Department; and what the cost of employing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [27506]

Bridget Prentice: The Department has a national contract for the provision of agency workers. Information regarding the number of agency workers provided to the Department under this contract and the associated expenditure is provided as follows.

Average number of agency workers for the financial year 2004-05 was 395.

Expenditure for employing agency workers for the financial year 2004-05 was £8,688,141.

Information relating to workers employed through other agencies is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ballot Papers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1165W, on ballot paper descriptions, whether *(a)* the five descriptions will allow a generic locality description to be registered permitting a candidate to use a description comprising constituency name and party name in each constituency and *(b)* only a specific named locality may be registered. [27228]

Ms Harman: Further to my answer of 2 November, under clause 47 of the Electoral Administration Bill registered political parties would be permitted to register up to five descriptions with the Electoral Commission. There is no provision for a generic locality description. It would be for the party to decide whether they wished to register a description including a specific named locality.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1165W, on ballot paper descriptions, for what reasons the number of descriptions is limited to five. [27229]

Ms Harman: Clause 47 of the Electoral Reform Bill provides for there to be up to five alternative party descriptions registered with the Electoral Commission. This implements the Electoral Commission's recommendation in "Standing for election in the United Kingdom", published in June 2003. It would allow one description each for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the United Kingdom as a whole and would simplify the use of party descriptions for the benefit of candidates and returning officers.

Bills (Supporters)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list right hon. and hon. Members who *(a)* presented and *(b)* supported the Bills for the (i) Representation of the People Act 2000, (ii) Registration of Political Parties Act 1998, (iii) Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000, (iv) Elections Act 2001 and (v) Election Publications Act 2001. [25591]

Ms Harman: The information requested is as follows:

(i) Representation of the People Act 2000

Presented by: Mr. Secretary Straw

Supported by: The Prime Minister, Mr. Secretary Prescott, Mr. Secretary Reid, Mr. Secretary Murphy, Mr. Secretary Mandelson and Mr. Mike O'Brien

(ii) Registration of Political Parties Act 1998

Presented by: Mr Secretary Straw

Supported by: The Prime Minister, Mr. Secretary Prescott, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Margaret Beckett, Mr. Secretary Dewar, Mr. Secretary Davies, Mr. George Howarth.

(iii) Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000

Presented by: Mr. Secretary Straw

Supported by: The Prime Minister, Mr. Secretary Prescott, Mr. Secretary Byers, Mr. Secretary Reid, Mr. Secretary Murphy, Mr. Secretary Mandelson and Mr. Mike O'Brien.

(iv) Elections Act 2001

Presented by: Mr. Secretary Straw

Supported by: The Prime Minister, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Prescott, Mr. Secretary Murphy, Mr. Secretary Reid and Mr. Mike O'Brien.

(v) Election Publications Act 2001

Presented by: Lord Bassam of Brighton.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many call centres were run by her Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year. [23309]

Ms Harman: Two call centres are currently operated by the Department for Constitutional Affairs or its agencies.

(i) The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal Call Centre, Leicester.

(ii) The Magistrates Court Fines Collection Call Centre., Gwent.

The following tables set out the performance information sought for both centres.

Asylum and Immigration Tribunals Call Centre	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06 to date*
Calls received	289,941	262,957	177,695
Calls handled by an adviser	282,687	253,826	158,393
Calls received but abandoned	7,254	9,131	19,302
Engaged tone received by caller	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Information not available

Gwent Magistrates Fines Centre	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06 to date*
Calls received	[1]—	[1]—	3,620
Calls handled by an adviser	[1]—	[1]—	2,087
Calls received but abandoned	[1]—	[1]—	1,533
Engaged tone received by caller	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—

[1] New monitoring software was only installed recently. No information is available prior to 1 April 2005.
[2] Information not available

Following the installation of monitoring software, the high abandonment rate at Gwent Magistrates Court Fines Centre was identified and investigated, with remedial measures put in place on 2 October 2005. The number of lines has been increased threefold (from six to 21) and the situation is being closely monitored to ensure performance improves.

Claims Farmers

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures are being taken to regulate claims farmers. [26485]

Ms Harman: The Compensation Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on 2 November 2005, sets out a statutory framework for the regulation of claims management services.

The legislation will require those providing claims management services to be authorised by a regulator and abide by rules and a code of conduct, raising standards of service for the consumer. It will also provide a clear mechanism for making complaints.

Consultancy Fees

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent by her Department on consultancy fees in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; what the 2006–07 projected figure is; and if she will make a statement. [27507]

Bridget Prentice: Information on expenditure on consultancy is not held centrally by my Department but is collected on an annual basis. The data collection exercise relating to 2004–05 is currently under way, and, on completion, details will be sent to the hon. Member.

Projected figures for 2005–06 and 2006–07 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Elections

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1165W, on independent candidate descriptions, what assessment she has made of the impact of clause 23 of the Electoral Administration Bill on the ability of independent candidates to run as Independent Labour, Independent Conservative or Independent Liberal Democrat. [27235]

Ms Harman: Clause 23 of the Electoral Administration Bill states that it would be a matter for the returning officer, having regard to any guidance issued by the Electoral Commission, to decide whether a description proposed by an independent candidate would be permissible. However, it should be noted that clause 23 specifies that the description must not be the same as the name or description of a registered political party, nor be so similar as to confuse with or lead an elector to associate the candidate with a registered political party. The intention therefore is that names such as those suggested would not be permissible.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the elections timetable, including the postal votes timetable, is for each type of election; [25483]

(2) what electoral timetable is proposed under the Electoral Administration Bill for each type of election, including for postal votes. [25919]

Ms Harman: The full details of national, local, and European election timetables can be found in Section D of the independent Electoral Commission's guidance, 'Managing Electoral Services', published in August 2005. Section D of the guidance can be found on the Commission's website at: http://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk/files/dms/SectionD-Electionmanagement_18105-6672_E_.pdf

The Electoral Administration Bill will remove Maundy Thursday as a disregarded day—dies non—for the purposes of all national and local elections, except local elections in Scotland. The Bill makes no further changes to either national or local electoral timetables.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was raised by each local authority from the sale of electoral registers in each of the past 10 years. [26416]

Ms Harman: Electoral services are delivered by local electoral registration officers and returning officers. The information sought is held by individual local authorities, and is not collected by central Government.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the recommended electoral registration rate is for each local authority. [26412]

Ms Harman: At present, there are no such recommended rates set centrally. The Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament will allow for performance standards for the delivery of electoral services in order to promote best practice and consistency in the delivery of these services. Performance standards may be set for electoral registration officers in the performance of their functions. The Electoral Commission will be responsible for setting performance standards following consultation with the Secretary of State and any other person it thinks appropriate.

Expert Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to accredit medical experts who give evidence in trials. [26632]

Ms Harman: It would not be appropriate for a medical expert to be certified as meeting required standards for the purpose of giving evidence in a specific area of expertise, given the wide range of subject areas and substrands on which such a witness might be called to give expert testimony. It is for the trial judge to determine if any witness being called to give expert evidence, including medical evidence, has acquired by study or experience sufficient knowledge of the particular subject to render his opinion of value in resolving the issues before the court.

Government Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what steps the Government are taking to ensure that .gov.uk websites attain the AAA standard of accessibility; and what target date has been set to meet these standards; [26994]

(2) which Government websites, have achieved the AAA standard as specified in the world wide web consortium's web content accessibility guidelines. [27102]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

There is no centralised monitoring of UK Government websites for compliance with the W3C's "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines" and the accessibility levels they define.

The Cabinet Office published the "Guidelines for UK Government websites" in 2002 to assist public sector web developers with the application of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility guidelines. The Department has extensively promoted accessibility awareness and continues to keep web accessibility standards and technical developments under review. Responsibility for the application of accessibility guidelines rests with individual Government Departments, agencies and local authorities.

Hereditary Peers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1166W, on hereditary peers, whether the Government plan to lower the candidacy age for hereditary peer by-elections to 18. [27230]

Ms Harman: The Government made clear how they intend to proceed with the reform of the Lords in their 2005 manifesto, which includes legislation to remove the remaining hereditary peers. While there remain a wide range of views on the proper way forward, it is

important to determine the part the second chamber plays in the parliamentary processes before other issues, including membership qualifications.

Judges

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many serving judges were originally *(a)* barristers and *(b)* solicitors. [26629]

Ms Harman: The table gives a breakdown of the former professions of the judicial officers currently in post in the courts and for the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary. The first part of the table shows judges who hold full-time appointments, while the second part shows the present professions of those judges who hold fee-paid appointments. Figures have been obtained from the DCA Judicial Database and reflect the information held on the system.

Part 1—Full-time judicial officers

Serving judges/gender	*Former barristers*	*Former solicitors*	*Total*
Lords of Appeal in Ordinary			
Women	1	0	1
Men	11	0	11
Total	12	0	12
Lord Chief Justice			
Women	0	0	0
Men	1	0	1
Total	1	0	1
Master of the Rolls			
Women	0	0	0
Men	1	0	1
Total	1	0	1
President Of The Queen's Bench Division			
Women	0	0	0
Men	1	0	1
Total	1	0	1
President of the Family Division			
Women	0	0	0
Men	1	0	1
Total	1	0	1
Chancellor Of The High Court			
Women	0	0	0
Men	1	0	1
Total	1	0	1
Lord Justice of Appeal			
Women	3	0	3
Men	34	0	34
Total	37	0	37
High Court Judge			
Women	11	0	11
Men	95	2	97
Total	106	2	108
Circuit Judge (including judges of the Court of Technology and Construction)			
Women	55	11	66
Men	480	75	555
Total	535	86	621
District Judge			
Women	7	76	83
Men	13	327	340
Total	20	403	423
District Judge (PRFD)			
Women	4	4	8
Men	5	4	9
Total	9	8	17

Part 1—Full-time judicial officers

Serving judges/gender	*Former barristers*	*Former solicitors*	*Total*
District Judge (Magistrates Courts)			
Women	12	17	29
Men	34	69	103
Total	46	86	132

Part 2—Fee-paid judicial officers

Serving judges/gender	*Barristers*	*Solicitors*	*Total*
Recorder			
Women	170	28	198
Men	1,115	97	1,212
Total	1,285	125	1,410
Deputy District Judge			
Women	28	131	159
Men	70	488	558
Total	98	619	717
Deputy District Judge (Magistrates Courts)			
Women	12	17	29
Men	34	69	103
Total	46	86	132
Deputy District Judge (PRFD)			
Women	20	10	30
Men	7	28	35
Total	27	38	65

Magistrates Courts (Fines)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been collected in fines at magistrates courts in Staffordshire in each of the last five years. [26162]

Ms Harman: Information on fines imposed and collected is provided by the 42 HMCS Areas in England and Wales. The table shows the total amounts collected and the payment rate in Staffordshire for the last five financial years:

Financial year	*Collections (£)*	*Payment Rate (percentage)*
2000–01	5,961,893	90
2001–02	4,553,633	73
2002–03	4,533,341	57
2003–04	4,254,355	78
2004–05	4,856,129	87

Prior to April 2003, confiscation order and civil amounts were also included in enforcement data in addition to fines, and direct comparisons with previous years are not therefore possible. The payment rate for 2004–05 demonstrates the improvement in performance in relation to the enforcement of fines made since the beginning of 2003–04.

Mentors

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many mentors will be *(a)* identified and *(b)* trained by her Department in the next two years. [26631]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs has a mentoring scheme for staff which has been in operation since March 2003. The scheme is open to all

staff on a voluntary basis, so no mentors are specifically identified or trained, although staff are encouraged to participate.

The Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor announced on 2 November that a pilot judicial mentoring scheme will be established in the north-east, where circuit judges will mentor district judges who want to apply for a more senior judicial post. My Department is working with the judiciary to decide an appropriate number of mentor judges to participate in the mentoring pilot and to receive appropriate training.

Parliamentary Boundaries

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the timetable is for the introduction of the order to amend parliamentary boundaries in Wales; and whether the revised boundaries will be in operation for the forthcoming Welsh Assembly elections. [27234]

Ms Harman: The Boundary Commission for Wales submitted its report on Welsh parliamentary boundaries to the Government in January this year. We hope to lay the report and associated order before Parliament by the end of the year. The revised boundaries will come into force for 2007 Welsh Assembly elections.

Policy Development Grant

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1168W, on policy development grant, whether the Government plan to change the audit requirements for policy development grant to reflect its decision to treat and report the grant as a donation. [27231]

Ms Harman: The decision to treat and report the policy development grant as a donation should have no effect on the audit requirements of the scheme.

Political Party Funding

David Taylor: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidelines cover financial donations to political parties. [28470]

Ms Harman: Part IV of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 specifies the controls on donations to registered political parties and their members. It imposes restrictions on the sources of donations so as to prohibit foreign and anonymous donations to political parties and make registered parties subject to reporting requirements in respect of donations above a certain value. The Act also provides that the Electoral Commission regulate the system. They secure compliance by regulated parties, provide advice, guidance and assistance to individuals and regulated bodies.

Postal Voting

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Department's policy is on all-postal vote elections. [27371]

Ms Harman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 535W.

Public Authorities

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will designate the English Regional Chambers as public authorities for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [27232]

Ms Harman: There are three ways in which a body can be a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

it can be listed in Schedule 1 to the Act;

it can be designated as a public authority by order under section 5 of the Act; or

it can be a publicly-owned company as defined by section 6 of the Act.

The English Regional Chambers are not listed in schedule 1 to the Act and are not publicly owned companies. No organisation has yet been designated by order under section 5 of the Act. The chambers are therefore not covered by the Act. They do not meet the conditions specified in section 4 of the Act and therefore cannot be added to schedule 1. The only way that they can be brought under the Act is by being designated by order under section 5 as a public authority for the purposes of the Act.

The scope of the power in section 5 is very wide ranging, enabling the designation of bodies that appear to the Secretary of State to be exercising functions of a public nature and those that are providing under contract with a public authority services whose provision is a function of that authority.

We are currently building up evidence of how freedom of information has impacted on the bodies that meet the existing criteria as specified in sections 4 and 6 of the Act. We feel that it is important to gain such evidence to inform consideration of how section 5 might be used.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidelines she has issued to *(a)* Network Rail, *(b)* the Association of Train Operating Companies, *(c)* individual train operating companies, *(d)* the Office of Rail Regulation, *(e)* the Health and Safety Executive, *(f)* the Strategic Rail Authority, *(g)* the Rail Passengers Council, *(h)* the passenger transport authorities, *(i)* the International Rail Regulator, *(j)* the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, *(k)* Rail Safety and Standards Board, *(l)* the Rail Accident Investigation Branch and *(m)* the Health and Safety Commission's Railway Industry Advisory Committee on whether they are public authorities for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [27233]

Ms Harman: Specific guidelines have not been issued by the Department of Constitutional Affairs to these bodies on whether they are covered by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

There are three ways in which a body can be a public authority for the purposes of the Act:

it can be listed in Schedule 1 to the Act;

it can be designated as a public authority by order under section 5 of the Act; or

it can be a publicly-owned company as defined by section 6 of the Act.

As schedule 1 has been amended by order, an update version of Schedule 1 is available on http://www.foi.gov.uk/coverage.htm#schedule1.

My Department has produced general guidance on coverage of the Act, which is publicly available on our website: http://www.foi.gov.uk/coverage-guide.htm.

Voter Turnout

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Government are taking to increase voter turnout in the next *(a)* local and *(b)* general elections. [26235]

Ms Harman: Tacking low turnout at elections is a complex issue and one we cannot deal with through legislation alone. However, some of the measures in the Electoral Administration Bill—particularly giving returning officers the power to promote elections and providing funding for them to do so, and also enabling people to register after an election has been called—should help to improve turnout. These measures will apply to all elections.

The Electoral Commission also has a statutory responsibility to promote public awareness of elections.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work Scheme

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average period of time taken to process travel cost reimbursement under the Access to Work scheme was in the last period for which figures are available; how many claims are awaiting payment; and what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total value is of outstanding claims. [15969]

Mrs. McGuire: The majority of Access to Work travel cost claims are processed by Regional Access to Work Business Centres on the day they are received, with an average national processing time of 1.4 days.

The majority of Access to Work Business Centres do not have 'outstanding' claims. On the day information was collated [1] there were 485 claims awaiting payment, and these claims would then be processed on the day of receipt or on the following day—in an average of 1.4 days. The average value of the travel claims awaiting payment was £201.42, and the total value of those claims was £97,690.65.

Once the paperwork has been processed by the Business Centres, claims are sent to an external contractor, Liberia, for payment. Liberia has an operating agreement to pay claims within five working days. In the three months to the end of August 2005, 24,200 claims were processed, of which 99.2 per cent. were processed within the terms of the operating agreement.

[1] 5 September 2005.

Source:

DWP Finance Division

Disability and Rehabilitation Division

Benefits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability allowance claimants there were in each quarter since February 2003, broken down by Jobcentre Plus district. [24080]

Mrs. McGuire: The information has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many incapacity benefit claims from the North East Milton Keynes Region were *(a)* registered and *(b)* successful in each year since 2000; [17018]

(2) what percentage of incapacity benefit claims were successful in each of the last three years. [17019]

Mrs. McGuire: Information is not available at constituency level. The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit claims awarded as a percentage of those received: Great Britain

Financial year	*Claims awarded as a % of claims received*
July 2002-March 2003	35.15
April 2003-March 2004	33.76
April 2004-March 2005	34.50
April 2005-August 2005	34.49

Notes:

1. Information is not available prior to July 2002.
2. The most recent available information is August 2005.
3. "Claims awarded" are those claims where an actual amount of benefit was awarded.

Source:

Central Data Unit for figures up to and including July 2004 and Management Information Systems Programme 04 (MISP04) from August 2004 to August 2005.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of incapacity benefit claimants have been receiving the benefit for more than five years; and what percentage this was in May 1997. [22191]

Mrs. McGuire: Incapacity benefit was introduced in April 1995; five year duration figures are not available for 1997. As at May 2005, 47.6 per cent. of claimants had been claiming for five years or more.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what mileage rate is used to reimburse incapacity benefit claimants travelling to a medical test centre; when the rate was set; when he last reviewed the rate; and what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the change in petrol prices on the adequacy of the rate. [24421]

Mrs. McGuire: A rate of 6.5p per mile is paid towards meeting the fuel costs of customers attending a medical examination centre for an incapacity benefit medical examination when public transport is not available. This rate, which was set in 1998, is currently being reviewed.

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people under the age of 60 years stopped receiving *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disablement allowance due to death in each month of the last five years. [24470]

Mrs. McGuire: The figures are not available for each month. The quarterly information is in the table.

Claimant off-flows due to death of claimant: at quarters shown	*Number*
Incapacity benefit	
May 2001	4,600
August 2001	4,300
November 2001	4,600
February 2002	4,400
May 2002	3,900
August 2002	4,300
November 2002	4,700
February 2003	4,600
May 2003	4,000
August 2003	4,100
November 2003	4,400
February 2004	4,900
May 2004	4,000
August 2004	4,300
November 2004	4,000
February 2005	5,000
May 2005	4,600
Severe disability allowance	
May 2001	900
August 2001	700
November 2001	800
February 2002	900
May 2002	800
August 2002	[1]400
November 2002	800
February 2003	700
May 2003	500
August 2003	500
November 2003	800
February 2004	600
May 2004	600
August 2004	700
November 2004	500
February 2005	500
May 2005	700

[1] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling error and should only be used as a guide.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Incapacity benefit figures include incapacity benefit credits-only cases.
3. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters.
4. Earlier quarters have been updated to include late notifications.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are claiming incapacity benefit in Morecambe and Lunesdale. [24557]

Mrs. McGuire: As at May 2005, there were 5,300 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance in the Morecambe and Lunesdale parliamentary constituency.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23293]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is in the following table:

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Number of call centres	153	98	[1]85
Number of calls handled by an adviser	29,437,890	38,481,314	18,564,666
Number of calls abandoned	3,927,351	6,342,046	4,071,625
Proportion of calls abandoned (%)	11.7	14.1	17.9
Number of calls receiving the engaged tone	[2]21,985,562	[3]29,009,230	[4]509,446
Proportion of calls receiving the engaged tone (%)	39.7	30.9	2.2

[1] The number of centres is reducing rapidly as small local telephony teams, particularly in Jobcentre Plus, are being replaced by larger call and contact centres.

[2] This excludes 19,978,016 calls to the DLA/AA helpline that received the engaged tone during 2003–04.

[3] This excludes 18,526,578 calls to the DLA/AA helpline that received the engaged tone during 2004–05.

[4] The 22,403 calls to the DLA/AA helpline that have received the engaged tone during 2005–06.

Child Poverty

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress towards meeting the Government's 2005 child poverty targets. [21960]

Margaret Hodge: The Government has set an ambitious target to reduce the number of children in low-income households by at least a quarter by 2004–05, as a contribution towards the broader target of halving child poverty by 2010–11 and eradicating it by 2020–21.

Since 1997 the number of children in low-income households has fallen by 700,000 and we are on course to meet the target to reduce the number of children in low-income households by at least a quarter by 2004–05. Data to report on the target will be available in spring 2006.

We have recently published 'Opportunity for all—seventh annual report' that comprehensively describes the Government's strategy and progress in tackling poverty and social exclusion. A copy is available in the Library.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24781]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions does not own any land or property in the Kettering constituency. The majority of the buildings occupied by DWP have been transferred (for value) to Land Securities Trillium under the terms of the PRIME (Private Resource Initiative for Management of the Estate) contract. We currently occupy one property in Kettering, Derbyshire House in Lower Street.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23459]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions has had no expenditure on items of art in 2004–05.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21006]

Mrs. McGuire: Literacy and numeracy skills are assessed as a mandatory part of the recruitment process. Applicants are required to pass literacy and numeracy tests that have been chosen or designed for the Department based on an analysis of the requirements of our jobs.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23765]

Mrs. McGuire: This information is not available.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23798]

Mrs. McGuire: Literacy and numeracy skills are assessed through psychometric tests which have been chosen or designed specifically for the Department.

DNA-related Work

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many firms are being assessed by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies for DNA-related work; and if he will make a statement. [25227]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies are not currently assessing any firms, as a part of the contracting process, for DNA-related work. However, the Health and Safety Executive (a DWP non-departmental public body) regularly assess firms registered to carry out DNA-related work under the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations 2000.

Jobcentres

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the funding of Jobcentre Plus on the number of *(a)* directly employed staff and *(b)* contracted staff. [25173]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 14 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the funding of Jobcentre Plus on the number of directly employed staff and contracted staff. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

At 1 March 2004, Jobcentre Plus employed the equivalent of 80,897 full time staff. At the end of September 2005, this figure has been reduced to 72,835 full time equivalents.

Separate information on the number of staff contracted to work for Jobcentre Plus through agencies or as consultants is not held.

I hope this is helpful.

Mental Health

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people living in *(a)* Basingstoke, *(b)* Hampshire and *(c)* Great Britain who are not working due to mental health problems are in receipt of (i) incapacity benefit, (ii) income support and (iii) incapacity benefit and income support. [26203]

Mrs. McGuire: Figures are not available for income support-only cases by diagnosis. The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants with a diagnosis in the 'mental and behavioural disorders' category at May 2005

	All IB/SDA cases with a mental and behavioural disorder diagnosis	*IB/SDA with no income support*	*IB/SDA with income support*
Great Britain	1,084,400	493,800	590,600
Hampshire	13,000	6,600	6,400
Basingstoke parliamentary constituency	1,000	600	400

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance (including incapacity benefit credits only cases).
3. 'Hampshire' includes the following local authorities: Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Hart, Havant, New Forest, Rushmoor, Test Valley and Winchester.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Parliamentary Questions

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer the question reference 22185, tabled on 24 October by the hon. Member for Gordon. [27873]

Mrs. McGuire: An answer was given on 11 November.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of the *(a)* new recipients and *(b)* stock of recipients of incapacity benefit in (i) Pathways to Work pilot areas and (ii) the UK have moved into sustained employment in each month since the Pathway pilots were launched. [23681]

Margaret Hodge: It is too early in the life of the pilots to provide robust information on sustainability.

This will be examined as part of the evaluation of the Pathways to Work pilots and we will publish this information once it becomes available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability living allowance claims have been terminated in the UK excluding the Pathways to Work pilot areas in each quarter since the first pilot areas came into operation. [27244]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the tables.

Number of incapacity benefit claims that have been terminated in the UK excluding Pathways to Work pilot areas

Quarter ending	All terminations (Thousand)	Terminations outside Pathways to Work areas (Thousand)	Percentage of terminations outside Pathways to Work areas
November 2003	180.5	173.1	95.9
February 2004	165.7	158.7	95.8
May 2004	168.5	151.2	89.7
August 2004	170.7	153.3	89.8
November 2004	170.8	154.7	90.6
February 2005	171.9	155.7	90.6
May 2005	128.1	115.9	90.5

Number of severe disability allowance claims that have been terminated in the UK excluding Pathways to Work pilot areas

Quarter ending	All terminations (Thousand)	Terminations outside Pathways to Work areas (Thousand)	Percentage of terminations outside Pathways to Work areas
November 2003	3.5	3.4	97.7
February 2004	2.8	2.7	93.7
May 2004	2.4	2.2	91.7
August 2004	2.9	2.8	97.9
November 2004	2.6	2.4	93.1
February 2005	3.1	2.8	91.5
May 2005	1.3	1.2	93.8

Notes:

1. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding. Percentages are shown to one decimal place.
2. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters.
3. Earlier quarters have been updated to include late notified terminations, including terminations for state pension.
4. Pathways to work pilot areas were introduced in October 2003 and updated in April 2004. The areas relevant to each quarter have been used i.e Bridgend, Renfrewshire and Derbyshire for all quarters, plus Gateshead and South Tyneside, Somerset, Essex and East Lancashire from quarter ending May 2004.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of *(a)* newly retired women, *(b)* retired women, *(c)* newly retired men and *(d)* retired men are eligible for a full state pension in their own right. [18635]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the table.

Great Britain-financial year 2005–06	Percentage entitled to a full basic state pension in their own right
Newly retired women	30
Retired women	47
Newly retired men	85
Retired men	87

Notes:

1. Percentages are rounded and relate to the pensioner population.
2. "Full basic state pension" equals 100 per cent. entitlement and includes those who are entitled to a full basic state pension based fully or partly on their late or former spouse's contribution records. It also includes those who are entitled to a full basic state pension but choose to defer it.
3. "Newly retired" means those reaching state pension age in 2005–06.
4. "Retired" means all those over state pension age including those who are "newly retired".

Source:

Government Actuary's Department

Remploy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of the total work force of Remploy are not disabled. [21712]

Mrs. McGuire: 17 per cent. of total Remploy workforce (including the interwork business) are not disabled.

Source:

Remploy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of turnover is represented by management costs in Remploy. [21714]

Mrs. McGuire: In 2004–05, management costs represented 16.4 per cent. of the company's business turnover.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many shop floor workers have proceeded to management grades in Remploy since 1997. [21715]

Mrs. McGuire: Since April 1997, 129 Remploy shop floor workers have moved into management grades within the company businesses (excluding Remploy Interwork).

Sema/Atos Origin

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assets were transferred to Sema/Atos Origin in the 1998 Benefits Agency Medical Services Contract; whether *(a)* offices and *(b)* other premises were transferred assets in that contract; and what assets were transferred to Atos Origin in the 2005 Benefits Agency Medical Services Contract. [24943]

Mrs. McGuire: Under the terms of the 1998 outsourcing contract all assets previously owned and used by Benefits Agency to deliver the medical services were offered to Sema (now Atos Origin) as the successful bidder for purchase.

Sema purchased assets that included all office furniture, IT hardware and office and medical equipment located in Medical Services Centres and Medical Service Examinations Centres located throughout the country.

A contractual provision was made for Sema to use existing DWP and other Government Department

premises to deliver the medical services. Sema/ Atos Origin occupy these premises under a formal lease arrangement.

In 2005 there was no transfer of assets from the Department to Atos Origin under the Medical Services Agreement.

Unum Provident

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department has entered into a contract with Unum Provident. [25926]

Mrs. McGuire: DWP has not entered into a contract with Unum Provident.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* Staffordshire, *(c)* the West Midlands and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [22152]

Mr. Timms: Information relating to the 1997–98 and 1998–99 winters is not available. The information from winter 1999–2000 onwards is in the table. These figures are also available in the Library. Information on payments made in Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Constituency/region	*Payments made*					
	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Tamworth	12,515	14,475	14,845	15,225	15,710	15,940
Staffordshire	138,255	157,750	161,340	165,620	169,930	170,975
West Midlands	935,060	1,033,555	1,043,580	1,059,210	1,073,350	1,065,460
Great Britain	10,084,130	11,105,745	11,201,895	11,348,040	11,468,235	11,401,170

Notes:
1. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
3. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Agenda for Change

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which costs of the implementation of "Agenda for Change" will fall to local health and personal social serviee trusts; what additional resources the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety plans to provide to those trusts for that purpose; and if he will make a statement. [26755]

Mr. Woodward: The total costs to HPSS organisations of the implementation of "Agenda for Change" in 2005–06 is estimated at some £69 million, although the full effect will vary depending on the details of each trust's circumstances. The Department has made £58.583 million available to health and social services boards, trusts and agencies for the implementation of "Agenda for Change" in the current year 2005–06. Additional funding of £70 million in 2006–07 and £80 million in 2007–08 has been proposed within the draft Budget as published recently.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued to individuals from each district council area in the Province. [24865]

Mr. Hanson: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply I gave on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1220W to her question concerning the number of antisocial behaviour orders issued in each constituency in Northern Ireland. Information is not held centrally on the addresses of individuals.

Arlene Arkinson

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with the Attorney-General on the case of Arlene Arkinson. [25376]

Mr. Hain: I have written recently conveying my condolences to the Arkinson family and in response to their request for a public inquiry into the handling of Robert Howard's cases by the criminal justice system. The Police Ombudsman and the Lord Chief Justice have both indicated that they are addressing the serious issues affecting their respective areas of responsibility. I have undertaken to consider carefully the different aspects of these cases, including any conclusions the Ombudsman and the Lord Chief Justice may reach. I shall also engage with the Attorney-General before taking a final decision on the request.

Artefacts (Irish Parliament)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether works of art, furniture, books, records and other artefacts are known to be located in *(a)* the Stormont Parliament buildings and *(b)* other locations for which he has ministerial responsibility that were originally (i) located or owned by the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster and (ii) owned or displayed in the Parliament of Ireland, Dublin, prior to the Act of Union 1801; and if he will make a statement. [22149]

Angela E. Smith: None of the items listed is known to be located in either Parliament buildings, Stormont or other buildings owned or maintained by the Northern Ireland Office or the 11 Departments of the NI Administration.

Teachers (Assaults)

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many assaults there have been on *(a)* male and *(b)* female teachers in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [25788]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the requested information. However, from the 2002–03 school year, statistics on the reasons for suspensions have been gathered annually from each Education and Library Board. The following table illustrate the number of suspensions for verbal abuse of, and physical attacks on, staff for the 2002–03 and 2003–04 school years:

Number of suspensions for abuse of staff by pupils in the school year

Reason for suspension	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
2002–03			
Verbal abuse of staff	1,683	343	2,026
Physical attack on staff	320	45	365
2003–04			
Verbal abuse of staff	1,867	403	2,270
Physical attack on staff	281	39	320

It should be noted that these figures relate to the number of individual suspensions not to the number of pupils suspended. A split by gender is not available.

These figures are available on the Department's website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/21-pupils_parents-pg/pupils_parents-suspensions_and_expulsions_pg.htm. Statistics are not yet available for the 2004–05 school year.

Brownlow College, Portadown

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the reasons are for the refusal to fund the development proposal for a sixth form proposed by Brownlow Controlled Integrated College in Portadown; and if he will make a statement. [23171]

Angela E. Smith: An examination of the proposal from Brownlow Integrated College did not convince the Department that sufficient consideration and planning had been given to the issue.

The College proposed to initially offer 10 academic 'A' level courses, which are also available in various combinations through other local post-primary and further education providers. The Department has also reservations about the viability of the sixth form and the proposal failed to provide sufficient statistical evidence to support the view that numbers could be sustained.

Business Aid

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses in the Dungannon district have been grant-aided by Invest Northern Ireland during *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; how much financial aid was granted; and how many new jobs were created as a result. [25527]

Angela E. Smith: The number of businesses and amount of financial assistance offered within Dungannon district council area during 2002–03 and 2003–04 is presented in table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Businesses assisted by Invest NI in Dungannon district council area

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Number of businesses offered assistance by Invest NI	48	105
Amount of assistance offered (£ million)	2.4	2.7
Net change in employment within Invest NI clients	55	192

Invest NI measures employment change within its active client base. During the years 2002–03 and 2003–04 there was a net change in employ merit of 247.

In addition to this support, 181 offers of assistance were made to new businesses through the Start a Business Programme (SABp), which is jointly administered by Invest NI and Enterprise Northern Ireland. Details are provided in table 2 as follows:

Table 2: Start a Business Programme activity in Dungannon district council area

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Offers of assistance made through the Start a Business Programme	75	106
Amount of assistance offered (£)	60,000	74,250
Jobs expected to be created	135	191

Civil Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the percentage change in civil servant salaries in Northern Ireland has been in each of the last 10 years. [25224]

Angela E. Smith: The annual pay rises awarded to *(a)* the Northern Ireland civil service and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Office in each year since 1995 are as follows:

Percentage

	NICS below the senior civil service	*NIO below the senior civil service*
2004	[1]4.65	3.49
2003	3.67	3.0
2002	5.5	5.5
2001	4.85	4.8
2000	4.5	4.5
1999	3.97	3.5
1998	3.2	3.5
1997	3.2	3.2
1996	5.5	5.7
1995	4.7	4.7

[1] 16 month pay deal

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil service posts there were in each Department, agency and non-departmental public body in Northern Ireland at *(a)* April 2004 and *(b)* April 2005; how many such posts he expects there to be in each case by April 2006; and if he will make a statement. [25837]

Angela E. Smith: The number of civil service posts, expressed as whole time equivalent staff-in-post plus vacancies, in each of the 11 Northern Ireland Departments and the NIO, and their agencies at April 2004 and April 2005, and the expected number at April 2006 are set out in the following table.

With the exception of two non-departmental public bodies (highlighted in the table) figures relating to NDPBs have not been included as they are not civil service posts.

Number of civil service posts in Northern Ireland by Department

Department	April 2004		April 2005		April 2006 (expected)	
	Department	Agencies	Department	Agencies	Department	Agencies
Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)	3,347	803	3,347	803	2,530	767
Enterprise, Training and Investment (DETI)	647	97	640	97	625	94
Education (DE)	720	n/a	720	n/a	692	n/a
Rural Development (DRD)	583	4,625	565	4,570	555	4,412
Environment (DOE)	242	2,555	255	2,587	250	2,567
Finance and Personnel (DFP)	1,635	1,362	1,588	1,269	1,543	1,314
Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)	900	154	887	149	876	149
Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)	213	264	206	263	198	262
Employment and Learning (DEL)	1,748	n/a	1,748	n/a	1,721	n/a
Social Development (DSD)	703	7,560	703	7,292	703	7,025
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)	460	n/a	451	n/a	449	n/a
Sub total	11,198	17,420	11,110	17,030	10,142	16,590
Northern Ireland Office (NIO)	2,593	2,337	2,423	2,376	2,513	2,441
Grand total	13,791	19,757	13,533	19,406	12,655	19,031

Notes:

1. DARD April 2006 expected reduction mainly due to creation of Agri-Food Bio-Sciences Institute (AFBI) as a non-departmental public body (NDPB) affecting about 700 staff. DARD Agencies: Forest Service and Rivers Agency.
2. DETI Agencies figure refers to the NDPB Health and Safety Executive for NI which is staffed by civil servants.
3. DRD Agencies: Roads Service and Water Service.
4. DOE Agencies: Driver and Vehicle Licensing NI, Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency, Environment and Heritage Service and Planning Service.
5. DFP Agencies: Business Development Service, Land Registers for NI, NI Statistics and Research Agency and Rate Collection Agency.
6. DHSSPS Agencies figure includes Health Estates (Agency) and the NDPB Mental Health Commission which is staffed by civil servants.
7. DCAL Agencies: Ordnance Survey NI and Public Record Office NI.
8. DSD figures include staff working on DWP services (Belfast Benefit Centre, CSA Eastern Business Unit and Paid Order Store, Lisahally) which are fully funded by DWP. DSD Agencies: Child Support Agency and Social Security Agency.
9. NIO figures exclude all home civil service posts, but include all temporary staff as time did not allow detailed analysis to exclude temporary staff not blocking permanent posts. The NIO Agencies: NI Prison Service, Youth Justice Agency, Forensic Science for NI, and the Compensation Agency.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total number of civil service posts in the Northern Ireland civil service was in *(a)* April 2004 and *(b)* April 2005; and what his working assumption is for the number of such posts in April 2006. [25838]

Angela E. Smith: The total number of civil service posts, expressed as whole time equivalent staff-in-post plus vacancies, in the Northern Ireland civil service on the requested dates was as follows;

	Total number of civil service posts
April 2004	33,443
April 2005	32,834

The figures in the table relate to the 11 Northern Ireland Departments and the NIO, including their agencies, but exclude home civil service staff and staff in non-departmental public bodies.

The working assumption is that the numbers of posts will continue to reduce to an estimated level of around 31,584 in April 2006.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 108–09W, on Northern Ireland Civil Service, which departments employed those people referred to in the recruitment figures under the heading 'Northern Ireland Civil Service'. [22934]

Angela E. Smith: The following table provides details of appointments to departments for the year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

Department/General service grades	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Non-determined		Total
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Child Support Agency CSA							
Permanent	80	36.5	138	63.0	1	4	219
Temporary	15	38.5	22	56.4	2	5.1	39
Agriculture and rural Development DARD							
Permanent	85	47.2	95	52	52.8	0.0	180
Temporary	30	35.3	53	62.3	2	2.3	85
Culture Arts and Leisure DCAL							
Permanent	7	43.7	8	50.0	1	6.2	16
Temporary	4	44.4	5	55.5	0	0.0	9
Education DE							
Permanent	34	72.3	13	27.6		0.0	47
Temporary	12	35.3	21	61.8	1	2.9	23

Department/General service grades	Protestant Number	Protestant Percentage	Roman Catholic Number	Roman Catholic Percentage	Non-determined Number	Non-determined Percentage	Total
Employment and Learning DEL							
Permanent	34	41.5	46	56.1	2	2.4	82
Temporary	6	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	6
Enterprise Trade and Investment DETI							
Permanent	17	48.6	18	51.4	0	0.0	35
Temporary	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0.0	3
Finance and Personnel DFP							
Permanent	79	47.3	86	51.5	2	1.2	167
Temporary	28	45.2	34	54.8	0	0.0	62
Health Social Services and Public Safety DHSSPS							
Permanent	31	96.9	0	0.0	1	3.1	32
Temporary	19	50.0	19	50.0	0	0.0	38
Environment DOE							
Permanent	0	0.0	14	100	0	0.0	14
Temporary	11	39.3	16	57.1	3	3.6	28
Regional Development DRD							
Permanent	98	41.7	136	57.9	1	0.4	235
Temporary	8	44.4	10	55.5	0	0.0	18
Social Development DSD							
Permanent	2	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	2
Temporary	7	33.3	14	66.7	0	0.0	21
Health and Safety Executive HSENI							
Permanent	0	0.0	2	100	0	0.0	2
Temporary	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Northern Ireland Office NIO							
Permanent	50	54.9	41	45.0	0	0.0	91
Temporary	24	68.6	11	31.4	0	0.0	35
Prison Service NIPS							
Permanent	10	71.4	4	28.6	0	0.0	14
Temporary	4	80.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	5
Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister OFMDFM							
Permanent	3	50	3	50	0	00.0	6
Temporary	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Ordnance Survey OSNI							
Permanent	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	0.0	6
Temporary	3	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	3
Social Security Agency SSA							
Permanent	127	36.6	219	63.1	1	0.3	347
Temporary	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency DVTA							
Permanent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Temporary	3	37.5	5	62.5	0	0.0	8

Coroner Services

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in how many cases the remains of deceased people from Foyle constituency have been retained in Belfast for three days or more since the amalgamation of the Derry Coroner's District with the Greater Belfast Coroner's District. [24730]

Mr. Hain: The Derry Coroner's District amalgamated with the Greater Belfast Coroner's District on 26 September 2005. From 26 September until 4 November 20 bodies from the Derry area were referred for post mortem examination. One body was held for more than three days, a suspicious death which required a second post mortem by a pathologist for the defence.

Disability Services

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of funding that makes up the learning disability programme of care is allocated to each aspect of the programme. [25213]

Mr. Woodward: The answer is detailed in the following table.

Learning disability 2003–04 expenditure

Sector/Speciality name	Percentage of funding
Acute	
Mental Handicap—Adults and children	22.8
Community	
Allied Health (OT, Physiotherapy, SLT, Podiatry)	3.3
Community Medical / Dental	1.5
Direct Payments	1.8

Learning disability 2003–04 expenditure

Sector/Speciality name	*Percentage of funding*
Incontinence Products	0.1
Nursing Costs	2.2
Personal Social Services	
Day care Facilities	20.8
Grants, Goods and Services	4.8
Domiciliary Care	3.8
Nursing Homes	11.3
Adult Residential Homes	17.1
Children's Residential Homes	2.5
Social Work	5.1
Supported and Other Accommodation	2.9
Total spend	100.0

Early Release

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners who have applied for early release following the signing of the Belfast Agreement for crimes committed prior to that agreement have been *(a)* released and *(b)* refused release. [25688]

Mr. Woodward: Under the terms of the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998, 447 prisoners have been released early; 127 applications for release under the Act have been unsuccessful. Among those 127 there were 14 prisoners who were released, having served their sentence, before the Sentence Review Commissioners reached a decision on their application.

Eglinton Primary School

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on *(a)* (i) pupil numbers and (ii) condition of the building at Eglinton primary school and *(b)* the prospects for a new school building. [27243]

Angela E. Smith: The current enrolment of Eglinton primary school is 212 pupils.

The Department inspected the school in July 2004 and is aware that it has a number of shortcomings. Among those noted were poor condition of walls and windows; need for re-wiring; re-plumbing and replacement of toilets. There is a serious shortage of storage space. There are three mobile classrooms.

The Western education and library board has submitted an economic appraisal to the Department for a capital major works scheme. While the school's needs are recognised it is not possible at this stage to say when a new building would be approved.

Grammar Schools

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals who were considered to come from the *(a)* Protestant, *(b)* Roman Catholic and *(c)* other communities have attended each grammar school in the Province in the last 10 years.[25796]

Angela E. Smith: The information has been placed in the Library.

Housing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes were sold to the tenant and subsequently repurchased by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive from the tenant, in each of the past five years. [27021]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested for each of the last five financial years (1 April to 31 March each year) is as follows;

	Number
2000–01	12
2001–02	33
2002–03	31
2003–04	18
2004–05	11
2005–06 (9 November 2005)	20

Insurance Premiums

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the change in insurance premiums for small and medium-sized businesses in 2004–05. [27765]

Angela E. Smith: A survey of business insurance premiums in Northern Ireland is undertaken annually by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment. The last survey was undertaken at the end of 2004 and showed a reduction of 16.1 per cent. in the average (median) insurance premiums for small and medium businesses compared to the previous year.

The next set of results from the survey which will provide an estimate of the change in insurance premiums between 2004 and 2005 will be published in spring 2006.

Irish League Premier Division

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made in funding the improvements in facilities for customer safety and comfort at each of the Irish league premier division grounds. [27019]

Mr. Hanson: Responsibility for funding improvements to facilities for customer safety and comfort at Irish league premier division grounds rests with the venue operators. Assistance in funding such improvements is available from the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI). SCNI has already provided the following assistance:

£

Club	*Award total*
Portadown Football Club	331,192
Glentoran Football Club	267,597
Cliftonville Football Club	275,000
Coleraine Football Club	225,000
Ballymena UTD Football Club	245,000
Linfield Football Club	256,590
Newry City Football Club	290,000
Glenavon Football Club	330,000
Institute Football Club	41,900
Limavady United Football Club	30,000
Dungannon Swifts Football Club	25,366

£

Club	Award total
Larne Football Club	15,000
Lisburn Distillery Football Club	12,384
Ards Football Club	40,000
Total	2,385,029

SCNI is currently considering applications for further assistance to improve customer safety and comfort at three Irish league premier division grounds.

Literacy and Numeracy

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees in his Department have requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2001. [25784]

Mr. Hanson: Since 2001, one member of staff in the Northern Ireland Office has requested training to improve their literacy skills. The applicant was interviewed to assess their training requirement and an appropriate course was identified with a local college. Ongoing support is being provided to the student. No staff have sought assistance with numeracy skills although basic numeracy skills are included in the Department's financial training courses.

M2

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of changes in commuter travel time at peak times from junction 5 of the M2 motorway to Belfast city centre over the last five years. [27015]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 14 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what assessment he has made of changes in commuter travel time at peak times from junction 5 of the M2 motorway to Belfast City Centre over the last five years. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service monitors journey times on the strategic routes in Northern Ireland including the routes from Larne to Belfast to Newry (A8, M2, M1 and A1). These surveys commenced in 1996 and the most recent information available is for 2003.

Unfortunately, we have no journey time information that relates to the specific journey between junction 5 (Templepatrick) and Belfast City Centre. However, a comparison of journey times between Templepatrick and the Divis Street junction on Westlink would suggest that the average journey time in the morning peak over this section has increased by 3 to 4 minutes between 1998 and 2003.

We fully appreciate the significant delays experienced by southbound traffic approaching Sandyknowes on the M2. Roads Service acknowledges that these delays are a direct result of capacity restrictions downstream of Sandyknowes where only 2 traffic lanes are available to cater for both mainline M2 traffic and the considerable flow joining the motorway from the Sandyknowes roundabout. Consequently we plan to widen the Belfast-bound carriageway of the M2 motorway to create an additional southbound lane between the Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions. This will make it easier for traffic to join the M2 from the Sandyknowes junction, particularly during the morning peak traffic, and also provide greater capacity on the Belfast-bound section of the M2 towards Greencastle. Construction of these improvements on the M2 is expected to start during 2008.

The £30 million M2 Widening Scheme is one of three schemes forming part of the £100 million Roads Service Design, Build, Finance and Operate Package 1, along with the M1/Westlink Project and the Antrim Hospital slip roads.

I can also advise that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan proposes modifications to the Sandyknowes roundabout to minimise conflicts between different traffic movements and afford greater priority to the strategic M2 and A8 movements. Roads Service is currently investigating various design options.

I hope this information is helpful.

Medical Students

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many medical students have studied in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000; and how many were entrants from *(a)* the independent and *(b)* the state education sector. [25777]

Angela E. Smith: Total student enrolments on medicine courses at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions which lead towards eligibility to register for practice as a doctor in each year since 2000.

Academic year	Enrolments on first courses degree medicine
2000–03	887
2001–02	915
2002–03	914
2003–04	918

The Department for Employment and Learning does not hold data on entrants to HEIs according to type of institution previously attended.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the overall cost to public funds of all non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland has been in each of the last five years. [22856]

Angela E. Smith: The cost to the public purse of all non-departmental public bodies sponsored by Departments in the NI Administration and the Northern Ireland Office is set out in the following table:

£ million

	Current expenditure	Capital investment
2001–02	1,369.4	91.0
2002–03	1,644.8	63.5
2003–04	1,662.6	95.5
2004–05	1,683.4	119.0
2005–06	1,847.1	175.2

PFI Schools

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* controlled, *(b)* maintained and *(c)* integrated sector schools have been built in Northern Ireland using private finance initiative schemes in each year since 2001; and where each is located. [25782]

Angela E. Smith: There have been three controlled schools and one maintained school built in Northern Ireland using the private finance initiative. Three of these have become operational since 2001. Wellington College, Belfast and Balmoral High School, Belfast, both controlled schools, opened in January 2002 and St. Genevieve's High School, Belfast, a maintained school, opened in February 2002.

In addition, PPP schemes have been announced each year since 2001 as follows:

Controlled	*Maintained and Voluntary*[1]	*Integrated*
2001		
Coleraine College	Holy Cross College, Strabane	
Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College	St. Cecilia's College, Londonderry	
Comber High School	St. Mary's College, Londonderry	
2002		
Tor Bank Special School, Dundonald	Our Lady and St. Patrick's College, Knock	Lagan College Belfast
	St. Patrick's GS, Downpatrick	
	St. Mary's PS, Portglenone	
	St. Joseph's PS, Carryduff	
2003		
Orangefield PS, Belfast		
Orangefield HS, Belfast		
Ashfield Girls' HS, Belfast		
Belfast Boys' Model		
Belfast Model School for Girls		
Grosvenor GS Belfast		
2004		
Greenwood Assessment Centre, Belfast	Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	
Mitchell House Special School, Belfast	Loreto GS, Omagh	
Rosetta PS, Belfast	Rainey Endowed, Magherafelt	
Ballymoney HS, Ballymoney		
Devenish College, Enniskillen		
Belmont House Special School, Londonderry		
Erne Special School, Enniskillen		
Amalgamation of Limegrove Special School, Limavady /Glasvey Special School, Ballykelly		
Strabane GS		

[1] Includes maintained and voluntary grammar schools.

Procurement Policy

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether *(a)* he and *(b)* another Minister was advised of the impact in terms of the valid consideration of wider policy objectives consistent with EU rules of the Procurement Policy Review commissioned by the Northern Ireland Executive. [24738]

Angela E. Smith: Following a review of public procurement, the new procurement policy was announced in the Northern Ireland Assembly in May 2002. The overall aim of the policy is to achieve "best value for money" in the procurement of goods, works and services over the lifetime of a contract. Best value for money does not mean the lowest initial cost. It means securing a procurement that meets the user's needs and achieves a balance between quality and cost throughout the life of the asset. Within this definition the policy allows for the consideration of wider policy objectives into procurement, that meet the tests of need, affordability and cost-effectiveness and comply with the UK's EC and international obligations.

All Northern Ireland Ministers are very aware of the concept of "best value for money" in the context of public procurement in Northern Ireland and Lord Rooker, through chairmanship of the Procurement Board, has specific responsibility for procurement policy.

Regional Rates

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by how much and what percentage the regional rate has changed in each of the last 20 years.[25164]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the increases in pence and in percentage terms in the domestic and the non-domestic regional rates from the 1986–87 financial year.

Domestic and non-domestic regional rate: changes (pence) and percentage change

	Domestic regional rate change		*Non-domestic regional rate change*	
	Pence	*Percentage*	*Pence*	*Percentage*
1986–87	9.51	10.7	9.51	9.4
1987–88	3.15	3.2	3.15	2.9
1988–89	9.06	8.9	9.06	8.0
1989–90	15.48	14.0	15.48	12.6
1990–91	10.20	8.1	10.20	7.4
1991–92	[1]- 64.87	-47.6	17.13	11.6
1992–93	-4.23	-5.9	- 12.23	-7.4
1993–94	-1.19	-1.8	- 13.19	-8.6
1994–95	8.70	13.2	8.70	6.2
1995–96	5.22	7.0	5.22	3.5
1996–97	6.41	8.0	4.41	2.9
1997–98	6.66	7.7	[2]—	n/a
1998–99	6.22	6,7	0.65	2.5
1999–2000	7.94	8.0	1.47	5.5
2000–01	8.57	8.0	1.30	4.6
2001–02	8.10	7.0	0.97	3.3
2002–03	8.67	7.0	1.00	3.3
2003–04	7.95	6.0	[3]—	n/a
2004–05	12.36	8.8	0.84	3.3
2005–06	13.75	9.0	0.87	3.3

[1] Domestic Rate Aid Grant increased from 12p to 94p due to Chancellor's Budget in line with the Great Britain Community Charge reduction.
[2] Not applicable—non-domestic revaluation (4th general revaluation)
[3] Not applicable—non-domestic revaluation (5th general revaluation)

Royal Mail

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Royal Mail on the recent removal of local post office services within Northern Ireland to private premises. [11114]

Angela E. Smith: There have been no such discussions. Decisions on individual closures and conversions of directly managed (Crown) post offices are operational and commercial matters for Post Office Ltd.

Sentencing Framework

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the conclusions of the review on the sentencing framework in Northern Ireland. [27762]

Mr. Hanson: A summary of the responses to the public consultation on the review of the sentencing framework was published on the Northern Ireland Office website in September 2005. Policy options are currently under consideration. I will make an announcement in due course.

Social Care Studies

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals commencing social care study in the Province *(a)* failed to complete and *(b)* completed their university course in each of the last five years. [24905]

Angela E. Smith: The information is as follows:

Academic year	*Students gaining social work qualifications*
1999–2000	420
2000–01	508
2001–02	448
2002–03	486
2003–04	389

The Department does not hold data, by subject area, on those students who fail to complete or on students who complete the course but fail to gain the qualification.

Truancy

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on tackling truancy in the Province since 1997. [25794]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not available. The money spent on tackling truancy in schools in the province is subsumed within the operating cost of the Education Welfare Service of the education and library boards. From 1 January 2004 the Department has collected information on the cost of the Education Welfare Service and the cost for the 2004 calendar year amounts to approximately £5.6 million.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the level of truancy among *(a)* males and *(b)* females at (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in the Province. [25795]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the requested information. However, information on referrals of pupils to the Education Welfare Service is collected from each of the Education and Library Boards on an annual basis. Referrals can be for a variety of reasons, including truancy.

The following table shows the percentage of pupils referred to the Education Welfare Service at each key stage in Northern Ireland from 2000–01 to 2003–04:

	Percentage pupils referred			
	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Key Stage 1	0.89	1.27	1.53	1.05
Key Stage 2	1.72	1.88	2.14	1.61
Key Stage 3	4.85	5.02	5.12	4.40
Key Stage 4	8.12	8.46	8.92	6.42

Unfilled Jobs

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage of unfilled jobs in the Province that are the result of skills shortages among potential applicants. [25773]

Angela E. Smith: Results from the most recent Skills Monitoring Survey published by the Department for Employment and Learning in 2003 show that 7.3 per cent. of vacancies reported by employers, were unfilled due to external skills shortages.

University Entrants

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of entrance to university by students from less well-off families in the Province in each of the last five years. [25789]

Angela E. Smith: The following tables set out social class and socio-economic classification data collected by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service for Ni domiciled applicants accepted to degree courses at UK Higher Education Institutions by year of entry. 2002 was the first year data were supplied according to National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification. It replaced the social class measure which was available until 2001,

Social Class	*2000*	*Percentage (excluding unknown)*	*2001*	*Percentage (excluding unknown)*
I Professional	964	10.2	1,034	10.4
II Intermediate	3,871	41.1	4,108	41.3
III Skilled Non-manual	1,676	17.8	1,709	17.2
IIIM IM Skilled Manual	1,939	20.6	2,099	21.1

Social Class	2000	Percentage (excluding unknown)	2001	Percentage (excluding unknown)
IV Partly Skilled	725	7.7	734	7.4
V Unskilled	242	2.6	253	2.5
Not Known	955	—	1,171	—
Total	10,372	—	11,108	—

Socio-Economic Classification (SEC)	2002	Percentage (excluding unknown)	2003	Percentage (excluding unknown)	2004	Percentage (excluding unknown)
1. Higher managerial and professional occupations	1,456	14.5	1,416	13.6	1,436	13.5
2. Lower managerial and professional occupations	2,916	29.1	3,030	29.1	3,113	29.4
3. Intermediate occupations	1,825	18.2	1,820	17.5	1,915	18.1
4. Small employers and own account workers	1,438	14.3	1,446	13.9	1,436	13.5
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	553	5.5	648	6.2	673	6.3
6. Semi-routine occupations	1,092	10.9	1,240	11.9	1,244	11.7
7. Routine occupations	745	7.4	796	7.7	789	7.4
Unknown	1,667	—	1,860	—	2,088	—
Total	11,692	—	12,256	—	12,694	—

Youth Services (Funding)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to consult directly with *(a)* children, *(b)* young people and *(c)* their families on priorities and possibilities for the funding package announced in Budget and Priorities 2006–08. [24851]

Angela E. Smith: Public consultation on the Draft Priorities and Budget 2006–08 commenced on 25 October, and will run until 5 December. In the course of this process we would welcome input from any and all interested parties, particularly in respect of the new funding packages. Comments may be made in writing, or by attending one of a series of consultation events, open to all members of the public.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on children's services in the Province in each of the last five years. [24893]

Angela E. Smith: Children's services cover a wide and varied range of activities across a number of Departments. Expenditure on activities which benefit children, either directly or indirectly, cannot be easily identified as budgets and expenditure lines are constructed to identify functions and programmes rather than target groups. The information sought could, therefore, be provided only at disproportionate cost.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23297]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Both the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and its agencies do not use call centres.

The number of calls received to the main ODPM switchboard prior to January 2003 is unavailable. However, a total of 24,833 calls were received January 2003 to March 2003, 118,773 during 2003–04, 129,209 during 2004–05 and 61,408 from the start of 2005–06 to the end of September 2005. Abandoned call data are available only from October 2004, since when, out of 106,823 calls received, only 0.2 per cent. were abandoned by the caller after 15 seconds. Rather than receive an engaged tone when waiting for an operator to become available, the call continues to ring until answered.

The Fire Service College have received 15,703 calls since July 2005 (no data available prior to this date). Out of those received, 14,388 (92 per cent.) were answered within the Fire Service College's performance target of 15 seconds. All calls to the main Fire Service College switchboard are handled by advisers: no data are available concerning abandoned calls. Calls to the switchboard continue to ring until answered rather than receive an engaged tone.

The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre receives approximately 110,000 calls annually which none are handled by advisers: no data are held concerning abandoned calls. Calls to the main switchboard do not receive an engaged tone, but go straight to voicemail if unanswered after a short period of time.

Call data volume for the Planning Inspectorate are not held nor are statistics relating to abandoned calls. All calls to the switchboard are handled by advisers and calls are placed into a queue until an advisor is available.

Council Housing

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of Sheffield's council housing stock has been sold under the right-to-buy scheme since 1980. [26344]

Yvette Cooper: It is estimated that approximately 35 per cent. of Sheffield's local authority housing stock has been sold through the right-to-buy scheme up to the end of March 2005.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes were sold under the right-to-buy scheme in Sheffield in 2004-05. [26345]

Yvette Cooper: Sheffield reported 1,323 local authority dwellings were sold under the right-to-buy scheme in 2004–05.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes were sold under the right-to-buy scheme in Bolton in each year since 1980. [26351]

Yvette Cooper: The number of local authority dwellings sold under right-to-buy since 1980, as reported by Bolton is tabled as follows:

Bolton: right-to-buy sales

	Number
1979–80	0
1980–81	4
1981–82	383
1982–83	290
1983–84	209
1984–85	233
1985–86	216
1986–87	47
1987–88	24
1988–89	356
1989–90	645
1990–91	668
1991–92	263
1992–93	151
1993–94	136
1999–95	114
1995–96	87
1996–97	89
1997–98	133
1998–99	138
1999–2000	150
2000–01	231
2001–02	240
2002–03	347
2003–04	654
2004–05	774

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of Bolton's council housing stock has been sold under the right-to-buy since 1980. [26352]

Yvette Cooper: It is estimated that approximately 25 per cent. of Bolton's local authority housing stock has been sold through the right-to-buy scheme up to the end of March 2005.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will break down the total number of right-to-buy sales in Bolton since 1980 by *(a)* bedsit, *(b)* one-bed, *(c)* two-bed, *(d)* three-bed and *(e)* four or more bedrooms. [26353]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not held centrally on the numbers of bedrooms of local authority dwellings sold through right-to-buy, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out the total capacity receipts generated from right-to-buy sales in *(a)* Bolton and *(b)* the north-west region in each year since 1980. [26354]

Yvette Cooper: The total capital receipts from right-to-buy sales of local authority dwellings in Bolton and the north-west region in the years from 1996–97 onwards are tabulated as follows. These figures are net of discounts and are as reported by local authorities.

Capital receipts

	Bolton	*£ million North-west*
1996–97	1.4	57.8
1997–98	2.1	74.0
1998–99	2.2	69.4
1999–2000	2.4	89.6
2000–01	3.7	105.0
2001–02	4.1	120.1
2002–03	6.1	168.3
2003–04	13.4	271.7
2004–05	19.8	251.2

Source:
Quarterly P1(A/B) return received from local authorities

The information for years prior to 1996–97 is not centrally available.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library preliminary *(a)* analysis, *(b)* studies and *(c)* estimates conducted before the announcement of the revaluation postponement by (i) his Office and (ii) the Valuation Office Agency on the distribution and number of gainers and losers from the council tax revaluation in England. [24678]

Mr. Woolas: As my right hon. Friend said on 20 September, Sir Michael Lyons will set out his work so far later this year.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23846]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Domestic Violence

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to improve the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence. [24082]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister plays an important part in the Government's action to tackle domestic violence. Specific action taken recently includes:

Investing more than £30 million over three years for new refuge provision and refurbishment of existing refuge schemes.

Investing £1.4 million over three years to develop a new national domestic violence helpline (0808 2000 247) supported by UKRefugesonline an internet based UK wide database of domestic violence services.

Providing £200,000 in 2005–06 for the development of minimum service standards for the Women's Aid network of domestic violence services, a programme of accredited training and support the regional network of women's refuges.

Introducing a substantially revised domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator from 1 April 2005, the purpose of which is to assess overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence.

Establishing the Supporting People programme from 1 April 2003, providing a more strategic basis for funding and commissioning housing related support services for victims of domestic violence. A consultation seeking views on the future direction of the programme will be launched shortly and will be a vehicle for improving services for those fleeing domestic violence.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action he is taking to improve the energy efficiency of community buildings. [26215]

Yvette Cooper: The energy efficiency provisions in Part L of the Building Regulations apply whenever buildings, including community buildings, are constructed, altered, extended or subjected to a material change of use. In September the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced further improvements to these energy efficiency requirements that will come into effect next April.

Fire-related Deaths

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire-related deaths there have been in West Lancashire in each of the last three years. [27835]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Lancashire fire and rescue service have supplied the following information on the number of fire-related deaths in the constituency of West Lancashire from 2002 to 2004.

	Number of deaths in fires
2002	0
2003	0
2004	1

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government have made to targets for reducing the number of *(a)* accidental fire-related deaths in the home and *(b)* deliberate fires since 1997. [26924]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government made changes to the Service Level Agreement Targets covering the period 1998–99 to 2010 when we introduced a Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target for the Fire and Rescue Service in April 2005.

The Service Level Agreement Target for reducing the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home was:

"To reduce the incidence of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20 per cent. averaged over the five-year period to March 2004 compared with the average recorded in the five year period to March 1999."

The current PSA target for reducing the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home is:

"To reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home by 20 per cent. by 31 March 2010."

This includes a floor target:

"That no local fire and rescue authority has a fatality rate, from accidental fires in the home, more than 1.25 times the national average by 2010."

The Service Level Agreement for reducing the number of deliberate fires was:

"To reduce by 30 per cent. the number of deliberate fires by March 2009 from the 1998–09 baseline."

The current PSA target for reducing the number of deliberate fires is:

"To achieve a 10 per cent. reduction in the number of deliberate fires by 31 March 2010 from the 2001–02 baseline."

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the required elements of home information packs. [24676]

Yvette Cooper: The draft regulations specifying the contents of the home information pack were published for public comment on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website on 31 October. The proposed required documents are listed in Regulation 8

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for the introduction of home information packs. [24679]

Yvette Cooper: The intention of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is to introduce home information packs early in 2007, and we are discussing with our key stakeholders how best this can be achieved.

Housing

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to increase the number of *(a)* affordable homes and *(b)* social housing units in rural areas. [24102]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation is currently considering bids from registered social landlords and others to support the increased provision of both social rented and low cost home ownership products over 2006–08. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects (subject to satisfactory bids coming forward) that some £424 million of grant will be allocated to bids in rural areas. The results of the bidding round will be announced in early 2006.

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish a revised planning policy guidance note 3 on the provisions of affordable housing in rural areas. [24103]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish by the end of this year a draft new Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) for consultation. Final PPS3 will be published as soon as practicable after the consultation period has closed.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* studio and one-bed, *(b)* two-bed, *(c)* three-bed and *(d)* four-bed units of social housing there were in each London local authority in (i) 1980, (ii) 1990, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2005. [24271]

Yvette Cooper: For 1980 and 1990, information on registered social landlord housing stock or local authority stock by size for each London borough is not held centrally. The information for 2000 and 2005 for those properties for which a breakdown is available is given as follows.

Table 1: Social stock by size for London boroughs—2000

	One bedroom and bedsits	Two bedrooms	Three or more bedrooms
Barking and Dagenham	6,364	10,666	8,383
Barnet	4,596	6,892	4,467
Bexley	3,351	2,889	3,846
Brent	7,769	7,807	5,668
Bromley	5,618	5,475	5,370
Camden	14,884	10,629	8,764
City of London	1,154	687	466
Croydon	6,600	7,959	8,400
Ealing	8,618	7,676	5,880
Enfield	5,563	6,570	5,558
Greenwich	10,561	11,896	12,113
Hackney	13,997	14,675	12,880
Hammersmith and Fulham	10,227	7,597	5,931
Haringey	10,018	9,058	8,057
Harrow	2,858	2,400	2,405
Havering	4,811	4,755	4,059
Hillingdon	5,242	5,476	4,461
Hounslow	5,848	7,159	6,256
Islington	16,776	13,335	10,388
Kensington and Chelsea	8,998	5,819	3,551
Kingston upon Thames	2,531	2,230	1,669
Lambeth	16,301	16,281	14,957
Lewisham	12,260	14,727	12,405
Merton	3,418	3,686	4,098
Newham	10,315	11,009	10,325
Redbridge	3,367	2,436	2,087
Richmond-upon-Thames	4,237	2,774	2,638
Southwark	21,442	20,793	17,323
Sutton	3,894	4,404	3,546
Tower Hamlets	12,308	14,589	12,216
Waltham Forest	6,875	6,313	6,738
Wandsworth	9,710	9,569	7,735
Westminster	13,191	7,195	4,401

Notes:

1. Figures are given for those registered social landlord general needs dwellings for which the landlord has provided size from the Regulatory and Statistical Return of the Housing Corporation.
2. The dwelling stock figures exclude non-self contained properties and staff homes.
3. Local authority information comes from the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Audit Base Return and does not include non-self contained units and may exclude stock owned by the local authority outside their area even if it is in another borough.

Table 2: Social stock by size for London boroughs—2005

	Bedsit	One bedroom	Two bedrooms	Three bedrooms	Four or more bedrooms
Barking and Dagenham	476	5,047	9,496	7,237	288
Barnet	338	3,762	6,763	3,993	515
Bexley	350	2,810	3,393	3,781	565
Brent	583	5,957	7,575	4,684	978
Bromley	552	3,261	5,643	4,722	618
Camden	2,756	10,118	9,634	6,161	1,971
City of London	429	600	612	407	19
Croydon	812	4,970	7,716	7,425	1,002
Ealing	1,056	6,816	7,221	4,867	757
Enfield	519	4,487	6,241	5,000	414
Greenwich	1,503	8,803	11,573	10,259	1,681
Hackney	1,542	11,101	14,821	10,287	2,564
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,102	8,531	7,638	4,575	1,338
Haringey	469	8,521	8,391	6,212	1,166
Harrow	303	2,262	2,362	2,268	224
Havering	682	3,617	4,348	3,681	186
Hillingdon	511	4,376	5,702	4,217	355
Hounslow	924	4,836	6,901	5,597	487
Islington	1,292	13,696	12,789	7,889	2,112
Kensington and Chelsea	2,084	5,976	5,757	2,894	657
Kingston upon Thames	489	1,846	2,312	1,522	145
Lambeth	1,740	13,004	15,667	11,018	3,056
Lewisham	1,471	9,433	12,710	8,933	1,844
Merton	227	2,877	3,370	3,579	255
Newham	393	8,781	9,692	7,819	1,330
Redbridge	521	1,992	2,474	1,918	220
Richmond-upon-Thames	454	2,695	2,553	2,084	254
Southwark	2,548	16,443	18,438	11,984	3,305
Sutton	22	703	1,302	524	51
Tower Hamlets	1,238	7,934	11,361	6,759	2,443
Waltham Forest	832	5,430	6,792	5,842	711
Wandsworth	1,146	7,464	8,953	5,909	1,416
Westminster	2,313	9,240	7,050	3,717	652

Notes:

1. Figures are given for those general needs dwellings for which the landlord has provided size from the Regulatory and Statistical Return of the Housing Corporation.

2. The dwelling stock figures exclude non-self contained properties and staff homes.
3. The information for local authority stock comes from the Housing Second Subsidy Claim form and are provisional and un-audited figures.
4. Information for local authority stock in Sutton is not yet available.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households *(a)* made a homelessness application and *(b)* were accepted as homeless in each London local authority in (i) 1990, (ii) 2000 and (iii) 2004–05. [24272]

Yvette Cooper: The available information is given in the following table. This presents information reported by each London borough on the number of households about whom a decision regarding their homelessness application was made, and the number of these accepted which were accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty.

The duty owed by the local authority is to secure suitable accommodation. If a settled home is not immediately available, the authority may secure temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. As an alternative to the provision of temporary accommodation some authorities arrange for households to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Decisions on applications from households for assistance under homelessness legislation, as reported by London boroughs

	1990		2000		April 2004 to March 2005	
	Total Decisions[1]	of which Accepted[2]	Total Decisions[1]	of which Accepted[2]	Total Decisions[1]	of which Accepted[2]
Barking and Dagenham	477	146	389	278	1,593	775
Barnet	1,989	638	3,538	1,208	4,893	758
Bexley	[3]—	[3]—	1,269	343	1,211	430
Brent	[3]—	[3]—	2,417	1,169	2,631	795
Bromley	1,643	759	1,809	885	[3]—	[3]—
Camden	[3]—	1,505	1,828	1,009	1,859	1,148
City of London	26	15	26	24	44	31
Croydon	3,073	1,608	5,217	1,668	4,432	1,126
Ealing	[3]—	[3]—	2,343	997	2,314	789
Enfield	1,528	1,094	1,547	912	[3]—	[3]—
Greenwich	[3]—	[3]—	3,432	1,233	2,945	1,197
Hackney	[3]—	[3]—	1,160	869	2,027	1,153
Hammersmith and Fulham	[3]—	[3]—	1,600	973	1,284	653
Haringey	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	2,114	1,175
Harrow	1,640	385	1,422	680	551	96
Havering	1,019	402	[3]—	[3]—	591	200
Hillingdon	[3]—	866	1,609	858	723	461
Hounslow	[3]—	[3]—	3,245	1,085	1,331	891
Islington	[3]—	[3]—	3,594	1,485	2,520	1,130
Kensington and Chelsea	[3]—	[3]—	1,195	612	1,267	589
Kingston upon Thames	985	328	1,065	400	[3]—	[3]—
Lambeth	[3]—	[3]—	1,642	1,006	2,715	1,644
Lewisham	[3]—	[3]—	2,220	891	2,216	1,245
Merton	655	405	797	178	659	261
Newham	[3]—	[3]—	2,952	1,353	[3]—	[3]—
Redbridge	[3]—	[3]—	600	430	[3]—	[3]—
Richmond upon Thames	[3]—	[3]—	594	321	488	279
Southwark	[3]—	[3]—	2,124	1,414	2,613	1,668
Sutton	1,619	525	801	432	930	272
Tower Hamlets	[3]—	[3]—	1,628	1,275	1,830	1,151
Waltham Forest	2,694	799	2,012	906	2,816	800
Wandsworth	3,768	1,476	[3]—	[3]—	1,867	840
Westminster	3,458	2,614	5,270	1,037	3,968	1,112

[1] Decisions prior to 1997 were made under the 1985 Housing Act; subsequent decisions were made under the 1996 Housing Act, although figures include any residual 1985 Act cases. Includes applications found to be ineligible.
[2] Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category and, under 1996 Housing Act provisions, consequently owed a main homelessness duty.
[3] Denotes an authority failed to provide a return for one or more quarters.

Note:
Data shown where four quarterly returns were received.

Source:
ODPM P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households were being accommodated in temporary accommodation in each London authority in September. [24273]

Yvette Cooper: Information about local authorities' activities under homelessness legislation, including the number of households in temporary accommodation in each local authority and London borough as at the end of September, will be available from the Statistical Release on statutory homelessness for the third quarter of 2005 to be published on 12 December.

Results for the second quarter of 2005, including the number of households in temporary accommodation as at the end of June, were presented in Supplementary Tables to Statistical Release published on 12 September. Information as reported by London boroughs is in the following table:

Households in temporary accommodation secured by London boroughs under homelessness legislation as at 30 June 2005

	Reported total
Barking and Dagenham	488
Barnet	[1]
Bexley	370
Brent	4,510
Bromley	451
Camden	2,147
City of London	31
Croydon	3,161
Ealing	2,286
Enfield	3,221
Greenwich	576
Hackney	n/a
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,791
Haringey	5,422
Harrow	1,236
Havering	881
Hillingdon	1,831
Hounslow	1,269
Islington	1,498
Kensington and Chelsea	1,238
Kingston upon Thames	735
Lambeth	2,422
Lewisham	1,939
Merton	164
Newham	6,117
Redbridge	2,598
Richmond upon Thames	439
Southwark	968
Sutton	637
Tower Hamlets	2,888
Waltham Forest	1,808
Wandsworth	1,589
Westminster	3,239
All London boroughs[2]	62,640

[1] Data not reported.
[2] All London total includes estimates for missing data.

Source:
ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average rent is for a two-bed unit of temporary accommodation in London. [24274]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Notting Hill Housing Trust as a provider of affordable housing over the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [24527]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation assesses the performance of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) against the Regulatory Code and publishes its findings in the Housing Corporation Assessment (HCA). The Audit Commission inspects and reports on an RSL's service delivery. The most recent HCA for Notting Hill Housing Group was published in May 2005 and confirms satisfactory performance in all areas. The Audit Commission published the report of its May 2005 inspection of service delivery at Notting Hill Housing Trust in August 2005, and concluded that the Trust provided a fair service that has excellent prospects for improvement.

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses and other dwellings were built in *(a)* Hertfordshire, *(b)* Surrey, *(c)* Sussex and *(d)* Hampshire in each year since 2000. [25442]

Yvette Cooper: The annual number of new build completions reported for *(a)* Hertfordshire, *(b)* Surrey, *(c)* Sussex (East and West Sussex) and *(d)* Hampshire in each year since 2000are tabled as follows:

Number of new build completions

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Hampshire	3,234	3,617	3,651	4,638	4,800
Hertfordshire	2,426	2,196	1,919	2,961	3,342
Surrey	2,526	2,616	2,848	3,318	3,207
East Sussex	1,272	1,394	1,384	1,147	1,220
West Sussex	1,587	1,436	2,200	2,010	1,847

Source:
Returns (P2/NHBC) to ODPM on building control completions

Figures for the County of Hampshire exclude Southampton and Portsmouth Unitary Authorities and figures for East Sussex exclude figures for Brighton and Hove unitary authority.

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant homes there were in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire in each of the past five years. [25444]

Yvette Cooper: The number of vacant homes in North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire in each of the past five years are shown in the table as follows.

Data as at:	*North East Lincolnshire*	*North Lincolnshire*
1 November 2000	2,890	3,361
1 November 2001	3,001	3,020
16 October 2002	2,628	2,522
16 October 2003	2,689	2,143
11 October 2004	2,727	2,035

The data are as reported on CTB1 and CTB1S forms submitted by billing authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each year. The figure includes both long-term and short-term empty properties.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require all new housebuildings to be built to the EcoHomes standard. [26189]

Yvette Cooper: EcoHomes is a commercially available environmental assessment system so it is not appropriate to specify that all new houses be built to this system. However, Government agencies are the main users of the EcoHomes system. The Housing Corporation currently require all publicly funded social

housing to be designed to meet the 'Good' standard. The English Partnerships Millennium Communities and Design for Manufacture Programmes specify the 'Very Good' standard. Statutory requirements for all new house construction are set out in the Building Regulations and we have announced improvements to minimum energy efficiency requirements that will come into effect next April.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* bedsit, *(b)* one-bed, *(c)* two-bed, *(d)* three-bed and *(e)* four or more bed right-to-buy sales there have been in Sheffield since 1980. [26343]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not held centrally on the numbers of bedrooms of local authority dwellings sold through right-to-buy, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the proposed new houses for Hertfordshire he expects to be built on brownfield sites. [26349]

Yvette Cooper: The East of England Plan, which is currently being tested through an Examination in Public, will determine how many homes should be built in Hertfordshire taking into account the availability of previously developed land.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 760W to the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), on housing, what assessment he has made of the impact of the right-to-buy on the number of households on Bolton's housing waiting list. [26355]

Yvette Cooper: No such assessment has been made. It is for each housing authority to manage its stock in the light of local circumstances.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many right-to-buy applications Bolton metropolitan borough council has received that remain under consideration. [26483]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not held centrally on the number of right to buy applications that remain under consideration by local authorities, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many applicants are on the Bolton housing waiting list. [26484]

Yvette Cooper: The number of households on the Bolton housing waiting list as at 1 April 2005 is 16,096.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the Housing Association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a Housing Association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to provide affordable housing in North East Milton Keynes. [27173]

Yvette Cooper: The Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Sub-Regional Strategy states that Milton Keynes should accommodate an additional 44,900 dwellings over the period 2001–21, of which 30 per cent. should be affordable. This follows the recommendations of the independent Panel which conducted a Public Examination into the Strategy.

Detailed consideration of housing opportunities in the North East of Milton Keynes, including affordable housing, is a matter for Milton Keynes Council and local partners.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on encouraging the residential use of unoccupied dwellings above shops and commercial premises. [27372]

Yvette Cooper: The release of vacant space over shops and commercial premises has a part to play in meeting housing supply demands and in reviving town centre living. There are however a number of barriers preventing much of this potential from being realised, including the complex ownership patterns in high street property. We are considering a number of ways in which these barriers might be overcome, and we will announce how we intend to take this forward in due course.

Housing Act 2004

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for *(a)* the laying of secondary legislation and *(b)* the publication of guidance in relation to the Housing Act 2004. [24680]

Yvette Cooper: Please see the following table.

Housing Act 2004: Timetable for secondary legislation and guidance

Provision/Part	*Proposed laying of SIs*	*Proposed publication of guidance*
Part 1—Housing Conditions	End November 2005	Statutory guidance will be laid with the Regulations. Subject to the parliamentary procedure, estimated to be ready for publication in March.
Parts 2, 3, 4 and 7—HMO and Selective Licensing	End January 2006	The Act does not provide for formal guidance but explanatory information will be made available for landlords and tenants in February and March 2006. The intention is to issue informal advice to local authorities in due course.
Part 4—Empty Dwelling Management Orders	End January 2006	March 2006
Part 5—Home Information Packs	Early 2006 Draft SIs published in full on 31 October 2005	Guidance on draft SI to be published w/b 8 November 2005
Part 6—remaining Right to Buy modifications	Commenced July 2005	
Clarification of application of Right to Buy provisions to Preserved Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes	December 2005	
Part 6—Suspension of certain rights in connection with antisocial behaviour	Commenced June 2005	To be confirmed

Housing Act 2004: Timetable for secondary legislation and guidance

Provision/Part	*Proposed laying of SIs*	*Proposed publication of guidance*
Part 6—Extension to introductory tenancies	Commenced June 2005	
Part 6—Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessments	Spring 2006	Draft guidance on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment will be issued shortly Guidance on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation strategies: spring 2006
Part 6—Tenant Deposit Protection	July 2006	Explanatory information to be issued from May 2006 onwards.
Part 6—Additional power to give grants for social housing	End November 2005	
Part 6—Allocation of housing accommodation by local authorities	Commenced April 2005	

Lea Valley Park Authority

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much *(a)* Havering council and *(b)* the Lea Valley councils allocated to the Lea Valley Park Authority in 2004–05. [25869]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Local Area Agreements

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 449W, on local area agreements (LAAs), (1) if he will place a copy of each agreed LAA in the Library; and why the website page referred to in the answer does not provide access to copies of each LAA; [24671]

(2) if he will list the measures which can be applied should certain targets not be met for each of the agreed LAAs. [24677]

Mr. Woolas: Copies of all LAAs signed to date are in the Libraries of both Houses. The signed LAAs can be found online as part of the LAA toolkit, accessible through both the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website and at:

http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=627986

I have also placed a copy of the document "Local Area Agreements Guidance" in the Libraries of the House. This document contains a range of detailed information on the creation and operation of LAAs, including performance management.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the Valuation Office Agency forecast the number of council tax banding appeals. [25622]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency forecast council tax banding appeals in the light of knowledge of levels of appeals received in successive years to date. The clearance targets published annually in its business plan, contained in the Agency's Annual Reports and Forward Plan, reflect these forecasts. The Annual Reports and Forward Plan can be viewed on www.voa.gov.uk. In the current year the Agency expects to receive and clear some 28,000 appeals against the 1993 council tax lists.

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the percentage increase in *(a)* Government grant and *(b)* council tax was for each county council between 1996–97 and 2005–06; [26143]

(2) what the percentage increase was in *(a)* Government grant and *(b)* council tax for each county council between 2004–05 and 2005–06. [26144]

Mr. Woolas: Tables have been made available in the Library of the House showing the percentage increases in Government grant and council tax for each county council in each year between 1996–97 and 2005–06.

Local Government Pensions

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total amount is of unfunded local government pension liabilities. [26227]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 16 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 548W.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning permission applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in Dacorum since 1997. [25818]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. The hon. Member may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning permission applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in North East Milton Keynes since1997. [27174]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. My hon. Friend may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning permission applications for mobile telephone masts in the Kettering constituency have been *(a)* granted, *(b)* granted on appeal and *(c)* refused in each year since 1997. [27296]

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the planning applications which have been granted for mobile phone masts in West Lancashire since 1997. [27700]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1066W to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham).

Outdoor Advertising

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to amend planning regulations on outdoor advertising controls; and if he will make a statement. [26917]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be consulting on amended regulations on outdoor advertisement control later this year. We expect the new advertisements regulations to be introduced in 2006.

Park Homes

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the charging by park home operators of commission on sale. [24411]

Yvette Cooper: Paragraph 8(2) of schedule 1 to the Mobile Homes Act 1983 entitles park owners to receive a commission on the sale of a park home, not exceeding a rate specified by the Secretary of State. The current maximum rate is 10 per cent. and is specified in the Mobile Homes (Commissions) Order 1983.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is planning to issue a consultation paper early next year exploring the basis for changes to the commission rate. This will draw on the research report on the Economics of the Park Homes Industry, published in 2002.

Pathfinder Projects

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons the Government are demolishing homes in the Pathfinder project areas; and if he will publish the criteria used for such decisions. [17253]

Yvette Cooper: The nine pathfinders are working in parts of our northern cities and towns where three years ago the prices of houses fell well below their apparent worth. Those who could do so moved out. Homes were abandoned and some of the most disadvantaged in our society became trapped in neighbourhoods characterised by dereliction, crime, anti-social behaviour and poor services. This market collapse was an extreme manifestation of a wider problem of low demand which the Housing Market Renewal Fund addresses.

The Government are investing £1.2 billion up to March 2008 to tackle the mismatch of supply and demand in these areas, providing people with a choice of good quality housing fit for the 21st century and re-creating sustainable communities. Refurbishment, new build and some demolition are part of this approach as well as action with partners to improve economic and job prospect, education, crime and behaviour and health, tackle dereliction, provide high quality public space and capitalise on the rich heritage of many areas.

Each pathfinder has in place its own arrangements to assess options and appraise projects.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder schemes are permitted to make their minutes and papers available to hon. Members who represent pathfinder areas; and whether they are covered by the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [24255]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders are permitted to make their minutes and papers available to hon. Members who represent their pathfinder areas.

For Freedom of Information purposes the pathfinders should be considered part of the local authority which acts as its 'accountable body'. Therefore the legal duty to respond to an FOI request falls to the accountable body.

Planning

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the discretion of local authority planning committees to delegate decisions to unelected officers. [27322]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) regards the delegation of suitable decisions to officers as an effective way to improve timeliness of decision making, which is why ODPM encourages all local authorities to adopt a comprehensive system of delegation.

Decisions can only be delegated to officers by elected members and so they determine the terms on which a delegated agreement operates, the level of member involvement, and the circumstances in which an officer's delegated power to make a decision may not be exercised.

The LGA and ODPM have jointly published revised guidance on schemes of delegation called "Delivering Delegation". Apart from re-affirming policy on delegation, the new document will give details on the types of decisions that can be delegated and best practice models of delegation schemes.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will review planning policy guidance; and if he will make a statement. [24078]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 810W.

Regional Fire Control Centres

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made towards establishing the West Midlands Regional Fire Control Centre; and if he will make a statement. [26841]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Good progress has been made on all aspects of the project. In August, Wolverhampton Business Park was chosen as the site for the West Midlands regional fire control centre, following a fair

and transparent procurement process. The building has recently received full planning permission. The West Midlands Regional Management Board have indicated their willingness to set up a local authority company as the governing entity for the centre, subject to a full consultation on the detailed proposals. Meanwhile, the procurement for the technology/infrastructure services that will supply all the new regional controls is well under way, and should be completed by spring 2006.

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons the Outline Business Case for the Regional Fire Control Centres has not yet been published. [26842]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Fire Control Outline Business Case was published in January 2005, and is available on the project website at www.firecontrol.odpm.gov.uk

Respect Unit

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 489W, on respect, which of the programmes listed are within the remit or responsibility of the Home Office. [24701]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Two of the four programmes listed in my earlier answer are ODPM programmes entirely and the Home Office have no remit or responsibility for them. The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund is a joint Home Office and ODPM programme, which also now incorporates the ODPM programme 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener' referred to in my earlier answer.

Self-invested Personal Pensions

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to protect houses in rural areas from purchase as second homes by holders of self invested personal pensions. [24101]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not envisage that changes to self-invested personal pensions (SIPPs) introduced by colleagues in the Treasury will have any significant effect on housing markets in either rural or urban areas. In July we launched the Affordable Rural Housing Commission and invited it to consider the evidence and reach consensus on the relevant issues around affordable housing needs in rural areas. It is likely that the Commission will wish to consider the positive and negative aspects of second homes. The Commission will report next year.

Smoke Alarms

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department plans to issue guidance to fire services on the need to ensure smoke alarms provided to deaf and hard of hearing people meet the British Standard BS 5446–3.2005. [26774]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government is funding free smoke alarms for 1.25 million vulnerable households in England under the £25 million Home Fire Risk Check initiative over the period 2004–08. Many FRSs are fitting alarms for the deaf and hard of hearing under this initiative. Specific advice is already included in guidance prepared by the Chief Fire Officers Association. In summary, people who use hearing aids may be able to hear conventional interconnecting alarms, but if this is found not to be the case, specialist alarms should be fitted. We would expect all smoke alarms to meet appropriate British Standards.

Regeneration (North Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the potential for a merger between Catalyst Corby and North Northants Together. [19477]

Yvette Cooper: The Government believe that a merger between Catalyst Corby and North Northants Together would be beneficial to regeneration and sustainable growth in North Northamptonshire and has invited local partners to consider this. It would give a clear single voice to the area on growth and regeneration issues and strengthen delivery capacity for capital infrastructure projects.

The Government recently received the formal merger proposals from both bodies and are considering their response.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 15 November 2005

WALES

Airports

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the development of regional airports in Wales. [27215]

Mr. Hain: The Transport (Wales) Bill will give the Assembly a specific power to provide financial assistance in respect of air services and airport facilities, where these would not otherwise be provided. The Bill received its Second Reading in another place on 1 November.

The Assembly Government are keen to exploit the potential of air transport within Wales. Following an extensive consultation exercise, it proposes to take forward a service from Swansea and Cardiff to Valley on Anglesey. This service would operate two flights a day in each direction. It would provide significant time savings for passengers and improve business links. The Assembly Government will be working with their partners to launch this service in 2006, subject to obtaining the necessary approvals and consents.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Office from May 1997 broken down by act. [28987]

Nick Ainger: The information is as follows:

Government of Wales Act 1998: (Responsibility of Welsh Office)

Section 96-Offence relating to preservation of order;

Section 72-Offence relating to integrity;

Section 75-Offence relating to witness and documents;

Section 145C-Offence relating to studies relating to registered social landlords;

Schedule 13-Offence relating to Welsh Development Agency disclosure of information.

Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004: (Responsibility of Wales Office)

Section 5-Offence relating to studies relating to registered social landlords;

Section 19-Offence relating to Auditor's rights to documents and information;

Section 27-Offence relating to Additional publicity for immediate reports;

Section 29-Offence relating to inspection of statements of accounts and auditors' report;

Section 39-Offence relating to accounts and audit regulations;

Section 47-Offence relating to publication of information as to standards of performance;

Section 53-Offence relating to rights of Auditor General for Wales to documents and information;

Section 54-Offence relating to restriction on disclosure of information;

Section 54A-Offence relating to restriction on disclosure of information by or on behalf of public authority.

Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005 (Responsibility of Wales Office)

Section 17-Offence relating to publishing reports;

Section 26-Offence relating to disclosure of information.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23495]

Mr. Hain: None.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Cars

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many abandoned cars *(a)* were recorded in each local authority in England in 2004–05 and *(b)* are predicted for 2005–06. [27891]

Mr. Bradshaw: The data on how many abandoned cars were recorded in each local authority in 2004–05 are still being collated and we intend to make this information available as soon as possible.

It is not possible to predict the number of cars abandoned for future years, as several variables such as the price of scrap metal can have significant impacts on the number of cars abandoned.

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will compensate poultry keepers who report a possible infection with avian influenza who are then affected by further cases during the time taken by the Department to carry out the necessary tests. [27523]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the event of an avian influenza outbreak, compensation would be payable under Schedule 3 of the Animal Health Act 1981 against the number of healthy birds destroyed at time of slaughter.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial resources have been made available by her Department to publicise the procedures that should be followed by local authorities who suspect the presence of Avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [27525]

Mr. Bradshaw: Existing legislation requires that any person including a local authority who suspects the presence of Avian influenza in poultry must report it to the local office of the State Veterinary Service.

No additional funding has been made available to local authorities for this purpose. However, consideration is being given to the way work following an outbreak that local authorities may undertake should be funded.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what contingency planning has been undertaken in West Lancashire to protect against an outbreak of avian influenza, with particular reference to Martin Mere; and if she will make a statement. [27657]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have significantly enhanced the arrangements for surveillance of wild birds, including the investigation of die-offs and sampling at shoots and wetlands. These arrangements have been agreed as part of coordinated efforts across the European Union.

Martin Mere is a wildfowl and wetlands trust that is fully aware of avian influenza and what to look for. They would notify their local Animal Health Office should they suspect avian influenza or other notifiable disease.

Defra has recently reviewed and updated its contingency plans and, following a period of public consultation, the Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan, which includes a section dealing specifically with an outbreak of avian influenza. The plan is regularly tested and was laid before Parliament on 21 July 2005. It is also available on the Defra website. In the event of an outbreak in GB the plan would be invoked immediately.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans the Government have *(a)* to prevent the release of game birds and *(b)* to ban driven shooting in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [24450]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no plans to treat game bird activity any differently from the remainder of the poultry industry. Restrictions on the movement of poultry in the event of an outbreak are contained within the Diseases of Poultry Order 2003. Game birds fall within the definition of poultry within this Order if they are reared or kept in captivity.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what is the current average period between a bird's death in quarantine and a veterinary investigation taking place into the cause of the bird's death. [24649]

Mr. Bradshaw: Guidelines to the state veterinary service allow a local veterinary inspector (LVI) to hold dead birds in a fridge or freezer for up to 10 days, if they do not suspect the presence of a notifiable disease, prior to sending them for testing.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many bird deaths in quarantine which were investigated was a specific cause of death identified in 2004–05. [24650]

Mr. Bradshaw: All birds dying in quarantine must be tested for the presence of the avian influenza and Newcastle disease viruses. No other tests are routinely performed. An importer, however, may carry out other tests privately.

Since November 2001 there have been four cases of highly pathogenic Newcastle disease and three cases of low pathogenic Newcastle disease (PMV1) in quarantine. There has been one case of avian influenza (H5N1), identified on the 21 October 2005.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what guidance she has issued to workers in *(a)* the commercial care of birds sector and *(b)* bird quarantine centres on whether they should attend events where there are large collections of birds; [25686]

(2) what guidance she has issued to workers in *(a)* the commercial care of birds sector and *(b)* bird quarantine centres who are also engaged in employment within the NHS. [25687]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA has distributed guidance materials on avian influenza to a range of industry groups-including the British Poultry Council, the British Egg Industry Council and the National Farmers Union-who are helping to distribute this material to their members, who cover the majority of birds. A simple one-page leaflet on biosecurity and surveillance for smaller concerns and backyard keepers has also been produced and has been distributed widely including to all veterinary practices and placed in trade and specialist press targeting the same audience .

DEFRA take very seriously and liaises closely with Department of Health, Health Protection Agency and the Health and Safety executive, who lead in this area. Guidance on worker protection has been issued by an industry and cross departmental working group and is available on the avian influenza pages of the DEFRA website.

Gatherings of birds at markets, shows, fairs and similar events are currently prohibited except under license following a veterinary risk assessment and which impose strict biosecurity requirements.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many licensed quarantine sites for birds there are in *(a)* the Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire. [25813]

Mr. Bradshaw: According to the records we have, there are currently no licensed quarantine sites for birds within either the Hemel Hempstead constituency or Hertfordshire.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what circumstances the Government will pay for the testing of poultry for avian influenza. [26831]

Mr. Bradshaw: All imported poultry must be accompanied by a health certificate, as laid down in EU legislation. The health certificate contains an official statement confirming that the birds are healthy and the premises and area of origin are free from avian influenza. Poultry is not required to be tested prior to export to the UK.

Where samples are taken from poultry for the purposes of ascertaining if those poultry are infected with the avian influenza virus, the tests carried out in the official laboratory are not charged directly to the owner of the poultry. Similarly, for any poultry that dies within 14 days of arrival the cost of testing for avian influenza would be borne by the Government.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has identified strains of avian influenza closely

related to H5N1 already in England; and what assessment she has made of the epidemiological implications of co-infection with H5N1 in a single host. [24009]

Mr. Bradshaw: The last H5 avian influenza virus to be isolated in England was the H5N1 virus responsible for the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in turkeys in Norfolk in 1991–92. This virus is genetically distinguishable from the H5N1 viruses currently causing the problems in East Asia and the virus isolated recently in quarantine birds in Essex.

The genetic material (RNA) of influenza viruses is segmented into eight distinct genes, which code for 10 proteins. Because this viral RNA is segmented, genetic reassortment can occur in mixed infections with different strains of influenza A viruses. This means that when two viruses infect the same cell, progeny viruses may inherit sets of eight RNA segments made up of combinations of segments from either of the parent viruses. The epidemiological significance of this for humans is that in theory if, for example, an H5N1 virus and a human influenza virus infect the same animal and same cell a reassortant virus could emerge that possessed the virus genes that enabled it to be transmissible in humans, but with the H5 haemagglutinin gene, which would mean that humans had no immunity to this virus. This mechanism is thought to have been the way the H2N2 and the H3N2 pandemic viruses emerged in 1957 and 1968 respectively.

Beef Exports

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken since May to promote the export of British beef; and what recent assessment she has made of the prospects for beef exports. [17482]

Mr. Bradshaw: Promotion of beef exports is undertaken primarily by the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC), their devolved bodies such as Hybu Cig Cymru in Wales and the beef industry itself. The Government recently fully supported their efforts to promote British beef at the International Food Fair, ANUGA, in Cologne in early October. On 14 October, Lord Bach held a high level meeting with the industry, agreeing to work together on opening up export markets for beef once the export ban is lifted.

The European Commission has acknowledged that the essential preconditions for lifting the EU export ban have been fulfilled. We are now awaiting proposals from the Commission for legislation to lift the ban. Such proposals would have to be submitted to EU member states to consider in the Standing Committee for the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH). If the member states were to vote in favour of the proposals in SCoFCAH, they would be translated into all EU languages and presented to the College of Commissioners for formal adoption. We hope that these processes will be completed in early 2006. but this is a best case scenario. We will continue to argue for an early resumption of beef exports.

The MLC estimate that UK beef exports could be about 40,000 tonnes, divided equally between prime beef and cow beef, in the first year after the ban is lifted.

Biodegradable Waste Pilot Schemes

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs where the 10 pilot plants funded by the Waste Implementation Programme for new waste technologies for the treatment of biodegradable municipal waste will be sited; and what types of technology will be used. [27099]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows:

Defra's Waste Implementation Programme—New Technologies Demonstration Programme

Subject to contractual closure and also planning, permitting and licensing requirements the following projects have been identified as possible demonstration projects:

ADAS—In-vessel composting sited in Somersham, Cambridgeshire

Novera Energy—Gasification situated near Frog Island, East London

South Shropshire/Greenfinch—Anaerobic Digestion sited at Ludlow, South Shropshire

Bioganix—In-vessel composting situated at Leominster, Herefordshire

SITA/Golder—MBT/Anaerobic digestion sited at Packington Landfill site, Warwickshire

Compact Power—Pyrolysis/Gasification sited at Avonmouth, Bristol

Yorwaste—Gasification sited at Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire.

Premier Waste—Aerobic digestion sited in County Durham

Energos—Gasification sited on the Isle of Wight.

Biofuels

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what support is available to farmers to grow crops for biofuels. [22176]

Mr. Morley: Help is available to farmers to grow crops for use in the generation of biomass heat and electricity and transport biofuels. £29 million was made available under the Energy Crops Scheme to support the planting of short rotation coppice (SRC) and miscanthus, and the setting up of producer groups to supply SRC to biomass heat and electricity end-users. The £3.5 million Bio-energy Infrastructure Scheme, which is now closed for applications, provides grants to develop the supply chain for purpose-grown energy crops, straw and woodfuel from harvest through to delivery to biomass energy end-users. Defra-funded research projects on crops for biomass heat and electricity are looking to develop disease resistant varieties and increase yields. Best practice guidance is available for growing SRC and miscanthus. Farmers growing crops for biomass heat and electricity and transport biofuels can receive the Single Payment for certain crops grown on set-aside or where the 45/ha Energy Aid payment is claimed for crops on non set-aside land. It was announced on 10 November that the Government will introduce a Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation which will require 5 per cent. of transport fuel sold in the UK to come from a renewable source by 2010. This may open up opportunities for farmers to supply crops to be used to produce biofuels.

Bird Markets

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what compensation will be offered to those who cannot hold bird markets and auctions as a result of the European Commission's Decision 2005/745/EC. [27521]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not Government policy to compensate for losses consequent upon the implementation of EU legislation.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Prime Minister on a policy towards bovine tuberculosis. [28033]

Mr. Bradshaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State holds regular meetings with the Prime Minister and other colleagues on a range of issues.

Cetacean By-catch

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* the European Commission, *(b)* France and *(c)* other EU member states regarding actions necessary to reduce cetacean by-catch. [27402]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* Previous discussions with the European Commission and other member states, following pressure from the UK, resulted in the adoption in April 2004 of Community measures to address cetacean by-catch (Council Regulation EC No. 812/2004). These measures include the mandatory use of observers to widen knowledge of where by-catch occurs and the use of pingers to deter porpoises from gill nets. A review of the effectiveness of these measures is due to take place in 2007–08.

More recently, pressure from the UK in relation to common dolphin by-catch in the Western Channel secured agreement at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of Ministers' meeting in March 2005 to an early review by the International Council for the Exploration of Sea (ICES) of the interaction of fisheries and common dolphins in the North East Atlantic. Following publication of this ICES advice, Commissioner Borg has written in September 2005 to all member states stressing the urgent need to provide timely reports to the Commission on the results from the observer schemes required under the council regulation to ensure that any future by-catch reduction measures can be targeted effectively.

Climate Change

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will support legally binding targets to tackle climate change. [28798]

Mr. Morley: As yet, there have been no formal intergovernmental discussions of the design of a future commitment period under the Kyoto protocol. The UK will chair the EU at the UN climate change conference at the end of this year at which the first formal discussion will take place when the parties of the Kyoto protocol meet for the first time.

The EU is also looking forward to using this discussion to initiate a process among all parties to explore how to implement better the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Following this conference, next year we plan to start discussions to prepare the UK position on further action.

The UK Government and the EU want to build on the Kyoto protocol and its key elements such as targets and timetables, monitoring and reporting, compliance and the flexibility mechanisms for the period after 2012. At the March meeting of the European Council of Ministers, the European Heads of Government stated that the EU looks forward to exploring with other parties strategies for achieving necessary emission reductions and believes that in this context, reduction pathways for the group of developed countries in the order of 15–30 per cent. by 2020, compared to the baseline envisaged in the Kyoto protocol and in the spirit of the conclusions of the Environment Council should be considered.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proposals the United Kingdom plans to put to the 11th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention to be held in Montreal from 28 November to 9 December. [28950]

Mr. Morley: The EU agreed its negotiating strategy for the upcoming Montreal conference at the Environment Council of 17 October. Its priority is to get the Kyoto Protocol off to a good start and ensure it is operating efficiently. This includes adoption of the Marrakech Accords, the rule book for the protocol. The EU confirmed its determination to meets its commitments under the UN Framework Convention and Protocol, including on funding to assist developing countries. The EU also set an objective to launch discussions on a process to determine further action after the Kyoto Protocol first commitment period.

Energy Efficiency

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to encourage progress in promoting household energy efficiency in West Lancashire. [27837]

Mr. Morley: The Government funds the Energy Saving Trust to deliver energy efficiency solutions to household consumers. Through its network of local Energy Efficiency Advice Centres, the Trust provides advice on energy efficiency to consumers and refers them to any grants or offers for energy efficiency measures available in their area. The Lancashire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre provides advice and support to West Lancashire.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes Ofgem has made in the last six months to its scoring and value of insulation measures when assessing measures being taken under the energy efficiency commitments. [27849]

Mr. Morley: Ofgem has made no changes in the last six months to the improvements in energy efficiency that it determines for insulation measures under the Energy Efficiency Commitment 2005–08.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of fuel suppliers being able to carry over unlimited energy savings from Energy Efficiency Commitment 2002–05 to Energy Efficiency Commitment 2005–08 upon the number of homes which will have to be insulated in order to meet the reduction targets; and if she will make a statement. [27918]

Mr. Morley: Ofgem's report to the Secretary of State on the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) 2002–05 includes an assesment of the transitional provisions to the EEC 2005–08, which enabled energy suppliers to start work early on their targets for EEC 2005–08 and energy efficiency activity to continue without interruption. We will take account of the impact of these provisions both in our monitoring of the EEC 2005–08 and in our consideration of proposals for the EEC 2008–11, including the transitional provisions to that phase. It is open to energy suppliers how they will meet their targets for the promotion of improvements in energy efficiency under EEC 2005–08.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much has been provided to the HEAT project through the energy efficiency commitment in each year of its operation; [27922]

(2) how many dwellings have had energy efficiency measures installed through the HEAT programme, broken down by *(a)* type of measure and *(b)* total funding provided; and what proportion of these were assessed as fuel poor. [27923]

Mr. Morley: While I understand that H EAT is an energy supplier's scheme under the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), Ofgem, who administers the EEC does not report on an individual scheme basis. Ofgem's report to the Secretary of State "A Review of the Energy Efficiency Commitment 2002–05" sets out for each energy supplier the percentage of energy savings achieved towards its target according to the types of measures delivered—insulation, heating, appliances and lighting. For each type of measure the percentage of savings achieved in the priority group of low-income consumers is specified.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many dwellings have been insulated in each year since the inception of the energy efficiency commitments; what percentage of the target set for each year this represents; and how many she estimates will be insulated through the second round of energy efficiency commitments of 2005 to 2008. [27924]

Mr. Morley: Under the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), it is open to energy suppliers how they meet their targets for the promotion of improvements in energy efficiency. During the EEC 2002–05, 367,070 cavity wall insulation, 224,521 loft insulation (professional), 330,274 loft insulation (DIY) and 17,689 solid wall insulation measures were installed. The target for the EEC 2002–05 was set for the three-year period and these measures represent 38 per cent. of the target. (Figures are not available on an annual basis and do not reflect the number of dwellings insulated, since some may have received both loft and wall insulation.)

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in *(a)* Great Yarmouth constituency and *(b)* Norfolk have received assistance under the Warm Front Scheme in each of the last five years. [28041]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the number of households assisted in each year in the Great Yarmouth constituency was as follows:

	Number
2000–01	163
2001–02	464
2002–03	471
2003–04	246
2004–05	474
Total	1,818

During the same period, the number of households assisted in Norfolk was:

	Number
2000–01	1,007
2001–02	3,795
2002–03	2,608
2003–04	1,912
2004–05	2,835
Total	12,157

Essential Chlorofluorocarbons

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the UK's position relative to that of other countries in respect of Annex I of Commission Decision 2005/626/EC, OJ L 224 volume 48 of 30 August on the definition of essential chlorofluorocarbons. [27754]

Mr. Morley: Under the Montreal Protocol, which phases out chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), CFC's can continue to be used in pharmaceutical metered dose inhalers (MDI's), until the party concerned declares that use to be non-essential. The EU (and corresponding UK) Transition Strategy for the Phase Out of CFC's in MDI's sets out how the transition away from CFC's in MDI's will be managed.

The Transition Strategy states that when an adequate number and range of CFC-free metered dose inhalers (MDIs) to meet patient needs are available for an individual drug, the use of CFCs will no longer be considered essential for that drug product. To date, the UK has declared salbutamol as non essential.

The variations between EU member states, shown in Annex 1 of Commission Decision 2005/626/EC, are partly dependent on clinical practice which varies from country to country. The majority of products listed in Annex 1 are either not marketed in the UK or are not available as MDI's, hence the UK has had no need to declare the use of CFCs as non-essential.

The European Commission, with member states, is currently reviewing the scope for further declarations of non-essentiality in relation to a number of other drug products used in inhalers. Following this review the UK may be in a position to declare further drug products non-essential.

Fishing

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's policy is on the use of fixed bolt rigs in lakes in England. [27134]

Mr. Bradshaw: The use of fixed bolt rigs is legal if used in conjunction with a licensed rod and line and in accordance with fishery byelaws.

To encourage anglers to take a responsible approach to their sport, the National Angling Alliance has produced a Code of Conduct for Coarse Anglers. This has been endorsed by the Environment Agency. This code includes advice on how bolt rigs should be used to minimise the risk to fish.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's policy is on whether fishing lakes and rivers should have a closed season. [27135]

Mr. Bradshaw: Fishing close seasons in England and Wales are specified in the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1975, and byelaws made under that Act. The rationale for the statutory close seasons is to protect fisheries from the impacts of angling during the spawning season. Coarse fish are returned alive to fisheries and therefore a close season for these species may no longer be justified on all waters.

The close season for coarse fish runs from 15 March to 15 June inclusive on all rivers, the Norfolk Broads and on some stillwater Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It also applies to several canals which have multiple connections with neighbouring rivers.

The statutory coarse fish close season has been removed on canals and on all other stillwaters.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government is taking to stop the poaching of *(a)* carp, *(b)* bream, *(c)* pike and *(d)* tench in lakes in England. [27137]

Mr. Bradshaw: "Poaching", whether for these or other fish species, generally refers to taking fish using illegal methods, and/or taking fish without the owner's permission, i.e. theft. It cuts across the roles and responsibilities of the fishery owner, the Environment Agency and the Police.

The Environment Agency is responsible for regulating fishing methods, under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1975. Individual fishery owners and the police are responsible for enforcing the Theft Act, 1968.

The Environment Agency does not have the powers to prosecute under the Theft Act, but will work with the police to bring prosecutions where both theft and illegal fishing offences are committed.

The Environment Agency takes an intelligence-led approach to programming enforcement and offence detection. It will respond to reports of illegal fishing in line with its customer charter. When it detects an offence and can gather sufficient evidence, it will take further action in line with its enforcement and prosecution policy.

The Environment Agency and the police support local "fishwatch" schemes, whereby fishery owners share information on suspicious activity.

Flooding/Flood Defences

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of flooding to the economy was in 2004–05; and how this is predicted to change in future years. [27880]

Mr. Morley: Defra has made no estimate of the cost of actual damage due to flooding in 2004–05. Our latest National Assessment of Defence Needs and Costs study estimated average annual damages from flooding at some £1 billion per year. However it must be emphasised that this is an expected average over the very long term derived by combining the potential damages from a wide range of possible events from the rare and extreme to the very frequent with their probabilities to provide an estimate of the annual expected average. It is not a useful estimate for any specific year.

Climate change has the potential to increase probability of flooding due to increases in sea level and potential changes in the frequency, duration and intensity of storms. Increased economic wealth will also tend to increase the value of losses. In 2004 the Foresight 'Future Flooding' report, sponsored by the Office of Science and Technology, estimated that, taking these and other factors into account, annual average flood damages could increase by between two and 20 times by the end of the century. The actual increases will be highly dependent on actual patterns of growth, development and future flood management activity.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research the Department and its related agencies has commissioned on flood defence policy since 1997; and how much this research has cost. [25459]

Mr. Morley: The Department and the Environment Agency have a joint user-oriented thematic programme of research and development addressing the management of risks from flooding and coastal erosion.

This joint R&D programme covers all aspects of flood and coastal erosion risk management, from design, planning, monitoring and appraisal, through to research to support development of flood and coastal policy and guidance.

Defra and the Environment Agency have commissioned around 200 projects with a range of academic and non-academic establishments since 1997. The details of most projects, including all recent technical reports, are available from http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/research/RandDProjects.htm

Approximately £26 million was spent on this research between 1997–98 and 2004–05. Defra has provided approximately two thirds of the funding in each year.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the recent foot and mouth emergency exercise held in Truro. [28031]

Mr. Bradshaw: The exercise in Truro was routine, and one in an on-going programme of exercises held every year by the State Veterinary Service.

Some of our major stakeholders attended the exercise as observers and we received very positive and constructive feedback from them. Those stakeholders included representatives from the National Farmers' Union, the Police, and Cornwall County Council Trading Standards and Emergency Planning Department.

FTSE 350 (Environmental Performance)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place in the Library the latest list of FTSE 350 companies that report on their environmental performance. [27893]

Mr. Morley: The most up to date information of which I am aware was published in the 2004 'Directions' report by Salterbaxter; I shall have a copy placed in the Library. 145 of the FTSE250 report to some extent on their environmental performance.

The new Operating and Financial Review and the EU Accounts Modernisation Directive are designed to improve company reporting, and require companies to consider their environmental impacts. In addition, my Department will shortly be publishing a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will help companies manage and communicate the links between environmental and financial performance.

Greenhouse Gases

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to seek international agreement for a successor to the Kyoto Protocol containing binding greenhouse gas reduction targets. [27912]

Mr. Morley: As yet, there have been no formal inter-governmental discussions of the design of a future commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. The UK will chair the EU at the UN climate change conference at the end of this year at which the first formal discussion will take place when the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol meet for the first time.

The EU is also looking forward to using this discussion to initiate a process among all parties to explore how to implement better the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Following this conference, next year we plan to start discussions to prepare the UK position on further action.

The UK Government and the EU want to build on the Kyoto Protocol and its key elements such as targets and timetables, monitoring and reporting, compliance and the flexibility mechanisms for the period after 2012. At the March meeting of the European Council of Ministers, the European Heads of Government stated that the EU looks forward to exploring with other parties strategies for achieving necessary emission reductions and believes that in this context, reduction pathways for the group of developed countries in the order of 15 to 30 per cent. by 2020, compared to the baseline envisaged in the Kyoto Protocol and in the spirit of the conclusions of the Environment Council should be considered.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research the Government have commissioned into the viability of an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that does not contain binding targets. [27913]

Mr. Morley: Currently no such research has been commissioned by this Government. As yet, there have been no formal intergovernmental discussions of the design of a future commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. The UK will chair the EU at the UN climate change conference at the end of this year at which the first formal discussion will take place when the parties of the Kyoto Protocol meet for the first time.

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Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what scientific advice the Government have received on the level of greenhouse gas reductions required by 2050 to avoid unacceptable risk of extreme climate change. [27914]

Mr. Morley: The ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that avoids "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". As yet there is no consensus on what constitutes this level. It is, however, accepted that dangerous levels will be different for different impact sectors and for different regions.

The Environment Council stated in 1996 that adaptation to a global temperature rise of 2C would be possible, but that the impacts associated with a temperature rise greater than 2°C are likely to be severe enough to be classified as 'dangerous'. A 2°C temperature rise was the starting point for the analysis carried out in preparation for the Energy White Paper, underpinning the conclusion by the Royal Commission

on Environmental Pollution Secretariat that we should put the UK on a path to reducing carbon emissions by 60 per cent. by 2050.

Our scientific understanding of the links between atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration, the scale of emissions reductions required and the risk of extreme climate change is rapidly developing, but still uncertain. The issue of stabilisation levels of atmospheric greenhouse concentrations was addressed at the Defra-funded international science conference, Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change, held in Exeter in February this year. The report of the steering committee concluded that:

"Compared with the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's] IPCC's Third Assessment Report (TAR) there is greater clarity and reduced uncertainty about the impacts of climate change across a wide range of systems, sectors and societies. In many cases the risks are more serious than previously thought".

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department has made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in relation to contaminated land information in home information packs. [26929]

Mr. Bradshaw: A submission was provided to the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister regarding the proposed inclusion of contaminated land reports in the home information pack, shortly before publication of the draft regulations for public consultation.

Illegal Logging

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking in respect of the UK Government's EU presidential role to build a multilateral approach under the Forests Law Enforcement Governance and Trade Action Plan; what other steps her Department is taking to tackle illegal logging effectively; and if she will make a statement. [27584]

Mr. Morley: The Government have used its presidencies of the G8 and EU to really focus on the issue of illegal logging and to promote the FLEGT Action Plan.

The Government see the bilateral approach of the Forests Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) dossier as an important way to develop experience in tacking illegal logging and to build the consensus that could lead to a multilateral agreement. The dossier, recently agreed under the UK presidency of the EU, allows for Partnership Agreements which will involve the establishment of a licensing scheme to ensure that only legal timber from Partner Countries is allowed into the EU.

Illegal logging was also one of two topics of discussion at the first ever G8 Environment and Development Ministerial meeting in Derbyshire in March 2005. Ministers agreed to a range of actions and officials will meet in 2006 to review progress.

The UK has also led in promoting and supporting Regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) processes in order to intensify national efforts and strengthen bilateral, regional and multi-lateral collaboration to address violations of forest law and forest crime. The UK has, from late 2004, been working with Russia to develop the European and North Asia FLEG regional process. The first Ministerial meeting is taking place in St Petersburg this month, November 2005. Other regional processes which the UK supports are the East Asian and African FLEG processes, the Asia Forest Partnership and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

The UK Government also recognise that Government purchasing policies can also send a strong signal to the market and timber suppliers. Since 2000 the UK Government have committed its central departments to seek to procure products made from timber that has been legally harvested and grown in a sustainably managed forest or plantation. The UK timber trade tells us that this policy has been the single most important driver of change of behaviour in the UK private sector. As a leader in this field, this year the Government committed to extend guidance on legal and sustainable timber procurement to the wider public sector, and to share our knowledge on procurement with the G8 and other countries.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the content of the negotiation mandate agreed by EU member states to accompany the EU's new Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade Action Plan. [27784]

Mr. Morley: The Negotiating Mandate contains relevant guidelines that will contribute to the negotiation of successful Partnership Agreements with timber producing countries designed to achieve the ultimate elimination of illegally-produced timber from a partner country's trade. As it forms the basis of negotiations it is a restricted Community Document.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the EU to deliver the report on further legislative options to tackle the import of illegal timber into the EU; what steps she is taking to ensure that this report is delivered before the end of the UK presidency of the EU; and when she expects this report to go to public consultation. [27785]

Mr. Morley: Government are frustrated at the time that it has taken the European Commission to produce its report on additional options which is already delayed. Unfortunately due to time-tabling issues the report is now unlikely to be delivered until the Austrian presidency in early 2006 and should go for public consultation at the same time.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House are producing a report on the additional options available in the UK and my officials have been working with the Commission to support them to deliver the EU report.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what contribution her Department is making to the proposed

establishment of an EU Advisory Group to facilitate consultation on the Forest Law Enforcement Government and Trade Action Plan with civil society groups. [27818]

Mr. Morley: Government has valued the many opportunities they have had to consult with civil society in the development of the Forest Law Enforcement Government and Trade Action (FLEGT) Plan both at the UK and European level. This opportunity for consultation will continue and my officials will raise the proposal for an advisory group with EU colleagues.

Government are also supporting development in all prospective FLEGT partner countries of a better understanding of the FLEGT Action Plan and co-ordination of input from civil society in these countries.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with EU counterparts on independent monitoring and third party verification of the new EU Licensing Regulation under the EU Forest Law Enforcement Government and Trade Action Plan; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the process. [27819]

Mr. Morley: Discussions on third party monitoring took place in the EU Forest Working Group during the development of the EU Forest Law Enforcement Government and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan and are a feature of the EU's plans for implementing FLEGT.

The associated FLEGT licensing scheme will be implemented through voluntary partnership agreements, which will specify that timber products exported from timber-producing countries that sign these agreements to the EU must be covered by a FLEGT licence issued by each such country. These licences will state that the timber products have been produced from timber that was legally harvested or legally imported into the partner country in accordance with its national laws. The process of verifying that timber has been legally produced and properly licensed will be subject to third party monitoring. In addition independent monitors will have access to certain records concerning imports of licensed products into the EU.

DFID has supported a number of studies on third party monitoring, including the development of guidance for practitioners. The European Commission is currently funding additional work.

Junk Mail

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of junk mail which can be recycled; what estimate she has made of the proportion of paper waste represented by junk mail in the last year for which figures are available; and what steps the Government are taking to reduce the volume of junk mail. [27878]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is estimated that 550,000 tonnes of direct mail are produced each year. This represents approximately 4 per cent. of paper waste. In theory, all direct mail can be recycled. However, certain adhesives that are used in the production of some direct mail can contaminate the recycling process and consequently make recycling difficult and expensive in certain cases.

To reduce the volume of direct mail, the Government signed a voluntary agreement with the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) in July 2003, which set recycling targets to increase the recycling of direct mail to 70 per cent. by 2013. The agreement also encourages producers of direct mail to avoid using materials that contaminate the recycling process. In addition, the agreement aims to improve the targeting of direct mail, thereby reducing the volume of direct mail that is distributed in the first place by encouraging the use of suppression files, which are lists of people who have opted out of receiving direct mail.

Lakes

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to ensure lakes are well oxygenated. [27176]

Mr. Morley: In advance of implementation of the Water Framework Directive, there is no general requirement to ensure lakes are well oxygenated. It is worth noting that under natural conditions, upland lakes will tend to be well oxygenated and lowland lakes less well oxygenated. However, there are various measures to address the effects that human activities can have on the natural status of waters.

In England we have met the requirements of the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive to provide secondary treatment for significant sewage discharges to lakes and other inland waters. This is the generally expected standard of treatment to protect the water environment, including the maintenance of dissolved oxygen levels, from the adverse effects of sewage discharges.

The Freshwater Fish Directive contains provisions for the monitoring of oxygen levels in waters designated under that Directive. Where water sample results do not comply with specified concentrations there may be a requirement to take appropriate measures, depending on whether non-compliance is a result of chance, natural phenomena, or anthropogenic pollution.

The EU Water Framework Directive which requires member states to achieve good ecological status for lakes by 2015. This will require that oxygen levels are either maintained or restored at appropriate levels in lakes to support the ecology as set out in the Directive.

Marine Environment (Monitoring)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to determine the *(a)* levels of fluoxetine and norfluoxetine residues in UK aquatic environments and *(b)* impact on the environment. [27881]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has published a briefing note on fluoxetine, and developed analytical methods for the detection of fluoxetine and norfluoxetine in river water. Investigational monitoring for these substances was undertaken in spring 2005 downstream of a small number of large sewage works in the North

West and Midlands. For the great majority of samples fluoxetine and norfluoxetine levels were below the limit of detection.

Further investigational monitoring downstream of sewage works is presently under way at a wider range of rivers sites across England and Wales. No results are available yet.

The Environment Agency briefing note on fluoxetine is available at: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commondata/acrobat/fluoxetine__1068996.pdf.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what research has been carried out *(a)* by and *(b)* on behalf of her Department to establish the background levels of (i) cocaine, (ii) LSD, (iii) cannabis and (iv) other recreational drugs in (A) the aquatic environment and (B) drinking water; [27883]

(2) what steps she is taking to assess the impact on the environment of recreational drug residues in UK aquatic environments. [27884]

Mr. Morley: Recreational drugs will be subject to substantial dilution in the aquatic environment, resulting in concentrations many times lower than the doses taken, and background levels which are not thought to present a threat to the aquatic environment. This is supported by the EU "Poseidon" research report on endocrine disruptor and pharmaceutical residues, and the Environment Agency has not undertaken further research.

Ozone and carbon treatment installed at drinking water treatment works to remove traces of pesticides is also effective for a wide range of trace organic substances such that no significant quantities of recreational drugs will be detectable in tap water. No research has been commissioned or carried out by Defra.

Meat Imports

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps have been taken to ensure that imports of beef do not enter the United Kingdom from regions of Brazil which accept movements of beef from those regions where foot and mouth has been detected in cattle. [28800]

Mr. Bradshaw: Each consignment of imported meat must be accompanied by appropriate health certification. The certificate confirms the territory from which the animals originated. In addition the animal must have been subjected to ante- and post-mortem inspection and the meat must be deboned and matured. This process ensures that imported meat does not present a risk.

All meat imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) where it is subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks and at least 20 per cent. of consignments undergo physical checks. These ensure import conditions are met and that the products remain in a satisfactory condition during transport.

Nappies

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of how many families use washable nappies; and how many tonnes of waste disposable nappies have accounted for in each year since 1997. [25454]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment Agency's Life Cycle Assessment estimated that 6 per cent. of households with babies in nappies used washable nappies to some extent and that 94 per cent. used disposable nappies only.

We do not collect information on the amount of disposable nappies used nor of the disposal route.

The Strategy Unit report "Waste Not Want Not" estimated that in 2000–01 nappies comprised around 2 per cent. of household waste, equivalent to 350,000 tonnes.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of how many tonnes of disposable nappy waste have been saved through the use of washable nappies since 1997; [25455]

(2) what estimate she has made of how many tonnes of disposable nappy waste have been diverted from landfill since the Waste and Resources Action Programme Real Nappy Programme began in 2003. [27098]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Strategy Unit report "Waste Not Want Not" estimated that in 2000–01 nappies comprised around 2 per cent. of household waste, equivalent to 350,000 tonnes in England.

The WRAP programme has the objective of diverting 35,000 tonnes of nappy waste from landfill over the period of the programme up to 2006.

WRAP reports annually on its overall progress in meeting targets, including work under the Real Nappy Programme.

It is scheduled to report on its achievements for the business plan period up to 2006 next year. At the outset of the programme 91 per cent. of expectant parents said they intended to use disposable nappies. Work done for the environment agency suggested the figure may be higher at 94 per cent. WRAP intends to survey parents again at the end of the programme and to establish the change in intended behaviour. An estimate of the diversion will be made and published by WRAP at that time taking account of the survey and other quantitative evidence.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government plan to continue funding the Waste and Resources Action Programme Real Nappy Programme when the current funding for the three years from 2003 expires. [27097]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1156W.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government have commissioned the Environment Agency to carry out further work on the environmental impacts of modern reusable nappies. [27114]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment Agency recognised, when it published its Life Cycle Analysis in May, that further work would be required to take account of changes in the market for reusable nappies and other developments since the survey work for the study was undertaken. The scope and timing of this further work is currently under discussion.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many disposable nappies she estimates were *(a)* used and *(b)* disposed of by (i) landfill, (ii) incineration and (iii) other means in the last year for which figures are available. [27885]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 955W.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are taken to monitor the impact of pesticides on those living in localities where spraying occurs. [25511]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Anyone who feels their health may have been affected by pesticides, whether by a one-off or a longer term exposure, should report it to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Health and Safety Executive staff investigate complaints involving ill health arising as a result of a work activity. Once an investigation is complete details of investigated cases are sent for examination by the HSE's Pesticides Incident Appraisal Panel (PIAP). PIAP reviews all the reports and publishes its conclusions in an annual report which is reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. Following recommendations in the recent report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) on "Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders" the Government will be reviewing these arrangements.

Pet Cemeteries

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to reach a conclusion on the Environment Agency's recommendation on the treatment of pet cemeteries under the EU landfill directive. [26960]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is currently investigating the scope for taking an alternative approach to the regulation of pet cemeteries. My officials are working with their Environment Agency counterparts to assess the potential benefits of each alternative option identified.

Pigeons

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what is the expected response time to a report of unusual die-off in pigeons or other wild birds to the departmental help-line by a departmental representative; and if she will make a statement. [27526]

Mr. Bradshaw: During normal office hours, following a call to the Defra help line, an immediate initial assessment is made and if necessary the caller is referred to a VLA (Veterinary Laboratories Agency) laboratory in England and Wales or an SAC (Scottish Agricultural College) laboratory in Scotland. Outside normal office hours, if necessary, the caller will be referred to the State Veterinary Service. If required, carcase collection by a representative from the State Veterinary Service or Rural Development Service will be arranged. The response time will depend on an overall assessment of the die off.

Radioactive Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the volume in cubic metres of *(a)* high level, *(b)* intermediate level and *(c)* low level stocks of radioactive waste in (i) 2010, (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2030, assuming projected closure of nuclear power stations occurs. [27827]

Mr. Morley: The estimated volumes, expressed in cubic metres of conditioned *(a)* high level and *(b)* intermediate levels stocks of radioactive waste in 2010, 2020 and 2030 respectively are given in the table. It has been assumed that the projected closure of nuclear power stations occurs.

Cubic metres

Date	*High level*	*Intermediate level*
2010	1,350	107,000
2020	1,510	128,000
2030	1,510	143,000

Since it is anticipated that the approximate annual arisings of 10,000 cubic metres of low level radioactive waste will be disposed of as it arises, the stocks in storage will remain low, but not quantified, over this time period.

Regional Advisory Council for North Western Waters

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on UK participation in the Regional Advisory Council for North Western Waters. [27820]

Mr. Bradshaw: A wide range of the UK catching sector (such as producer organisations and those who represent processors) and other interest groups (such as consumer and conservation groups) are participating in the Regional Advisory Council for North Western Waters, on the General Assembly, the Executive Committee and various working groups.

Defra and the Devolved Administrations have been actively supporting the establishment process (I attended the inaugural General Assembly meeting on

30 September 2005) and participating as active observers in the first set of meetings that were held on 7 and 8 November.

Renewable Heat Obligation

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason the Task Force on Biomass ruled out a renewable heat obligation. [25234]

Mr. Morley: The Task Force's views on this subject are set out in its report which was published on 25 October and in the earlier emerging conclusions and draft recommendations report of August 2005. They considered a scheme whereby an obligation would be held by the suppliers of the fossil fuels from which heat is produced, and renewable heat certificates would be granted to heat producers and users who could demonstrate that they had substituted renewable heat for fossil-fired heat. However, they judged that such a scheme would be complex since most heat is not supplied by commercial companies but is produced by domestic and industrial/commercial end-users by using purchased fuel in boilers which they themselves own. They reported that a fundamental flaw in the proposal was that the obligation would rest with a supplier who had no control over the many, varied and often small users and producers of heat. In view of the complexities, they also noted that it would take considerable time to draw up a suitable scheme. They concluded that quicker progress would be achieved by offering capital grants to aid all biomass heating boilers and the heat element of combined heat and power (CHP) biomass-fuelled plants.

Secondments

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the secondees from British Nuclear Fuel Group *(a)* working and *(b)* who have worked during the last 12 months in her Department; what their (i) job role and title and (ii) grade is; and what the responsibilities were of each of the secondees. [28670]

Mr. Morley: There are no secondees from British Nuclear Fuel Group working, or who have worked, during the last 12 months in the Department.

Sewerage Discharges

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many sewerage discharges into the sea were permitted in each of the last five years at *(a)* Goodrington beach, *(b)* Paignton beach, *(c)* Preston beach, *(d)* Torre Abbey Sands, *(e)* Meadfoot beach and *(f)* Oddicombe beach; and how many sewerage discharges have been recorded at each location in each year. [25922]

Mr. Morley: The following table presents the intermittent sewer overflows discharging to sea associated with the beaches in the question. Sewer overflows are needed to prevent flooding, and the overloading of the sewage treatment works, when the additional rainwater run-off collected by the Torbay sewerage system exceeds its design capacity.

Beach name	*Associated combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to sea*
(a) Paignton beach	Roundham Road Paignton Green Tank
(b) Preston beach	Preston Green Tank
(c) Torre Abbey Sands	Beacon Hill Fleet Walk No 1 Fleet Walk No 2
(d) Meadfoot beach	Ilsham Valley Pumping Station Ilsham Marine Drive
(e) Oddicombe beach	No sea outfalls associated with this beach

In addition, two other emergency overflows: Clennon Valley Pumping Station—Goodrington beach—and Fleet Walk Pumping Station—Torre Abbey Sands—are also consented in case of equipment failure.

All sewer overflows are consented by the Environment Agency. The design standards and consents have been set to ensure compliance of the receiving waters with the EC bathing waters, and where applicable EC shellfish waters, directives. The design standard for the overflows associated with:

Paignton and Preston beaches are predicted to result in no more than three significant spills each bathing season (May to September);

Torre Abbey Sands are to achieve an appropriate flow of sewage going for treatment;

Meadfoot beach are for Ilsham Valley Pumping Station to on average have no spills for 98.2 per cent. of the bathing season, and for Ilsham Marine Drive to achieve an appropriate flow of sewage going for treatment.

As the sewerage company has implemented the design standards agreed with the Environment Agency, it is not considered necessary to monitor the overflows. Therefore, although I cannot provide information on the recorded overflow discharges, the Environment Agency expect:

the number of significant overflows to be less than three each bathing season for those associated with Paignton and Preston beaches; and

for Torre Abbey Sands and Meadfoot beaches the overflows are predicted to operate more frequently but to achieve the design standards.

All the listed bathing waters consistently meet the mandatory standard of the bathing waters directive, and often the higher guideline standards.

Snowfall

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what is the predicted future annual number of days when there is snowfall for *(a)* London, *(b)* Edinburgh, *(c)* Bristol and *(d)* Inverness in (i) 2010, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2030 and (iv) 2050. [27925]

Mr. Morley: In April 2002, the Department published new "Climate Change Scenarios for the UK". These scenarios include information on total winter snowfall amounts, but not number of snowfall days. Snowfall totals decline substantially over the whole UK and in all scenarios, with the largest percentage reductions around the coast and in the English lowlands.

While there are no robust estimates at the scale of individual cities, the scenarios indicate that in the London, Edinburgh, Bristol and Inverness areas snowfall could be reduced by up to 55, 50, 57 and 59 per cent. respectively, by the 2050s (compared to the 1961–90 average baseline), depending on the degree of future climate change.

For the particular years in question a general scaling back of the UK-wide data gives the following estimates of the reduction in snowfall over these periods, depending on whether there is a low or high degree of climate change:

	Percentage Reduction
2010	17 to 30
2020	22 to 38
2030	27 to 47
2050	37 to 65

These figures represent general trends, not predictions of the amount of snowfall in specific years, which will be greatly influenced by natural year-to-year variability, particularly in the first few decades of the century.

Further information is available in the full report in the Libraries of both Houses, and more information may be available when the "UK Climate Change Scenarios" are updated in 2007.

State Veterinary Service

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many senior veterinary posts there were in the State Veterinary Service in 1997; and how many there are in 2005–06. [28149]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The State Veterinary Service was a very different organisation in 1997 and so any comparison with today would not be comparing like with like. The Veterinary Field Service was a part of the State Veterinary Service at the time. In terms of operations and responsibilities, it was the Veterinary Field Service that would equate most closely to today's State Veterinary Service.

The Veterinary Field Service was organised along regional lines, with five senior vets responsible for operations within their region. These posts had management responsibility for a number of local animal health divisional offices (AHDOs), all headed by a divisional veterinary manager (DVM). There were 23 AHDOs in total.

The State Veterinary Service (SVS) became an executive agency on 1 April 2005. In order to better manage and co-ordinate operations, both in normal circumstances and during a disease emergency, the agency has implemented a new structure during this year. The agency's corporate management team includes an operations director, strategic planning director and professional services director, who are all senior veterinary staff. The professional services director is also the Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland. The head of operations in Scotland is also a senior vet. A new role of lead divisional veterinary manager (LDVM) has also been created. The organisation has seven LDVMs and a further 17 divisional veterinary managers.

Although the structure of the organisation has changed, senior veterinary staff still have a key role in managing the SVS' delivery of animal health and welfare policies throughout GB.

Water/Sewerage Services

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the sustainability of water supplies over the next 12 months; and what estimate she has made of the level of financial investment required to ensure adequate water supplies are available over the next five years, broken down by region. [26982]

Mr. Morley: Low winter rainfall may cause supply difficulties for some water companies in 2006. By February 2006 the Environment Agency should have sufficient data to make an evidence-based assessment and advise Government on the prospects for water resources next year based on rainfall, river flows, groundwater and reservoir levels.

It is for water companies to plan the investment necessary to deliver their services, including the necessary financial provision, and it is for Ofwat, in the light of companies' plans, to ensure that companies carry out and are able to finance their functions. In its recent periodic review Ofwat set water price limits for 2005 to 2010 in the light of water companies' business plans for that period.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much water was supplied by water companies to consumers in the last year for which figures are available; what this represents per household; and what percentage of tap water supplied is estimated to be used for drinking purposes. [27882]

Mr. Morley: The Office of Water Services' (Ofwat) report "Security of Supply, leakage and the efficient use of water 2004–05" states that 8,700 megalitres a day is supplied to domestic customers by water companies in England and Wales. This equates to 3,175,500 megalitres of water being supplied in 2004–05.

The report also confirms that water companies in England and Wales estimate that average household consumption was 150 litres/head/day in 2004–05. Of this average, the estimated proportion of water used for drinking purposes, which includes water use within cooking and for food preparation, is 7 per cent.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average monthly cost to consumers is of *(a)* water services and *(b)* sewerage services in each water supply area in 2005–06 (i) in total and (ii) broken down by those who were (A) metered and (B) unmetered. [27895]

Mr. Morley: The average monthly cost to households of water and sewerage services is set out in the following tables, broken down by company area and by measured and unmeasured supply. The figures are estimates based on forecast data provided to Ofwat by companies.

£

2004-05	Water Unmeasured	Water Measured	Water Total	Sewerage Unmeasured	Sewerage Measured	Sewerage Total
Water and sewerage companies						
Anglian	13.17	9.67	11.17	16.58	12.25	14.17
Dwr Cymru	12.75	8.75	11.83	16.58	9.50	14.92
Essex and Suffolk	13.25	9.67	9.25			
Northumbrian	9.50	7.83	11.92	12.08	10.33	11.83
Severn Trent	11.25	9.42	10.75	10.42	9.83	10.25
Southwest	14.75	9.67	12.17	26.92	16.17	21.17
Southern	9.08	8.58	8.92	16.83	13.92	16.00
Thames	12.92	11.08	12.50	8.58	8.33	8.50
United Utilities	11.58	10.33	11.33	13.08	11.67	12.83
Wessex	12.92	9.67	11.75	14.83	11.08	13.75
Yorkshire (incl. York)	11.08	9.25	10.50	12.08	9.92	11.50

£

Water only companies			
Bournemouth and W Hampshire	11.42	9.50	10.67
Bristol	11.08	9.58	10.67
Cambridge	9.58	7.83	8.67
Dee Valley	10.75	7.42	9.58
Folkestone and Dover	14.58	10.58	12.75
Mid Kent	13.00	10.33	12.08
Portsmouth	6.58	6.67	6.58
South East	13.58	10.83	12.75
South Staffs	8.75	8.33	8.67
Sutton and East Surrey	12.58	9.50	12.00
Tendring Hundred	17.00	11.58	13.58
Three Valleys	12.33	10.17	11.75

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list the rates of pay of lawyers employed by the Crown Prosecution Service, broken down by grade. [27477]

The Solicitor-General: The following list shows the rates of pay of lawyers employed the Crown Prosecution Service, broken down by grade. The rates of pay are also split to show the London and National pay rates.

London pay bands

Pay band C1 London

£26,954
£27,704
£28,704
£30,610
£32,159

Pay band C2 London

£31,880
£35,095
£36,966
£38,839
£42,581
£44,453
£45,389
£47,260
£49,132
£51,082
£53,667

Pay band D London

£45,389
£46,790
£47,466
£48,888
£50,306
£51,724
£53,915
£56,190
£59,033

Pay band E London

£58,064
£59,314
£60,564
£61,814
£63,064
£64,314
£65,565

National pay bands

Pay band C1 National

£25,648
£26,398
£27,398
£29,334
£30,819

Pay band C2 National

£30,138
£34,111
£35,084
£36,042
£37,213
£38,669
£40,936
£42,305
£43,759

£45,388
£47,685
Pay band D National
£41,970
£43,077
£43,966
£45,388
£46,759
£47,505
£49,927
£52,040
Pay band E National
£54,728
£56,124
£57,520
£58,916
£60,312
£61,708
£63,104

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural Subsidies

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what account is taken of the level of public subsidy for agriculture in developing countries in deciding allocations of UK development aid. [27302]

Mr. Thomas: DFID operates an annual review of budgets that includes deciding how much money to allocate to each developing country. The process involves dialogue at all levels, starting with country offices and culminating in approval by DFID's management board and Ministers.

To help inform the discussion, DFID uses a financial model to generate suggested allocations for bilateral country programmes. The model takes account of both the extent of a country's poverty and the likely effectiveness of aid in reducing its poverty. Vulnerability to economic shocks and the amount of aid which countries are likely to receive from other donors are also taken into account. In addition to the model's results, the regional divisions responsible for DFID's bilateral country programmes analyse a range of factors when considering allocations. These include the effectiveness of multilateral channels, conflict and reconstruction needs, inequality and social exclusion, our historical engagement and the political environment.

The central process to allocate resources between developing countries and regions does not give specific consideration to levels of public subsidy for agriculture. However, at country level, DFID allocates its resources to support national strategies for growth and poverty reduction. DFID country programmes work with national governments to identify the most effective way for DFID to support these strategies. Discussions with governments on the allocation of DFID resources at country level are likely to take into account the broad range of policies and programmes set out in national strategies.

Bolivia

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions his Department has held with the World Bank in relation to *(a)* water privatisation in Bolivia and *(b)* the need to consider the implications of the projects it funds for poor citizens in each recipient country. [26987]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not held any discussions with the World Bank on water privatisation in Bolivia as DFID does not work and has not worked in the water or sanitation sector in Bolivia.

DFID supports a World Bank managed facility called the Global Partnership for Output-Based Aid (GPOBA). GPOBA supports the design and piloting of performance based approaches for targeting public funding to subsidise the delivery of basic services to poor people. In early 2005, officials discussed with the managers of GPOBA, the possible involvement of GPOBA in piloting subsidies for water connections in El Alto, but this has not happened.

The UK Government's position on water privatisation in general is made clear in our policy on conditionality, available on the DFID website at www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/conditionality.pdf. The Government do not make its aid conditional on policy decisions by partner governments, or attempt to impose policy choices on them, including in the area of water privatisation. Where appropriate, DFID responds to requests from developing country governments for assistance to help improve the efficiency of water utilities. If a country has held an extensive public consultation exercise and has decided that it wishes to involve the private sector in the management of water, then DFID can provide them with the information to help them to do so.

The UK Government also uses its position on the Board of the World Bank and IMF to influence their approach to conditionality in general, and conditionality in sensitive areas such as water privatisation in particular. The UK led calls for a review of the Bank's policy and practice on conditionality, and this has just concluded. New best practice principles have been endorsed, which accord well with the UK approach, and we will be monitoring their implementation carefully.

The World Bank systematically considers the impacts of its operations on poor people in recipient countries. The Bank's mission is to reduce global poverty and all its operations are designed to improve the lives of the poor. The Bank also uses a range of tools to assess the likely impact of its operations on specific groups of poor people. When the Bank lends for specific projects, it uses safeguard policies which are designed to prevent and mitigate undue harm to people and their environment in the development process. When the Bank lends to support countries' policy and institutional reforms, it conducts Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) which assesses the likely impact of policy reforms on different groups, with a particular focus on the poor and vulnerable. Both safeguard policies and PSIA are used before projects are discussed at the Bank Board, and often result in changes to project design. More information on both can be found on the World Bank website, at www.worldbank.org/safeguards and www.worldbank.org/psia.

Central America

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance has been provided by his Department to help with the recovery from the damage in Central America caused by hurricanes. [26975]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provided a total of £250,000 of emergency relief to Guatemala and El Salvador after Hurricane Stan. This support was provided through Plan International UK, £103,000 (70 per cent. for Guatemala and 30 per cent. for El Salvador) and through Care International UK, £100,000 for Guatemala, and £50,000 for El Salvador.

DFID also supports relief and reconstruction through its contributions to multilateral agencies. The European Commission Humanitarian Department (ECHO) provided €5.7 million (including 18 per cent. DFID contributions) to support those affected by flooding and mudslides in Guatemala and El Salvador.

The Government of Guatemala has requested that the World Bank focus part of its loan to the Ministry of Health, to help rebuild seven local hospitals and clinics in the affected area. Other multilateral agencies are considering how their programmes in Guatemala and El Salvador might support reconstruction efforts.

During Hurricane Beta, DFID asked the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to place its frigate, HMS Cumberland, located in the Caribbean, on stand by and offer its assistance to the Government of Nicaragua. This assistance was not required as the hurricane changed course. The Government of Nicaragua is providing emergency food and shelter from existing resources. DFID will provide £30,000 to Nicaraguan Atlantic Coast civil society and universities to work with affected riverside and coastal communities, helping them to reduce their dependence on food aid over the next six months.

Commonwealth Countries

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which country in the Commonwealth is the least developed; and what funding his Department provided to it in 2004–05. [27236]

Hilary Benn: Using the amount of gross national income (GNI) per capita as an indicator of development, Sierra Leone with the lowest GNI per capita could be regarded as the least developed Commonwealth country. In 2004–05 DFID provided £27.3 million in development assistance to Sierra Leone. DFID also provides aid contributions to multilateral institutions some of which will also benefit Sierra Leone. The estimated UK share of the multilateral aid benefiting Sierra Leone for 2004 is not yet available; however in 2003, the estimated amount was £6.3 million.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available; and what the nature of the claim was in each case. [27725]

Hilary Benn: As from 1 November 2004, the 10 largest amounts of compensation paid by DFID for damages, and the nature of the claims, were as shown in the following table:

Nature of claim	*Amount (£)*
Compensation paid to a member of staff for the loss of personal effects	15,378.28
Interest and penalty payment to the Inland Revenue	11,320.00
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	5,832.33
Compensation paid to a landlord for destruction, by terrorists, of a DFID rented house in Nepal	3,756.00
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	3,473.14
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	3,151.00
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	3,004.10
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	2,825.35
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	2,214.88
Compensation paid to a pensioner for arrears of payment due.	1,899.67

Famine (Africa)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment his Department has made of the risk of famine in each country in Africa for which the UN has issued a warning during 2005. [27786]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* DFID has a group of humanitarian advisers at regional and country level that routinely monitor the food situation and the potential for food crises across Africa. They draw information from a range UN and other monitoring instruments, including famine early warning systems, and food security and nutritional data produced by governments and non-governmental organisations (NGO)s. They also participate in country and regional assessments of the food security situation on a regular basis. This information, including that contained in UN warnings and appeals, is used to determine our response.

Female Circumcision

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department in relation to the practice of female circumcision. [26976]

Mr. Thomas: Female circumcision or 'Female Genital Mutilation' (FGM) is a fundamental violation of the human rights of women and girls and is explicitly denounced in a number of human rights treaties and conventions. It is estimated that the number of women and girls who have undergone genital mutilation is between 100 and 140 million and that 2 million girls undergo FGM each year.

DFID support to reduce the prevalence of this harmful practice forms part of our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to improve maternal and child health and to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

DFID provides support to help lower FGM through our funding of relevant UN organisations and NGOs. We are providing nearly £500,000 through our Civil Society Challenge Fund to Plan UK for a project in Mali enhancing the capability of local organisations in the fight against FGM at grassroots level. As well as this, in 2004–05 DFID provided annual core funding to support the work of multilateral organisations, including £19 million for UNICEF, £20 million for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), £12.5 million for the World Health Organisation (WHO) and £3 million to the United Nations Women's Fund (UNIFEM), which all advocate and support programmes to combat FGM globally, not only because of its harmful impact on the reproductive and sexual health of women, but also because it is a violation of woman and girls fundamental human rights.

DFID provides indirect funding through social development and health programmes that support rights-based work at country level. DFID is also supporting the forthcoming United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) African conference in Senegal, which will bring together parliamentarians, religious and traditional leaders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and former practitioners to plan actions to help eradicate the practice of FGM.

Gormo-Lhasa Railway

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on what occasions in the last 12 months *(a)* he and *(b)* officials in his Department have met the Bombadier Company to discuss their involvement in the building of the Gormo-Lhasa railway; and if he will make a statement. [27648]

Hilary Benn: Neither I nor any DFID official has had any contact with the Bombardier Company in the last 12 months to discuss their involvement in the Gormo-Lhasa railway.

Labour Exploitation

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what advice his Department gives to UK companies on avoiding the exploitation of cheap labour in developing countries. [26986]

Mr. Thomas: The Government are committed to and encourage the highest standards of business behaviour. This includes support for ethical sourcing practices that should ensure businesses take account of the labour conditions within their supply chains. The UK, (led by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) gives strong support to international initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multi-national Enterprises which encourage the implementation of internationally agreed labour standards.

DFID welcomes dialogue on corporate social responsibility with multi-nationals and supports the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) which offers advice and training to companies wishing to implement ethical trading practices. ETI corporate members adopt a labour code of conduct that includes the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation. They work with their suppliers, in collaboration with trade unions and non-governmental organisations, to improve working conditions in their supply chains and develop and disseminate best practice based on practical experience.

Small Fruit Growers

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department is giving to small fruit growers in developing countries to *(a)* meet the demands of producers who will purchase only fruit of a specified shape and size and *(b)* resist incentives to use pesticides with potentially harmful effects. [27341]

Mr. Thomas: DFID recognises that fruit production and horticulture more generally, is playing an increasingly important role in driving agricultural growth and providing sustainable livelihoods for millions of poor households. In India for example, horticulture already accounts for over half the value of agricultural output.

However, increasingly stringent product standards set by the retail trade can create particular difficulties for small producers seeking access to valuable European markets. To address this DFID has recently begun a three year programme working with retailers, importers, standard-setting bodies (in particular the Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group—Good Agricultural Practices (EUREPGAP) and producers aimed at ensuring that standards, such as requirements to produce fruit of a specified shape and size, do not discriminate against small-scale and developing country producers.

DFID is also active in a number of developing countries where we fund projects to support suppliers to meet supermarket standards. For example in Kenya, in the last two years, DFID has given approximately £582,000 in support for export horticultural development. An additional £290,000 will be spent by June 2006. Much of these funds are spent assisting smallholders to cope with the process and cost of compliance with EUREPGAP standards.

Buyers are extremely concerned about the use of pesticides with potentially harmful effects and European regulations and market health and safety requirements are increasingly difficult for developing country exporters to meet. At the request of African, Caribbean and Pacific country suppliers, the European Commission has put in place the Pesticides Initiative Programme; it aims to provide concrete responses to fruit and vegetable producers and exporters adaptation difficulties and assists suppliers to conform to the expectation of European buyers.

DFID supports the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) through a network of 15 International Research Centres and Global Programmes. Research is conducted on all major world crops of relevance to the poor with particular emphasis on crop improvement through genetic enhancement to withstand stresses of various kinds including attack by pests and diseases. New pest and disease resistant crop varieties significantly reduce the need for applications of harmful pesticides.

DFID's bilateral Crop Protection Programme has developed successful technical solutions known as Integrated Pest Management whereby crop husbandry and natural resource management methods are systematically combined to reduce or eliminate the incidence of pests thereby reducing the need for pesticide applications.

Somalia

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what Somalia's outstanding debt is; how much international debt relief was given to Somalia following the G8 summit in July; and if he will make a statement. [27223]

Hilary Benn: The World Bank's latest estimate for Somalia's external debt is just under $3 billion, on which they have not been able to make repayments for many years.

The G8 proposal discussed in July, will cancel 100 per cent. of the debts owed by heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs) to the International Monetary Fund and the concessional funds of the World Bank and the African Development Bank. To qualify, countries must first complete the HIPC Initiative.

In order to benefit from the exceptional debt relief given under the HIPC Initiative, Somalia would need to establish a minimum track record of macro-economic stability, demonstrate a commitment to poverty reduction by developing an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and clear its arrears. The fundamental priority for the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia now is to establish political stability, with the support of the international community, and by doing so begin to shore up national and international credibility. Once political reconciliation is under way, donors will clearly need to focus on what support needs to be provided to help Somalia address its unsustainable debt and arrears. The UK will remain actively involved in helping to find solutions to Somalia's problems.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much financial aid the UK has given to Somalia since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [27242]

Hilary Benn: Since 1997 up to the end of financial year 2004–05 (the latest period for which figures are available), the UK provided £137,000 of assistance to Somalia that is categorised as financial aid. This was in relation to a residual obligation to pay the pensions of expatriate officers who saw service in Somalia prior to independence. Details of these amounts are provided in the following table, which also shows the total amount of UK bilateral aid, £19.47 million, to Somalia over this period. The UK also provides contributions to multilateral institutions some of which funding has also been benefiting Somalia.

DFID's programme for Somalia in the financial year 2005–06 is expected to amount to £13.2 million, and is focused on governance programmes, service delivery and humanitarian assistance.

Total UK Bilateral Aid For Somalia 1997–2005

	Financial Aid	*Technical Co-operation*	*Grants and Other Aid in Kind*	*Humanitarian Assistance*	*£ thousand Total UK Bilateral Aid*
1997–98	20	55	345	1,047	1,467
1998–99	20	45	473	1,079	1,617
1999–2000	19	9	350	372	751
2000–01	17	11	218	1,235	1,480
2001–02	16	92	55	1,575	1,739
2002–03	16	8	180	2,920	3,124
2003–04	15	12	781	3,165	3,973
2004–05	14	0	2,263	3,043	5,320

Source:
Statistics on International Development

Sustainable Development

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department is providing to the poorest countries to promote the sustainable development of local growers, farmers, manufacturers and retailers. [27340]

Mr. Thomas: In 2004–05, DFID provided more than £83 million in support to rural livelihoods in low income countries. DFID's forthcoming agriculture policy paper, emphasises DFID's continuing commitment to agriculture as an important component of poverty reducing growth and highlights the following priorities for action: creating policies and procedures that support agriculture; targeting public spending more effectively; tackling market failure; filling the agricultural finance gap; spreading the benefits of new technology; improving access to land and secure property rights and reducing distortions in international agricultural markets.

More generally, DFID is working to support the development of a vibrant private sector in developing countries. Much of our work focuses on support for establishing a sound business environment to enable domestic investors and entrepreneurs to operate productively.

Specific areas of support include assistance to developing countries to simplify and streamline administrative and regulatory frameworks to provide greater incentives and opportunities for small business people to enter the formal economy; support to develop financial systems that provide financial services, including micro-credit to small businesses; support for programmes providing entrepreneurship and basic business skills training to small entrepreneurs, including women and young people; and support for programmes, such as Challenge Funds, that enable small farmers, traders and manufacturers to link up with larger businesses and participate in industry supply chains.

Water Privatisation Projects

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make it his policy not to spend UK aid money on water privatisation projects that result from (*a*) World Bank and IMF conditions and (*b*) conditions imposed by other Governments. [20617]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's policy on conditionality sets out how we intend to strike a balance between ensuring aid is used effectively for poverty reduction, strengthening countries leadership of their own development and making aid more predictable. It makes clear that we will use conditions to ensure aid is used effectively, but we will minimise any negative effects of these conditions on partner Government leadership and aid predictability. In particular we will not use conditionality to impose specific policy choices on partner Governments, including in sensitive areas such as privatisation.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are also both committed to the principle of country ownership of reforms. The World Bank's 2005 review of its use of conditionality resulted in five good practice principles for conditionality, the first of which is country ownership. At the annual meetings of the World Bank in September 2005, we successfully pressed for agreement that the Bank would report back next year on the implementation of these principles.

The Paris Declaration re-affirmed donors' views that countries must lead their own development process. DFID strongly supports this approach. Countries should lead their own policy making processes and are free to decide to implement market-based reforms in the water sector. In cases where Governments are committed to reform of the water sector and request our support, we would be ready to consider assistance to ensure policy options are thoroughly considered, and the appropriate regulation is put in place so that affordable services are delivered to poor people. In 2004, of the £93 million DFID spent in country programmes on urban, rural and humanitarian water supply and sanitation services, 95 per cent. was spent through Governments, not for profit or humanitarian agencies. Rather than focussing on who delivers these services we concentrate on ensuring that services are delivered to the poor and that Governments can make informed choices between approaches.

World Trade

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made under the UK presidency of the EU to ensure that poor countries are represented at the World Trade Organisation talks. [26079]

Mr. Thomas: There are three main ways in which we have supported and continue to support developing countries in trade negotiations, including the current Round of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade talks.

First, through assistance to help countries formulate and develop their own trade policies, taking account of their domestic and regional circumstances, second, by helping countries build their capacity to negotiate these policies with their partners, either regionally or internationally and thirdly, we help the actual participation of developing countries in trade talks themselves. For example, we have provided countries such as Lesotho and Zambia with the resources they need to secure analysis and expertise in order to help determine their own trade policies.

We have supported regional institutions that in turn support their developing country members in trade analysis and negotiations. For example through funding trade advisors in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariats and providing resources for the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, the body that helps Caribbean countries co-ordinate and pursue their negotiating efforts, not just in the WTO but in terms of other agreements such as the Cotonou Economic Partnership Agreements.

We have funded advisory support and resources to the Least Developed Country (LDC) Group chaired by Zambia, to develop their position and attendance at the Hong Kong WTO ministerial and with other donors, we contribute to a trust fund that will enable least Developed Countries (LDCs) to attend the forthcoming WTO ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Leasing Costs

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost has been of leasing or hiring (*a*) helicopters and (*b*) fixed wing aircraft from commercial contractors in each year since 2000. [24579]

Mr. Ingram: The cost of the leasing or hiring of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft from commercial contractors in each year since 2000 is shown in the following table. The data shown have been gathered from centrally held records. A number of other areas within the Ministry of Defence hire or lease aircraft but details of these contracts are not held centrally and could be supplied only at a disproportionate cost.

£ million

Financial year	*Helicopters*	*Fixed wing aircraft*
2000-01	29	43
2001-02	29	46
2002-03	30	47
2003-04	40	45
2004-05	43	50

In compiling this answer, an error in the calculation of the projected cost for leasing or hiring helicopters and fixed wing aircraft in financial year 2005-06, given in response to a previous parliamentary question of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 245-48W, came to light. The cost for financial year 2005-06 is likely to be in the region of £95 million and not as previously reported, £74 million.

Armed Forces (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on assisting the prosecution of current and former members of the armed forces involved in deaths in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [27320]

Mr. Ingram: In any investigation into a death in Northern Ireland involving current or former members of the armed forces, the Ministry of Defence will provide the police with whatever assistance they may properly require.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the role is in Headquarters Northern Ireland of the G2 Historic Investigation Branch; and how many people are employed therein. [27321]

Mr. Ingram: The role of the G2 Historic Information Team (HIT) is to collate information held within Headquarters Northern Ireland (HQNI) in response to requests from Public Inquiries.

The G2 HIT is a joint military civilian team, consisting of four personnel.

Army Recruitment

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost has been of British Army recruitment campaigns in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [27171]

Mr. Touhig: Headquarters Recruiting Group, a part of the Army Training and Recruiting Agency, is responsible for marketing recruitment for the Regular and Territorial Army. Marketing costs for the last three Financial Years are detailed in the table, and covered activities including: national advertising, television, radio, response handling, magazines, regional marketing, education and citizenship, national events and exhibitions and Camouflage (Youth programme). Staff costs are excluded.

Financial Year	*Cost of marketing (£ million)*
2002-03	20.517
2003-04	20.325
2004-05	33.215

Additional funding was provided to the recruiting operation in 2004-05 to counter the difficult recruiting environment, which grew towards the end of the year. The bulk of the additional expenditure was spent on television advertisements.

Army Tanks

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many tanks are operated by the Army; and how many are in storage. [28008]

Mr. Ingram: There are 385 Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks operated by the Army, of which 38 are currently held in long-term storage. There are a further 32 tanks in temporary storage pending redeployment to Front Line Commands.

Bicester Camp

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what steps have been taken to address bullying among members of the (*a*) 23 Pioneer Regiment and (*b*) Royal Logistics Corps at Bicester camp, Oxfordshire, in the past two years; [25300]

(2) what steps have been taken to address bullying among members of the 23 Pioneer Regiment and Royal Logistics Corps at Bicester camp, Oxfordshire in the last two years. [25358]

Mr. Touhig: The Army has a policy of zero tolerance as far as bullying is concerned and any allegations made are thoroughly investigated, with disciplinary action taken where appropriate. All commanders are made fully aware of their responsibility to protect others from the differing forms of harassment, physical and mental intimidation and discrimination. This is reinforced throughout all military training.

There is no evidence to suggest a culture of bullying at Bicester but, like all Army personnel, members of 23 Pioneer Regiment Royal Logistic Corps have access to a wide-ranging welfare support network, which includes a confidential help line. Welfare support is publicised widely throughout the Army.

Chinook Mark 2/2a

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Chinook Mark 2/2a fleet to reach its out-of-service date. [26627]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1232W to the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Soames).

Congestion Charge

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has paid to Transport for London in congestion charges since they were introduced. [27425]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence vehicles are divided into separate categories: 'Green Fleet' (camouflaged/operational vehicles) which are exempt from congestion charges and 'White Fleet' (administrative vehicles) which are liable for congestion charges.

White Fleet vehicle congestion charges are paid locally by units or individual. Records of congestion charge payments are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department since May 1997, broken down by Act. [26703]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence has created no criminal offences in legislation since May 1997.

Criminal Records

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many serving members of *(a)* the Army, *(b)* the Royal Air Force and *(c)* the Royal Navy have a criminal record, broken down by type of crime. [27620]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Decommissioned Nuclear Submaries

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of storing decommissioned nuclear submarines in each year since 1997. [27612]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is shown in the table.

Financial Year	*Decommissioned nuclear submarine storage costs (£ million)*
1997–98	1.3
1998–99	0.5
1999–2000	0.6
2000–01	2.3
2001–02	1.0
2002–03	0.2
2003–04	1.6
2004–05	2.5

These figures include the cost of monitoring and maintenance work that is regularly carried out to ensure the continued safe storage of the submarines as well as the cost of berthing them. Maintenance costs are not included for the submarines stored at Rosyth in Financial Year 1997–98 as this information is no longer held.

Delivery Systems

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make representations to *(a)* the German Government and *(b)* NATO on the sale of delivery systems to Israel. [23310]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

Germany, as a party to the EU code of conduct, would look at the sale of delivery systems to any country on a case by case basis in accordance with the strict criteria of the code. We have no reason to question German judgment on this. Access by Israel as a NATO partner, to the NATO Maintenance and Service Agency (NAMSA) is currently under discussion. No agreement has yet been reached. The UK would only agree to such an arrangement if it was clearly understood that requests from Israel would be carefully examined on a case-by-case basis, were consistent with the UK's consolidated criteria on export licensing and approved by the NATO Atlantic Council.

Fixed-wing Capability

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to ensure the deployment at sea of an adequate fixed-wing capability beyond 2012; and whether such plans include extending the life of *(a)* HMS Illustrious, *(b)* HMS Ark Royal and *(c)* HMS Invincible. [24571]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 November 2005]*: The Invincible class carriers and Harrier GR9 are planned to be progressively replaced by the Future Carrier and JCA respectively thereby maintaining a potent fixed-wing capability. During the transition period, we retain the option to deploy Harrier GR9 with the Future Carrier. The ISDs for the Future Carriers will not be set until the main investment decision is taken and therefore it is too soon to determine whether there will be any case for extending the Invincible class carriers in service.

Fleet Requirement (Army)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the Army's Total Fleet Requirement 2004. [24580]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will place a redacted and declassified version of the Army's Total Fleet Requirement 2004 in the Library of the House. The reason for the redaction is that sections of the TFR 2004 paper reveal military planning assumptions, the disclosure of which would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the armed forces.

Future Integrated Soldier Technology

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planning assumption is for entry into service of the Future Integrated Soldier Technology; and if he will make a statement. [27170]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Integrated Soldier Technology (FIST) project is currently in its Assessment Phase. No decisions on entry into service will be taken before Main Gate.

Gulf War Syndrome

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Servicemen and *(b)* Servicewomen from Hertfordshire who served in the 1990–91 Gulf conflict are suffering from diagnosed illnesses. [25580]

Mr. Touhig: Information on all the illnesses reported by veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict is not held centrally. Although the medical records of individuals who have left the Services are held by each Service at individual central locations, the MOD does not hold records of all illnesses reported after an individual has left the Service. Furthermore, for those still serving, medical records are normally held at their unit medical centre. They are not held in a way that allows the identification of those from Hertfordshire.

Heapey Storage Facility

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the *(a)* management and *(b)* security of the Heapey ammunitions storage facility in the event of the closure Royal Ordnance Chorley. [28156]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 November 2005]*: The Heapey magazine facility is owned by BAE Systems Land Systems. The management and security of the facility are matters for the company.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1262W, on literacy and numeracy, how many basic skills tutors are employed in his Department; and how much they are paid. [27961]

Mr. Touhig: Currently there are 42 basic skills tutors directly employed by the Ministry of Defence. The salaries for each basic skills tutor varies according to a number of factors such as number of hours worked, length of service in grade, regional weightings and cost of living allowance for those tutors based overseas. However their basic pay is based on either the teachers' scales in England and Wales ranging from £19,161 to £35,082 or the band D MOD civil service pay scale: £17,072 to £26,626.

In addition, a further 18 basic skills tutors work within MOD funded entirely by Learning and Skills Council provision.

Military Deployment (Kosovo)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of the presence of British military forces deployed in Kosovo; what plans there are for continuing the deployment; and if he will make a statement. [27532]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The UK played a key role in the initial stabilisation of Kosovo, contributing some 13,000 troops to NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR). More recently, our contribution of some 200 troops to KFOR has supported provision of a safe and secure environment in Kosovo. As with all deployments of UK forces overseas, we regularly review force levels and structures. There are currently no plans for significant changes to our contribution to KFOR.

Oil Prices

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of recent oil price rises on general operations for the three branches of the armed forces; what the real terms increase in cash spending has been for each of the armed forces in each of the last four years; and what extra funding has been requested from the Treasury to alleviate the consequences of oil price rises. [17113]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* There is a clear relationship over the longer term (though a less predictable one in the shorter term) between changes in the oil price and the costs of fuels used in Defence, with rises in the oil price translating into increased unit costs for fuel for the Department. Fuel price rises have not, however, had an adverse impact on the delivery of Defence outputs, as the Department actively seeks to forecast and plan for movements in fuel prices, in both its forward financial planning and in-year financial management.

The Department has not requested additional funding from the Treasury to alleviate the consequences for Defence of oil price rises. In line with established practice, the net additional costs of operations, including the costs of fuel consumed on operations continue to be met from the Treasury Reserve. The resource costs of the consumption of fuel, oil and lubricants by the Department in support of operational and non-operational activity in each of the last four years are shown in the table. As the Department's fuel consumption ranges across a number of joint organisations as well as Service budget areas, breaking these figures down by Service could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

	£ million
2001–01	368
2002–03	364
2003–04	370
2004–05	402

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28176]

Mr. Touhig: None. Predictive dialling technology is not used by the Ministry of Defence.

Qinetiq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what value creation targets have been set for Qinetiq; and what implications this has for further non-competitive work allocation by his Department. [27647]

Mr. Ingram: No specific value creation targets have been set for Qinetiq by MOD. We have, however, sought to enhance the value of our shareholding in Qinetiq through the introduction of The Carlyle Group as our strategic partner in February 2003. On non-competitive work allocation, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1216.

RAF Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the tendering process for RAF Gibraltar air traffic control. [28009]

Mr. Ingram: The RAF Gibraltar air traffic control requirement was competitively tendered as part of the re-let of the airfield support services requirement at RAF Gibraltar. The tender exercise was undertaken in accordance with MOD guidelines with an invitation to tender issued in February 2005 and an award of contract in August 2005.

The requirement was initially advertised for expressions of interest in the MOD Contracts Bulletin in June 2004. A total of six companies expressed an interest in the requirement and were issued with invitations to tender. Three companies responded and entered bids which were evaluated under technical and commercial criteria published in the tender documentation, with the

award of contract to the National Air Traffic Services as the highest scoring bidder offering the best overall value for money.

Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many personnel will be involved in the 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team from *(a)* the Royal Military Police, *(b)* the Police Service of Northern Ireland, *(c)* the Army Prosecutions Service and *(d)* other sections of his Department; [27113]

(2) when he expects the first prosecutions to be brought by the 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and if he will make a statement; [27063]

(3) how many cases are being examined by the 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation Team; and if he will make a statement; [27038]

(4) what the duties of the 6 Royal Military Police Historic Investigation team are; and how many *(a)* officers, *(b)* non-commissioned officers and *(c)* ordinary soldiers are in the team. [27037]

Mr. Ingram: The 6th Regiment, Royal Military Police (6 RMP) Historic Inquiry Team (HIT) has been established as the focal point in headquarters Northern Ireland for providing information to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) review of all 'troubles' related-deaths. They are not undertaking any investigative responsibilities in relation to this review, nor do they have responsibility for the prosecutions process. Any prosecutions arising from the PSNI review will be carried out by the PSNI.

Once fully established, the 6 RMP HIT will comprise five non-commissioned officers from the RMP and three Ministry of Defence civilian support staff.

The PSNI are expected to review some 2000 cases, although each case-file may contain more than one incident of death. The RMP HIT are currently examining their information holdings in order to establish and inform the PSNI whether they hold information relevant to these cases. The RMP HIT remit is to retrieve relevant material regarding specific cases in response to requests for information from the PSNI.

Royal Ordnance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects the supply of components to be affected by the proposed closure of the BAE ordnance factory at Bridgwater. [26086]

Mr. Ingram: BAE Systems Land Systems will remain responsible for the maintenance of security of supply of components currently manufactured at the Bridgwater factory. We remain confident in their ability to do so.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications for security of supply of the proposed closure of the BAE Systems ordnance sites at Bridgewater and Chorley. [26093]

Mr. Ingram: BAE System Land Systems are responsible for security of supply of ammunition. They have provided detailed plans to the Ministry of Defence on how they intend to achieve this when the Bridgwater and Chorley sites are closed, and we remain confident in their ability to do so.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what types of ordnance are supplied to the armed forces by BAE Systems at *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Bridgewater; and whether arrangements will be put in place to continue the availability of such ordanance from UK sources following their closure. [26094]

Mr. Ingram: Chorley's main production output is initiators for various natures of munitions but production at the site has been suspended following an industrial incident in March 2005. Current production remains limited to filling and assembling a small number of stores using stocks of previously manufactured compositions.

The following table lists those items which have, until recently, been manufactured at the Chorley site:

Item:

TVE L4
Cap Conducting. CC No 1
Cap and Holder (TV23AF)
L1062.25grnRWY.
L1062.1grnL
L106 Delay.
MDF items and End Fittings for warheads
6.5grn LZY Detonator and Housing
Igniter CC
IEBW 222
CLC Charge Line Cutting.
7.62mm SAA Cap -Air
7.62mm SAA Cap—Land
5.56mm SAA Cap
IEBW 302. Detonator N16
CERU 201/Cap EBW No1 mk2
Primer 52
Cartridge Cable Cutter.
IEBW 213
Detonator EEBW N1 Mk2

The Bridgwater site supplies a range of explosive compounds and products including fillings for warheads, propellants and demolition stores.

A list of the individual items supplied over the last five years to the MOD or MOD prime contractors by the BAE Systems Land Systems facility at Bridgwater is as follows:

Items:

New products

RF-01-NPM11
Rowanex 1001 premix
RF-03-NPM6
Rowanex 1301 premix
RF-23-NPM02
Rowanex 6000 premix
RP3
Rowanex 6000, 2400 and Rowanex 2000 binder
RF-25-NPM01
Rowanex 1400 premix
RF-03-NPM37

Rowanex 1100 premix
TATB See PBX-N7
K10
Rowanite 8001
Rowanite 8002
CXM-7
Premix for PBXN1O9
PBXN110
Premix Class 2 Special
PBXN110
Premix Class 3 Special
PBXN-109 filling
Rowanex 1100 pre-cure
Rowanex 3601/PBX-N7
Rowanite 533 BBG
Rowanite 558 BBG
BBP75:25 Nocat
Rowanite 8101
BOBBA 8
Rowanex 4400(M)
Rowanex 2400
Warheads under PBXN-109

Demolition products

POPLIN
ROMOR
Giant Viper MLI
Python
PE4 bulk
PE4 Cartridges
PE6A1
SX2/Demex 200 bulk
SX2 Demex 200 sheets
ECT 63g/m (all lengths)
Blade 100g/m (all lengths)
Blade 240g/m(all lengths)
Blade 450g/m (all lengths)
Blade 650g/m (all lengths)
Blade 1150g/m (all lengths)
'Old' Bangalore torpedo
Brixal 75/25
E-mite
Paw-Paw
Demex 400

Additives

Styphnic acid
2:4 DNR
Processed waste NG acid
Lead Stannate
LAP (Lead Acelo Pthalate)
Basic Copper Salycilate

BAE Systems Land Systems will remain responsible for the maintenance of security of supply for these products. They have provided detailed plans on how they intend to achieve this and we remain confident in their ability to do so.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 19 December 1997, *Official Report*, column 383W on Royal Ordnance, Bridgewater to the hon. Member for Salisbury (Robert Key), what considerations he took into account in approving the joint venture between BAE Systems and Société Nationale des Poudres et Explosifs. [26346]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is aware that discussions took place some years ago between Royal Ordnance (now BAE Systems Land Systems) and Société Nationale des Poudres et Explosifs with a view to a joint venture. No final agreement was reached between the two companies so there was no joint venture.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has held with BAE Systems plc over the closure of the Royal Ordnance factories in Bridgwater and Chorley. [26369]

Mr. Ingram: A number of meetings were held between BAE Systems Land Systems and MOD officials on their proposed closure of the Chorley and Bridgwater sites. The aim of these meetings was to ensure that the company's rationalisation plans provided for continued security of supply as well as offering value for money for the taxpayer.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel have been seconded to a factory in France from the former Royal Ordnance factory in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Bridgwater; and whether associated plant has been relocated from the UK to France. [27064]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is aware that discussions took place some years ago between Royal Ordnance (now BAE Systems Land Systems) and the Societe National des Poudres et Explosifs (SNPE) with a view to a joint venture. No final agreement was reached between the two companies. Issues relating to secondment and plant relocations are a matter for BAE Systems Land Systems.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much land at the Royal Ordnance factory at Chorley has been sold for redevelopment. [28011]

Mr. Ingram: Questions regarding land sales at BAE Systems Land Systems site at Chorley should be addressed to the company.

Stealth Aircraft

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans are in place to develop a stealth aircraft for the RAF. [27623]

Mr. Ingram: Stealth is a term used to describe techniques to reduce visual, infra-red and radar observability. Such low observability characteristics are at the heart of the US/UK Joint Strike Fighter, the selected solution for the Joint Combat Aircraft programme, due in service next decade. In addition, the UK continues to explore the underlying technologies contributing to low observability, to ensure that the technology base exists to meet any potential future capability requirement.

Vanguard Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the end of service life is of each of the four Vanguard-class nuclear-powered submarines. [28006]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2123W, to the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr. Lewis).

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Housewives

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assistance and support is offered by the Government to married mothers, with a husband in work, who choose to stay at home to bring up their children. [25439]

Meg Munn: Families have substantially benefited from the changes in the tax and benefit system. As a result of the Government's reforms to the tax and benefit system since 1997, by October 2005, in real terms, families with children are, on average, £1,400 a year better off, while those in the poorest fifth are, on average, £3,200 per year better off.

The 2005 budget improved this situation still further by announcing a commitment to increase the child element of child tax credit at least in line with average earnings up to and including 2007–08. It is currently worth up to £1,690 a year per child, benefiting 7 million children in 3.6 million families.

SCOTLAND

Renewable Energy

7. **Mark Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the promotion of renewable energy in Scotland. [26713]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions with my right hon. Friend on a wide range of energy matters.

Pathways to Work

8. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the effects of the Pathways to Work pilot scheme in Scotland. [26714]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has not yet had the pleasure of meeting the new Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to discuss the Pathways to Work pilots in Scotland. I am sure they will meet in the future to discuss this and a range of other issues.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

11. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans the Government have for reducing the burden of central Government regulation on Scottish small and medium-sized enterprises. [26718]

David Cairns: This Government are undertaking the most radical and serious systemic reform of Britain's regulatory system in recent history. This will deliver genuine reductions in the regulatory burden upon all businesses, including SMEs, without compromising necessary regulatory outcomes.

Terrorism

12. **Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary about the implementation of the Terrorism Bill in Scotland. [26719]

Mr. Darling: I am in regular contact with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on a number of matters, including ensuring that Scotland's interests are fully covered by terrorism legislation and policies.

Fisheries

13. **Mr. MacNeil:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the impact of climate change on cod migration; and what action the Government are planning to take. [26720]

David Cairns: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Bradshaw) on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2308–2309W, to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond).

Employment Statistics

14. **Ms Katy Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had on ensuring full employment in all parts of Scotland by 2010. [26721]

David Cairns: The Government's objective is to increase employment opportunity for all. The UK labour market is performing well, both by international standards and on a historical comparison, with high levels of employment and low levels of unemployment. In addition, the Scottish labour market has hit new record levels, with employment at its highest since quarterly records began. We will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Executive to deliver prosperity for all the people of Scotland.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Office; what the *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses is of each; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27432]

Mr. Hoon: The highest paid employee in the Office of the Leader of the House is the Principal Private Secretary, who is a member of the Senior Civil Service. Details of his salary band are available in the Privy Council Office, Resource Accounts 2003–04, HC109Q, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

The office employs an additional 13 members of staff, all of whom are civil servants. Details of their salary are not released, as to provide this information for such a small number of staff (all of whom are below the Senior Civil Service grade) would be unfair on the grounds of their entitlement to privacy.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Leader of the House how many staff in his Office were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27456]

Mr. Hoon: Prior to 2001 separate records were not kept for the Office of the Leader of the House of Commons. The figures were disaggregated from the rest of the Privy Council Office, which provides administrative support to my office, only from 2001. The information available is given in the following table.

	Civil servants	*Contractors*	*Other staff*
2001	19	0	0
2002	19.5	0	0
2003	16.5	0	0
2004	16	0	0
2005	14	0	0

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Evans: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list statutory instruments made, laid before Parliament, and which came into force during the most recent summer recess. [28025]

Nigel Griffiths: A total of 201 statutory instruments (excluding draft instruments) and six Statutory Rules of Northern Ireland were laid in the House of Commons in the period 22 July to 7 October. These are listed in the Votes and Proceedings of the House for 10 October. Of these 123 statutory instruments and five statutory rules came into force before 10 October.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Postal Voting

19. **Philip Davies:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications to pilot all-postal vote elections her Department has received since the Representation of the People Act 2000 came into force. [28122]

Ms Harman: The Government have received 93 applications to run all-postal pilots since the Representation of the People came into force. Eight were received in 2000, 20 in 2002, 43 in 2003, 12 in 2004 and two in 2005.

Electoral Registers

20. **Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she plans to take to reduce the time taken to produce a copy of the marked register for those 2005 general election candidates who require one. [28123]

Ms Harman: The provision of copies of the marked electoral registers for the 2005 General Election is in fact the responsibility of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. Pickfords Records Management store these documents on the Clerk of the Crown's behalf. There were problems with the service in the first three months immediately following the 5 May Election. In this period, we received the same number or requests as we received for the whole of the year following the 2001 General Election.

This was due to the unforeseen volume of requests, which far exceeded the number of requests following the previous General Election. However, I have been assured that these problems have now been resolved.

Asylum Seekers

21. **Tony Baldry:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what funding her Department provided to Citizens Advice Bureaux for advice to asylum seekers in 2004–05; and what assessment she has made of the adequacy of such provision in Oxfordshire. [28124]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) provided a total of just under £27 million to CAB's nationally in all categories in 2004–05. It is not possible to separate what part of this sum was spent specifically on asylum advice.

The LSC is satisfied overall that there is adequate provision of specialist asylum advice in Oxfordshire.

National Census and Registration Day

22. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress she has made in considering the proposal for an annual national census and registration day. [28125]

Ms Harman: We are determined to increase electoral registration levels, particularly among young people and those who rent. We want to focus on one particular day as a way of concentrating resources and raising public awareness and we are looking at this.

Armed Forces Personnel (Voting)

23. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to facilitate voting by armed forces personnel. [28126]

Ms Harman: We have been working closely with the Ministry of Defence and the Electoral Commission to ensure that Service personnel are aware of their voting rights and the procedures for registering to vote. We are currently considering whether further legislation will be beneficial.

Judicial Appointments

24. **Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on qualifications for judicial appointments. [28127]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made on the 13 July by my right hon. and Noble Friend the Lord Chancellor on increasing diversity in the judiciary. Among the measures announced were that the Government would legislate when parliamentary time permitted, to change the current statutory requirements.

State Funding (Conservative Party)

25. **Mr. Khan:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much state funding has been paid to the Conservative party in each of the last five years. [28128]

Ms Harman: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Dr. Palmer) earlier.

Legal Aid

26. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent representations she has received on the proposed levels of legal aid; and if she will make a statement. [28129]

Bridget Prentice: My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor and I have received letters from individual members of the Bar expressing concerns about the October changes that we had to implement to some fee rates in criminal cases in order to tackle the serious overspend of £130 million that has been forecast to the legal aid budget. Prior to the changes my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor received representations from professional bodies and met with representatives of the Bar.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on the administration of justice of the recent industrial action by barristers over legal aid levels; and if she will make a statement. [28130]

Bridget Prentice: We said we would maintain the justice system regardless of any action barristers might take. We have done that. Action was limited and was (managed locally by the courts, Legal Service Commission and Crown Prosecution Service using a range of effective contingency plans.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the change in the rates paid for criminal legal aid has been over the last 10 years. [27153]

Bridget Prentice: There are different rates prescribed for the many separate schemes across a variety of services provided within the Criminal Defence Service (CDS). The changes to the prescribed basic legal aid rates for work in the criminal courts are set in the following table.

Defence legal aid rates—Changes to the prescribed rates: Magistrates court proceedings, Crown court and Court of Appeal (Criminal) Proceedings

1995	Solicitors' rates and counsels' Crown court standard fee rates increased by 2 per cent.
1996	Solicitors' rates and junior barristers' rates increased by 1.5 per cent.
1997	Nil uprating.
1998	Nil uprating.
1999	Nil uprating.
2000	Nil uprating.
2001	Magistrates court—General Criminal Contract launched with an overall effect of an overall increase of 7.25 per cent., though the increase in rates varied between classes of work. Criminal higher courts—Remuneration changes in October with the introduction of a common graduated fee scheme by the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Crown Prosecution Service for advocates in all trials lasting up to 25 days in the Crown court. The effect of those changes was to raise total remuneration for 1 to 10 day cases by about £3.2 million and to leave the level of remuneration for 11 to 25 day cases broadly the same. These changes also included changes in the graduated fee scheme to allow for some payment for conferences and the attendance fee for plea and directions hearings was increased from £75 to £100.
2002	Contract mileage rate under the General Criminal Contract increased to 45p. Nil remuneration uprating.
2003	Nil uprating.
2004	February—telephone fixed fee implemented for police station advice and assistance. £30.25 national / £31.45 London. October—Duty Solicitor. Serious offences rate introduced for police station advice and attendance at £80 per unsocial hour and £60 per hour at other times. Overall impact to introduce £3 million new money. Criminal courts—Remuneration changes in August to the Very High Cost Criminal Case contract rates and Criminal Graduated Fee schemes. The effects of the changes were: to reduce bureaucracy for the Bar by taking some 50 per cent. of VHCC cases into an extended graduated fee scheme, which now covers cases up to 40 days; raising the graduated fee rates for 11 to 25 day cases to the level which was expected in 2001 when the scheme was introduced and carrying those rates through to the 40 day extension; all Category 4 VHCC cases will be paid at the same rates as Category 3 VHCC cases; substantially increasing refreshers so that the same rate is now paid for Category 2 and 3 cases as for Category 1; moving terrorism cases into Category 1; moving under five-year advocate call rates to over five-year call rates. This settlement was a package to the Bar worth approximately £17 million. £11 million came from changes to the VHCCC scheme, and a further £6 million from the changes made to the 11 to 25 day graduated fee scheme where we made good the unintended shortfall that had occurred since the scheme was extended to 25 days on October 2001.
2005	October—Cuts in rates paid in some graduated fee and Very High Cost Criminal Case contracts (to both advocate's and litigator's rates). Extension of the existing graduated fee scheme for cracks and guilty pleas. Estimated savings in RAB terms from these additional measures, excluding Cracks and Guilties, are £5.1 million and £20.8 million for 2005–06, 2006–07 respectively. The extension of the Cracks and Guilties schemes is anticipated to increase savings by an estimated total of £20 million over 2005–06 and 2006–07.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs, if she will make a statement on the development of a standard form of legal aid applications as set out in Commission Decision 2005j630jEC, OJL225 of 31 August; what assessment his Department has made of the costs of implementing the scheme; and what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the scheme on the quantity of litigation. [27745]

Bridget Prentice: The Government warmly welcomes the introduction of the European Union's cross-border legal aid directive, which the Government enacted in November 2004.

The Legal Services Commission has received only one application for legal aid here in the United Kingdom and has transmitted 22 applications to other member states. The Government therefore expect the additional legal aid costs to be minimal. The Government do not hold the information requested in relation to both the costs of implementation and the impact of the scheme on the quantity of litigation.

Voter Registration

28. **Mr. David Jones:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on her policy on individual voter registration. [28131]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill, currently before Parliament, includes provision for the collection of personal identifiers such as individual signatures and dates of birth at the point at which a person registers to vote.

In order that the effect of this policy may be tested prior to full implementation, the Bill provides for personal identifiers to be first piloted at a local level, with the results to be evaluated by the Electoral Commission.

Election Campaigns

29. **Ms Barlow:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to limit the money that can be spent in election campaigns. [28132]

Ms Harman: There are no current plans to further limit the money that can be spent in election campaigns, over and above the limits that already exist both for candidates and parties. I understand that the Electoral Commission will be publishing its report into the spending at this year's general election in the spring of 2005. They also propose to undertake a review of expenditure limits beginning in mid-2006. I look forward to reading both reports.

Commercial Court

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to modernise the Commercial Court [27152]

Bridget Prentice: My Department is working with Her Majesty's Courts Service to finalise investment plans which will set out what new court building projects and major refurbishments will be taken forward. The improvement of the accommodation for the Commercial Court features in these plans and has been identified as a priority project within the HMCS Estate strategy.

A business case is being developed. This will include consideration of business justification, costs and funding. Accordingly, the business case will consider a number of options and solutions as to how and where improved facilities can be provided for this court.

Following consultation with the judiciary and users of the Commercial Court, we are also seeking to develop a new IT system for the Commercial Court which is designed to meet the particular needs of the court.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Computer Facilities

34. **Hywel Williams:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if the Commission will arrange a Welsh language spell-checker to be installed on computers on the parliamentary network. [28138]

Nick Harvey: Existing software licences provide spell-checkers for a number of languages, including Welsh. A non-English spell-checker can therefore be installed on a specified personal computer on the basis of a request from an hon. Member to the Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD).

Contract Cleaners

35. **David Taylor:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what progress has been made in improving pay and conditions for the contract cleaners on the parliamentary estate. [28139]

Nick Harvey: Over recent months officials have worked hard to find ways of saving money within the contract. I understand that, as a result, in mid-August, MITIE were able to offer an increase in basic hourly rates to £6.00: and that dialogue between the company and the union on this offer continues. New changing accommodation and a limited rest facility have been made available.

Recycling

36. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what the latest estimate is of the proportion of waste from Members' offices on the parliamentary estate which is recycled; and what steps are planned to increase this proportion. [28140]

Nick Harvey: Currently 35.7 per cent. of parliamentary waste is recycled. It is not possible to provide a separate figure for Members' offices. The new Waste Management policy to be adopted shortly sets out a target for increasing recycling by 5 per cent. per annum until 75 per cent. is reached.

College Green Ticket Office

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission when the seasonal ticket office located on College Green is due to be removed. [27626]

Nick Harvey: The ticket office was removed last week.

PRIME MINISTER

China

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will press President Hu Jintao to meet the Dalai Lama to discuss the Tibet conflict; [27073]

(2) what his assessment is of progress in the dialogue between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government. [27075]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Hoon) to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton and Wanstead (Harry Cohen) at Prime Minister's Questions on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 300.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the situation in Tibet. [27074]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Ian Pearson) to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 863–64W.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met non-governmental organisations working on human rights in *(a)* China and *(b)* Tibet. [27076]

The Prime Minister: I have not had any recent meetings with these organisations. However, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers have regular meetings with non-governmental organisations working on human rights in China and Tibet.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to give a joint press conference with China's President Hu Jintao when he pays a state visit to the UK; and if he will make a statement. [27077]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the morning press briefing given by my official spokesman on 9 November 2005, a copy of which is available on the Number 10 website.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions were held on Tibet prior to the agreement of the recent joint EU-China statement. [27079]

The Prime Minister: I encouraged further meetings between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's representatives during my visit to China in September, at the end of which the joint EU—China Statement was signed.

Prisons

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Prime Minister how many prisons he has visited since 1 May 1997. [28487]

The Prime Minister: I visited Pentonville prison in February 2001, and have undertaken a number of other visits relating to the criminal justice system since 1997.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bilateral Trade

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what bilateral trade agreements are in force with developing countries. [27331]

Ian Pearson: The following bilateral trade agreements between the European Union and developing countries are currently in force:

Country	
Algeria	Cooperation Agreement
Egypt	Association Agreement
Jordan	Association Agreement
Lebanon	Interim Agreement
Morocco	Association Agreement
Syria	Co-operation Agreement
Tunisia	Association Agreement
Chile	Association Agreement
Mexico	Free Trade Area
South Africa	Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement
African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACPs)	Partnership Agreement (Cotonou Agreement)
Certain Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)	Association Agreement

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of bilateral trade agreements with developing countries on their *(a)* local trade, *(b)* development and *(c)* economic growth; and what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Development on these matters. [27332]

Ian Pearson: Bilateral trade agreements have the potential to promote trade, growth and prosperity in developing countries. But to do this, they must be carefully designed and any trade reform in developing countries must be sequenced as part of a wider strategy for development and poverty reduction.

The Department of Trade and Industry and the Department for International Development work closely at all levels on this and other trade policy issues relating to developing countries.

Biofuels

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to provide funding to encourage Shropshire farmers to grow biofuels. [25334]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

Funding is available to support the growing of energy crops for use in the generation of biomass heat and electricity and transport biofuels. £29 million was made available to farmers throughout England under the Energy Crops Scheme to support the planting of short rotation coppice (SRC) and miscanthus, and the setting up of producer groups to supply SRC to biomass heat and electricity end-users. The £3.5 million UK-wide

Bio-energy Infrastructure Scheme, which is now closed for applications, provides grants to develop the supply chain for energy crops, straw and woodfuel from harvest through to delivery to biomass energy end-users. Several of the successful applications are based in the West Midlands area. Farmers who grow crops for biomass heat and electricity and transport biofuels can receive the single payment for certain crops grown on set-aside or where the €45/ha Energy Aid payment is claimed for crops on non set-aside land.

Funding is also available to develop markets for energy crops in the generation of heat, combined heat and power, electricity and transport biofuels. It was announced on 10 November that the Government will introduce a Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation which will require 5 per cent. of fuel sold in the UK to come from a renewable source by 2010. The Government are also considering further initiatives to support investment in biofuel processing plants. These measures may open up opportunities for farmers to supply crops to be used to produce biofuels. A number of biomass and biofuel projects are being established in the West Midlands area. Marches Energy Agency, the Community Renewables Initiative's local support team for Shropshire and Herefordshire is working to develop further projects in the area.

Cold-calling Scams

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidance his Department issues to start-up small businesses to safeguard them against cold-calling scams; and if he will make a statement. [23625]

Alun Michael: The Business Link website-www.businesslink.gov.uk-contains detailed advice on how businesses can avoid scams, including cold-calling.

Debt Collection Agencies

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in what circumstances debt collection agencies are entitled to inform debtors that their credit rating may be altered. [27585]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* A person's credit reference file will automatically indicate when an account is in default. Communications between a debt collection agency and a debtor will depend on the circumstances concerned but the Office of Fair Trading, which is responsible for the licensing of debt collection agencies, has issued guidance that the debt collection sector must follow. The guidance sets out the types of behaviour that the Office of Fair Trading considers to be unfair and which could call into question a company's fitness to hold a licence. For example, the guidance makes clear that it is unfair for a debt collection agency to communicate with consumers in an unclear, inaccurate or misleading manner.

Employment Status Review

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the conclusions of the Employment Act 1999 Section 23 Consultations (Employment Status Review) are to be made public. [27305]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government intend to publish a response to the Employment Status Review around the turn of the year.

Fireworks

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the quantity of fireworks used in October and November *(a)* by private individuals and *(b)* in public displays in each of the last 10 years. [27346]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* None. The Department does not collect or hold this information.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of firework-related injuries in each of the last 10 years, broken down by *(a)* age of victim and *(b)* type of injury. [27347]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Department publishes firework injury statistics every year. These are collected from every hospital Accident and Emergency Department in Great Britain for a period of approximately four weeks around November 5. Information of the type you request is available on the DTI website for the years 1997–2004. The web address is:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topicsl/pdfl/fireworkinjuries2004ss.pdf

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the safety levels of bonfire night activities in 2005. [27348]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* Legislation and guidelines are in place covering the importation, supply, use (including anti-social use) and the firing of displays. All of this legislation is kept under review, either by DTI or the Health and Safety Executive. Enforcement bodies will report on enforcement activities in due course.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of public firework displays held in England in October and November in each of the last 10 years. [27349]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* None. Professionally fired displays are governed by legislation covering health and safety at work, which is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of fireworks regulations in relation to bonfire night activities in 2005. [27350]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* None. However, an assessment of enforcement activities under the relevant fireworks legislation will be undertaken in due course.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people were injured by fireworks in West Lancashire in each of the last five years. [27839]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The fireworks injury statistics collected on behalf of the DTI are broken down by country i.e. England, Scotland and Wales, by super region and by health trust. Statistics for West Lancashire are therefore not available.

Furniture

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many sofas were seized by consumer protection staff because of the presence of combustible foam in 2004–05, broken down by region. [26969]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture manufactured in or imported into the UK. These regulations are enforced by Trading Standards, who have powers to suspend the supply of products which do not meet the requirements of the regulations, to seize such products and to prosecute suppliers. This Department collates statistics on prosecutions under the regulations every five years and publishes them in a statutory report on consumer safety. The most recent report, published in 2003, records that 101 prosecutions were brought under the regulations between 1 April 1998 and 31 March 2003, of which 98 resulted in conviction. The Department does not collect statistics in relation to the presence of combustible foam in upholstered furniture.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many furniture manufacturers have ceased to trade over the last five years, broken down by region. [26981]

Alun Michael: Information on how many furniture manufacturers have de-registered for VAT in the last five years can be provided on a national basis but figures for each region could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

DTI figures for the whole of the UK, based solely on VAT de-registrations for furniture manufacturers[1], are shown below for 2000 to 2004. Data on the number of registered furniture manufacturers and the rate of de-registration are also shown. Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

[1] Standard Industrial Classification 361.

Furniture manufacturing 2000–04

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
VAT de-registrations	585	585	610	610	610
VAT registered stock at start of year	7,715	7,745	7,700	7,560	7,515
De-registrations per 100 registered stock	7.6	7.6	7.9	8.1	8.1

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2004, Small Business Service, available at http://www.sbs.gov.uk/vats

VAT registration and de-registration data do not capture all business activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the levels of sofa imports with combustible foam content labelled as non-combustible foam. [26983]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture manufactured in or imported into the UK. These regulations are enforced by Trading Standards, who have powers to suspend the supply of products which do not meet the requirements of the regulations, to seize such products and to prosecute suppliers. The Department does not collect statistics in relation to the presence of combustible foam in upholstered furniture.

Post Offices

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* sub-post and *(b)* post offices there were in north-east Milton Keynes in each year since 1997. [27181]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). I have therefore asked the chief executive of POL to provide a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* sub-post and *(b)* post offices there were in Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [27294]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL) and the chief executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the removal of the duty for Post Office Ltd. to prevent avoidable rural post office closures in April 2006. [27323]

Barry Gardiner: The then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's statement of 16 September 2004 to the House advised that Post Office Ltd. had been directed to provide a report to Government of the findings of pilot activity into new, innovative and cost-effective means of delivering postal services at the end of 2005. It further stated that an assessment of the policy of preventing avoidable closures of rural post offices would be conducted in light of the findings of the pilot report. This will be considered alongside analysis of the network currently being conducted.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will hold a public consultation on the future of the rural post office network. [27327]

Barry Gardiner: The Government are in the process of reviewing the future of the social network of post offices in rural and deprived urban areas and is fully committed to undertaking a public consultation at the appropriate time.

Postcomm

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications were received for the post of Chair of Postcomm; whether the job is full-time; and what the annual salary of the Chair of Postcomm is. [28015]

Barry Gardiner: 56 applications were received in June 2003 for the post of Chair of Postcomm. It is a part-time position, based on a three-day week, attracting an annual salary of £76,500 (pay award pending).

Radioactive Waste Management

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has received from the European Commission in respect of proposals for a joint undertaking to organise research on radioactive waste management. [28952]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The Government are aware that the European Commission is developing a proposal for a joint undertaking to organise research on radioactive waste management. The Commission believes that such a project would be of common European interest and would allow the pooling of private, national and Community resources to achieve specific long-term research objectives. The proposal has not yet been submitted to the Council of Ministers.

Retirement Age

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with local authorities about the retirement age for public sector workers; and if he will make a statement. [24826]

Alan Johnson: I have had no discussions with local authorities about the retirement age for public sector workers.

Tax Forms

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what average number of tax forms businesses were requested to *(a)* fill in and *(b)* reply to in each of the last five years. [28014]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The number of tax forms a business will respond to will depend upon a number of factors including its size, the nature of its business activities and how it chooses to provide information eg in writing, on-line or through agents. The wide range and diversity of these factors means any exercise to calculate averages has limited value and would necessitate a great deal of research at disproportionate cost.

Travel Insurance

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with insurance industry representatives on travel insurance which excludes cover for tour company insolvency. [25680]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 (SI 1992/3288) require that all businesses organising package tours must at all times be able to provide sufficient evidence of security for the refund of money paid over by consumers and for the repatriation of consumers in the event of insolvency.

Veterinary Services

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for access to veterinary services of the loss to vets of prescription-related income. [27353]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The regulatory impact assessment accompanying the Supply of Relevant Veterinary Medicinal Products Order 2005 fully sets out the implications. It is for individual veterinary surgeons to choose their pricing structure should they wish to recoup this income, as long as they do it in a way that does not discriminate between those customers who take a prescription and those who do not.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reason vets will be prevented from charging for prescribing; and whether he plans to apply the same principles to other professional groups. [28113]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The Competition Commission found in their report in April 2003 that the market in prescription-only veterinary medicines was not working well for animal owners. They recommended a package of measures aimed at opening up the market to competition.

A key element of the package of measures is to enable customers to take up prescriptions, so they can shop around for medicines rather than be forced to pay the prices charged by the veterinary surgeon treating their animal. The three-year moratorium on prescription charges is seen by both the Competition Commission and Government as essential to encouraging take-up and opening the market.

This is not currently applied to other professional groups as it follows a detailed analysis by the Competition Commission in response to complaints specific to the market for veterinary medicines.

Water Privatisation

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has made to ensure that the consequences of privatisation of water in developing countries is discussed at the World Trade Organisation talks in December. [26078]

Ian Pearson: There is nothing in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) which requires WTO members to privatise water utilities. The GATS provides a framework within which WTO members can negotiate the liberalisation of trade in services. It is up to WTO members to decide in which sectors to make commitments.

We have therefore made no such representations.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the EU's negotiating position at the World Trade Organisation. [25828]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Under the Common Commercial Policy, the European Commission negotiates in the World Trade Organisation on behalf of the European Union's 25 member states. The European Commission is bound by a negotiating mandate granted and updated by the Council of Ministers but has the freedom to determine strategy and tactics within the parameters of that mandate. The assessment of Her Majesty's Government is that the offers tabled by the European Commission on 10 and 28 October are within the remit of the negotiating mandate. Her Majesty's Government continues to give its full backing to the Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, in his conduct of the negotiations and is committed to achieving an ambitious, pro-development conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda by the end of 2006.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Priorities

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Department's priorities for 2006–07. [28064]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The aim of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, (ODPM) is to help create sustainable communities, working with other Government Departments, local councils, businesses, the voluntary sector, and communities themselves.

We have five year plans, a challenging set of public service agreement targets and strategic priorities which set the overall framework, as set out in our Annual Report for 2004–05 (Cm 6526). They are published in the ODPM Business Plan for 2005–06 which can be found on the ODPM website.

We have recently completed a stock take of our policies and programmes to ensure that we have full alignment across these programmes, to maximise our impact in delivery, and to sharpen our focus in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007. The conclusions are set out in the core narrative on the ODPM website.

English Partnerships

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when English Partnerships' future national programme for the years 2005–06 to 2008–09 is expected to be announced. [27509]

Yvette Cooper: Discussions are currently under way with English Partnerships on their future national programme and priorities for the years 2005–06 to 2008–09. Once these planning round discussions have been finalised, which is likely to be in the next two months, English Partnerships corporate priorities will be published.

Funding for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister programmes, including English Partnerships, for 2008–09 to 2010–11 will be dependent on the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Free Bus Passes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to answer the letter from the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham of 21 September regarding payments to Adur council for extension of free bus travel for pensioners. [28231]

Mr. Woolas: I replied to the hon. Member on 10 November.

Housing

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage change has been in average weekly rent in constant prices in *(a)* the local authority and *(b)* the registered social landlord sector in each (i) London borough and (ii) English region since 2001. [24269]

Yvette Cooper: Average weekly rent by local authority district and region are published for the local authority sector and the registered social landlord sector on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website in Tables 702 and Tables 704 respectively. The links for these tables are given as follows:

Table 702: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1156266

Table 704: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id:=1156268

These tables will be updated with information for 2005 late this month. The percentage changes from March 2001 to March 2004 are given in the Tables:

(i) London boroughs

Table 1: Percentage change in average weekly rent at constant prices 2001 to 2004 for London boroughs

	Registered Social Landlord (RSL) % increase	*Local Authority Landlord % increase*
Barking and Dagenham	2.2	3.8
Barnet	2.7	5.0
Bexley	-2.2	LSVT
Brent	7.3	-3.4
Bromley	0.1	LSVT
Camden	4.9	-2.6
City of London	7.7	5.5
Croydon	1.2	-3.6
Ealing	6.2	-5.7
Enfield	6.9	-0.5
Greenwich	6.2	2.7
Hackney	5.3	-7.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	6.3	3.4
Haringey	3.3	-1.8
Harrow	1.1	2.2
Havering	3.2	5.1
Hillingdon	4.2	0.4
Hounslow	3.0	4.4
Islington	6.9	-2.9
Kensington and Chelsea	8.1	5.6
Kingston upon Thames	6.2	0.4
Lambeth	5.1	3.2
Lewisham	6.2	0.7
Merton	1.9	0.2
Newham	3.5	3.4
Redbridge	3.6	-4.3
Richmond upon Thames	0.9	LSVT
Southwark	5.9	-1.0
Sutton	3.8	5.3

Table 1: Percentage change in average weekly rent at constant prices 2001 to 2004 for London boroughs

	Registered Social Landlord (RSL) % increase	Local Authority Landlord % increase
Tower Hamlets	7.9	-8.0
Wandsworth	5.0	9.8
Waltham Forest	-1.0	1.4
Westminster	6.3	1.2
London	4.1	0.1

Notes:
1. RSL data based on data collected by the Housing Corporation via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) LA data based on unaudited returns from the Second Subsidy Claim form and are provisional for 2004.
2. Constant prices based on the Retail Price Index.
3. Average Weekly Rents in Both Sectors are affected by Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVT).
4. "LSVT": all or most of the local authority stock has been transferred to the RSL sector, so an average rent is no longer appropriate.

(ii) English Regions

Table 2: Percentage change in average weekly rent at constant prices 2001 to 2004 for English regions

	Registered Social Landlord % increase	Local Authority Landlord % increase
North East	0.0	1.6
North West	4.0	1.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.8	-1.0
East Midlands	-0.7	3.5
West Midlands	2.6	2.8
East	1.3	1.8
London	4.1	0.1

Table 2: Percentage change in average weekly rent at constant prices 2001 to 2004 for English regions

	Registered Social Landlord % increase	Local Authority Landlord % increase
South East	1.6	3.0
South West	2.1	0.3
England	0.8	2.9

Notes:
1. RSL data based on data collected by the Housing Corporation via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR) LA data based on un-audited returns from the Second Subsidy Claim form and are provisional for 2004.
2. Constant prices based on the Retail Price Index.
3. Average Weekly Rents in Both Sectors are affected by Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVT). If Large Scale Voluntary Transfers have taken place the average weekly rents may be affected by the change in the mix of the stock.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households were on the housing register of each local housing authority in the north-east in each year from 2000 to 2005; and what that number of households was as a percentage of all households. [26187]

Yvette Cooper: The available information is in a table and has been placed in the Library of the House.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the housing association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a housing association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Number of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, and as a percentage of total households in the area, by each local authority in the north-east region, 2000–05

	Total households on the housing waiting list					
Local authority	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Alnwick	773	568	802	961	1,155	1,192
Berwick-upon-Tweed	523	566	455	492	455	756
Blyth Valley	2,110	1,878	1,966	2,223	2,753	3,637
Castle Morpeth	1,083	1,424	719	2,048	1,426	1,419
Chester-le-Street	1,314	1,698	1,827	2,028	2,366	2,464
Darlington	2,087	2,127	1,886	2,666	2,601	2,853
Derwentside	2,249	2,227	2,269	2,652	2,920	2,965
Durham	1,028	1,126	1,091	1,413	2,110	2,618
Easington	3,094	2,546	3,205	2,842	3,622	2,015
Gateshead	4,665	4,841	5,394	6,015	9,894	4,174
Hartlepool	2,374	2,026	2,998	3,033	7,310	3,222
Middlesbrough	3,312	2,912	2,921	3,331	4,324	5,217
Newcastle upon Tyne	4,361	5,353	6,289	6,625	10,230	13,099
North Tyneside	3,274	2,477	2,860	3,350	4,028	4,325
Redcar and Cleveland	2,777	2,639	2,645	2,939	2,424	3,250
Sedgefield	620	776	690	841	1,819	2,364
South Tyneside	12,245	8,681	10,203	10,798	12,325	8,649
Stockton-on-Tees	5,312	4,395	3,962	3,892	3,736	3,485
Sunderland	4,476	5,156	5,764	22,323	25,827	16,222
Teesdale	350	343	367	377	387	298
Tynedale	820	1,251	1,011	1,104	1,338	1,576
Wansbeck	1,021	736	700	986	1,428	1,244
Wear Valley	2,248	1,270	2,237	2,482	1,475	2,703
Total north-east region	62,116	57,016	62,261	85,421	105,953	89,747

	As a percentage of total households in area					
Local authority	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Alnwick	6	4	6	7	8	9
Berwick-upon-Tweed	4	5	4	4	4	6
Blyth Valley	6	5	6	6	8	10
Castle Morpeth	5	7	4	10	7	7
Chester-le-Street	6	7	8	9	10	11
Darlington	5	5	4	6	6	7

Local authority	As a percentage of total households in area					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Derwentside	6	6	6	7	8	8
Durham	3	3	3	4	6	7
Easington	8	6	8	7	9	5
Gateshead	6	6	6	7	12	5
Hartlepool	6	5	8	8	20	9
Middlesbrough	6	5	5	6	7	9
Newcastle upon Tyne	4	5	5	6	9	11
North Tyneside	4	3	3	4	5	5
Redcar and Cleveland	5	4	4	5	4	6
Sedgefield	2	2	2	2	5	6
South Tyneside	18	13	15	16	18	13
Stockton-on-Tees	7	6	5	5	5	5
Sunderland	4	4	5	19	22	14
Teesdale	4	3	4	4	4	3
Tynedale	3	5	4	4	5	6
Wansbeck	4	3	3	4	5	5
Wear Valley	9	5	9	10	6	10
Percentage north-east region	6	5	6	8	10	8

Source:
The number of households on the waiting lists from ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return. Figures are as at 1 April. Total household figures from ODPM's 2003 mid-year household estimates.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will commission research to update the affordability index used to determine the areas included within the scope of the Housing (Right-to-Buy) (Limits on Discounts) (Amendments) Order 2003. [26238]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing (Right-to-Buy) (Limits on Discount) (Amendment) Order 2003 came into force on 27 March 2003. It reduced to 16,000 the maximum right-to-buy discount available to tenants in 41 areas in London and the South of England that appeared to be under the greatest housing market pressure in terms of high levels of homelessness and high property prices. The Government is keeping the position on maximum right-to-buy discounts generally under review.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of additional public services which will be required by people living in the proposed new housing in Hertfordshire. [26348]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's approach is to ensure that infrastructure, including public services, is provided in step with growth, as plans for individual growth locations are developed. There are three elements to this: first, to ensure that main public expenditure programmes, such as health and education, are sufficiently flexible and responsive to the needs of growing communities; second, to secure an appropriate contribution from developers and private investors; and third, to provide additional support through growth areas funds, including the Community Infrastructure Fund.

Hertfordshire and the rest of the East of England have already benefited from a significant increase in identifiable public expenditure, receiving £28.1 billion in 2003–04—a 26 per cent. real terms increase on 1999–2000. In particular between 1999–2000 and 2003–04:

Transport spending in the region rose from £717 million to £1,038 million

Health spending in the region rose from £4,011 million to £6,001 million

Education and training spending in the region rose from £3,327 million to £4,889 million

Public order and safety spending in the region rose from £896 million to £1,413 million

The East of England Regional Assembly has submitted its draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England to Government. Following extensive public consultation, that draft strategy is now subject to an independent Examination in Public, which began on 1 November and runs to early March 2006.

It is for the Examination in Public, after considering all the evidence and representations before it, to make recommendations to Government on the appropriate long-term strategy for the scale and location of development in the East of England.

Once Government have received the recommendations of the Examination in Public, and consulted on any changes it proposes, the final strategy will be issued. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is already engaged in discussions with partners on infrastructure and growth issues in the East of England and we will develop plans further in the light of the final strategy. Public service providers will then have the long-term certainty they need in which to plan future levels of service provision. Detailed development decisions need to be made at the local level as part of the preparation of local development documents.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* demolitions and *(b)* empty properties (i) across all sectors and (ii) in council housing there were in each local housing authority in the North East in each year from 2000 to 2005. [26186]

Yvette Cooper: The available information is in a table and has been placed in the Library of the House.

Table for PQ 2024—number of all tenure and council demolished and empty dwellings by each local authority in the north east region 2000 to 2005.

Part A—number of demolished dwellings in the financial year

Local authority name	Total dwellings demolished 2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Alnwick	0	2	0	0	n/a
Berwick-upon-Tweed	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	n/a
Blyth Valley	0	0	0	0	n/a
Castle Morpeth	[1]—	0	1	0	n/a
Chester-le-Street	0	0	24	38	n/a
Darlington	174	12	41	56	n/a
Derwentside	106	20	43	152	n/a
Durham	17	2	0	0	n/a
Easington	[1]—	177	99	63	n/a
Gateshead	91	310	155	224	n/a
Hartlepool	15	58	20	7	n/a
Middlesbrough	61	78	343	161	n/a
Newcastle upon Tyne	383	612	531	485	n/a
North Tyneside	238	499	149	14	n/a
Redcar and Cleveland	54	285	169	87	n/a
Sedgefield	[1]—	54	30	28	n/a
South Tyneside	52	130	229	37	n/a
Stockton-on-Tees	[1]—	74	149	154	n/a
Sunderland	471	165	203	280	n/a
Teesdale	[1]—	0	0	0	n/a
Tynedale	0	0	1	1	n/a
Wansbeck	276	471	13	19	n/a
Wear Valley	45	207	162	144	n/a

Local authority name	Council dwellings demolished 2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Alnwick	0	[1]—	0	0	n/a
Berwick-upon-Tweed	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	n/a
Blyth Valley	0	0	0	0	n/a
Castle Morpeth	[1]—	0	0	0	n/a
Chester-le-Street	0	0	24	32	n/a
Darlington	169	9	36	0	n/a
Derwentside	106	20	3	124	n/a
Durham	17	2	0	0	n/a
Easington	131	0	99	14	n/a
Gateshead	88	242	20	68	n/a
Hartlepool	0	34	19	5	n/a
Middlesbrough	19	76	335	132	n/a
Newcastle upon Tyne	383	462	493	437	n/a
North Tyneside	229	476	104	12	n/a
Redcar and Cleveland	53	283	169	69	n/a
Sedgefield	[1]—	0	30	0	n/a
South Tyneside	47	126	226	22	n/a
Stockton-on-Tees	[1]—	74	138	154	n/a
Sunderland	455	0	0	0	n/a
Teesdale	[1]—	0	0	0	n/a
Tynedale	0	0	0	0	n/a
Wansbeck	276	467	12	19	n/a
Wear Valley	36	0	159	134	n/a

[1] Indicates that no data was submitted.

Note:

n/a means data not yet ready to publish.

Source:

Housing Flows Reconciliation return

Part B—number of empty dwellings (All figures to be treated as for 1 April)

Local authority name	All dwellings: HSSA + RSR returns data 2000	2001	2002	CTB1 return data 2003	2004	2005
Alnwick	438	441	453	580	726	571
Berwick-upon-Tweed	331	[1]—	608	655	544	614
Blyth Valley	988	798	634	844	940	789
Castle Morpeth	579	790	806	805	658	774
Chester-le-Street	685	741	877	643	726	582
Darlington	2,186	2,095	1,903	1,591	1,823	1,660
Derwentside	1,756	1,824	1,772	1,672	1,707	1,669
Durham	2,530	1,522	[1]—	1,238	673	1,282
Easington	3,022	2,878	2,046	1,894	1,860	1,880
Gateshead	3,387	3,213	3,491	6,205	5,519	5,488
Hartlepool	1,752	1,708	1,911	1,903	1,701	1,925
Middlesbrough	4,412	1,977	2,741	3,151	3,191	2,833
Newcastle upon Tyne	8,045	3,583	7,352	7,555	7,275	6,141
North Tyneside	4,024	3,814	2,912	2,820	2,784	2,877
Redcar and Cleveland	2,828	2,822	2,706	2,626	2,550	2,225

Part B—number of empty dwellings (All figures to be treated as for 1 April)

All dwellings

Local authority name	HSSA + RSR returns data 2000	2001	2002	CTB1 return data 2003	2004	2005
Sedgefield	799	1,362	1,524	1,550	1,358	1,965
South Tyneside	1,466	2,578	3,757	1,814	1,737	1,997
Stockton-on-Tees	2,502	3,046	3,034	2,836	2,667	2,319
Sunderland	3,780	4,039	2,771	3,628	4,140	4,114
Teesdale	[1]	508	513	607	613	656
Tynedale	1,079	583	619	834	862	782
Wansbeck	979	1,505	851	1,152	1,045	1,031
Wear Valley	1,963	2,504	1,736	1,586	1,511	1,558

LA dwellings only

Local authority name	HSSA return 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	data 2005
Alnwick	28	22	25	27	15	31
Berwick-upon-Tweed	3	13	10	11	11	8
Blyth Valley	56	53	57	63	74	54
Castle Morpeth	96	137	201	160	158	165
Chester-le-Street	140	199	163	181	152	61
Darlington	211	150	138	180	163	136
Derwentside	283	304	425	405	491	332
Durham	243	239	182	137	117	137
Easington	822	910	835	826	768	490
Gateshead	601	463	460	471	525	472
Hartlepool	187	218	180	155	0	0
Middlesbrough	505	597	766	571	717	0
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,542	1,778	1,883	1,398	1,413	1,151
North Tyneside	1,119	1,057	622	518	404	524
Redcar and Cleveland	337	438	313	0	0	0
Sedgefield	373	299	223	175	138	112
South Tyneside	495	518	489	608	449	607
Stockton-on-Tees	941	943	756	724	489	373
Sunderland	1,102	0	0	0	0	0
Teesdale	18	24	26	58	72	57
Tynedale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wansbeck	617	496	304	204	255	200
Wear Valley	321	445	358	357	392	299

[1] Indicates that no data was submitted.

Note:
Zero LA figures indicates council became LSVT.

Source:
Council Tax Base 1 (CTB1) return for all dwellings from 2003 to 2005, all others from Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of the planned 75,000 social rented houses planned to be built by 2007–08 will be provided by local authorities. [22253]

Yvette Cooper: Of the estimated 75,000 social rented houses to be provided by 2007–08 we estimate that up to some 3,000 will be provided by local authorities.

Since 1990 registered social landlords (RSLs) have been the main providers of additional affordable housing. They are generally able to deliver more units than local authorities for a given amount of public subsidy because of their ability to access private finance.

Local Government Finance

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital funding his Department has allocated to Luton council in each of the last five years. [26106]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The following table sets out payments made to Luton council since 2002–03. For earlier years, the table shows the amount paid by ODPM's predecessor Departments from programmes which are now administered by the Office.

All figures (£ million)

Funding	(a) Revenue	(b) Capital
2000–01	136.000	5.163
2001–02	141.859	3.013
2002–03	148.423	3.063
2003–04	171.619	6.323
2004–05	179.599	7.946
Total	777.500	25.508

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the revenue support grant per head was in each local authority in *(a)* 1998, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2004; and what the figure for the relative level of grant per head was for each authority in each year if the average level of grant per head in England in each year is represented by 100. [26893]

Mr. Woolas: A table showing formula grant per head for 1998–99, 2001–02 and 2004–05, together with the relative level of grant per head for each authority in each of these years has been placed in the Library of the

House. Formula Grant comprises Revenue Support Grant, Redistributed Business Rates and Police Grant. It is not appropriate to look at only the amount of Revenue Support Grant an authority receives since floor damping operates across formula grant.

Please note that for every area in England there is more than one authority providing services. In order to get a true comparison for an area compared to the English average for the year it is therefore necessary to add together the authorities that cover that area, thus for the Isle of Wight it is necessary to add together the data for the Isles of Wight plus that for Hampshire police. For example, in 1998–99 the Isle of Wight received £592.77 per head to cover all services except police and Hampshire police received £88.08 per head to cover police services. Therefore, the figure for the Isles of Wight area to cover all services was £592.77 + £88.08 = £680.85 which compares to an England average of £653.14.

Pathfinder Renewal Projects

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 339W, on Pathfinder Renewal Projects, what information he requires from Pathfinder Renewal schemes about their expenditure, including the Capital Modernisation Fund; and what the frequency is of those financial returns. [24242]

Yvette Cooper: All nine of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders submit monthly claims for expenditure occurred in the previous month. The claims are divided in each case between capital and revenue costs and show expenditure on:

i. Physical implementation

ii. Non-physical implementation

iii. Management, administration and scheme development costs.

At six monthly intervals the pathfinders submit their core indicator returns which show progress on each of their agreed outputs.

All Capital Modernisation Fund (CMF) moneys were spent in 2002–03 and 2003–04. The information then collected was not submitted on an agreed pro-forma or broken down into any fixed categories for each pathfinder but submitted on local authority or pathfinder own forms depicting various items of expenditure relating to scheme development and capacity building.

Smithfield Market

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has made to the Corporation of London about the proposed redevelopment of the old Smithfield Market site. [27998]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has not made any representations to the Corporation of London.

Social Landlords

Paul Holmes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether members of boards and gateway boards of registered social landlords are legally required to act in the best interests of the organisation; [26207]

(2) whether councillors are prohibited by law from being members of the boards and gateway boards of registered social landlords; [26208]

(3) whether tenants' representatives are legally required to act in the best interests of their registered social landlord. [26209]

Yvette Cooper: All board members of registered social landlords (RSLs), including tenant board members, owe a fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the organisation. This is a common law duty which imposes a general requirement on them to act in good faith and for the benefit of the RSL. This applies to all RSLs, including those established using the Community Gateway model.

There is no prohibition on councillors being RSL board members. However, as councillors they are subject to a code of conduct which requires them to remove themselves from, or not vote at, any council meeting where they might have a prejudicial interest in the matter being discussed.

Thames Gateway

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to extend *(a)* motorways and *(b)* A roads in Essex to take account of the Thames Gateway. [25081]

Yvette Cooper: In 2003 the Secretary of State for Transport announced a £1.6 billion investment in the widening of the M25. This programme will take in junctions 27–30 in the Essex stretch of the motorway.

The transport authorities in Essex have an opportunity to bring forward improvements to non-strategic roads through their respective local transport plans. Provisional plans are currently with the Department for Transport and are being assessed.

Additionally, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport are working with the South Essex Transportation Board to identify the further transport and other infrastructure needs of the area in the context of the Thames Gateway.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of the Thames Gateway project will be accounted for by social housing. [25082]

Yvette Cooper: The ultimate percentage of affordable housing (which includes social housing) in the Thames Gateway will be dependent upon a number of factors such as local development plan requirements. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not set targets centrally for affordable housing.

However, "Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway" sets out our expectation that at least 35 per cent. of new homes will be affordable for rent or purchase, while supporting the different local circumstances across the Gateway. The London Plan, published in February 2004, set an affordability target of 50 per cent. for new developments. Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) for the South East of England and the East of England regions are currently under review. At present neither existing RSS sets a target for affordable housing, but an anticipated target of 30 per

cent. was put forward in the Interregional Planning Statement agreed by the three Gateway regional planning authorities.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many properties the Government plan to build in *(a)* Essex, *(b)* Basildon, *(c)* Southend, *(d)* Thurrock and *(e)* East Tilbury in the context of the Thames Gateway project. [25097]

Yvette Cooper: The draft Regional Spatial Strategy developed by the East of England Regional Assembly proposes a total of 43,800 new dwellings in the period 2001 to 2021. This is spilt between the areas as follows:

	Number
Thurrock	18,500
Basildon	10,700
Southend	6,000
Castle Point	4,600
Rochford	4,000

These proposals will be tested through the Examination in Public of the East of England Plan. This began on 1 November.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

"Working Together"

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to publish the responses to the consultation on "Working Together". [28831]

Maria Eagle: The consultation ended on 28 October. The Department will publish an analysis of the consultation responses within three months of this date, in line with standard DfES practice.

Adult Guidance Provision

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills where the responsibility for Adult Guidance Provision will lie when the Connexions model is replaced with that proposed in the Every Child Matters and Youth Matters white papers. [25085]

Phil Hope: Overall responsibility for securing provision of information, advice and guidance services for adults to help them make informed choices about learning and work rests with the Learning and Skills Council, and there are no plans for this to change.

After-class Tutoring

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school teachers who participate in after-class tutoring (i) at their school of employment and (ii) elsewhere in West Lancashire. [28103]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

Education

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* classroom assistants and *(b)* full-time equivalent classroom assistant posts there were in the North-East Milton Keynes constituency in each year since 1997. [27205]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in maintained sector schools, including pupil referral units, in the North-East Milton Keynes constituency in January of each year.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching assistant posts in North-East Milton Keynes is not collected centrally.

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants[1] in maintained sector schools[2] including pupil referral units, in the North-East Milton Keynes constituency

	FTE teaching assistants
1997	80
1998	90
1999	100
2000	100
2001	100
2002	100
2003	170
2004	180
2005	180

[1] Includes teaching assistants, special needs support staff and ethnic minority support staff.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual School Census.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of its total budget was spent by Lancashire Local Education Authority on special needs education in West Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [27658]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is collected at local education authority level. West Lancashire is part of Lancashire Local Education Authority and the information supplied is reported at the LEA level.

Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1, 2] by Lancashire local authority[3] in financial year 2005–06

	Expenditure
Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1, 2, 3, 4] (£)	109,113,000
Total education revenue expenditure[3, 4, 5] (£)	702,069,000
Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with SEN as a percentage of total education revenue expenditure[4]	15.5

[1] Includes planned expenditure on the provision for pupils with statements and the provision for non-statemented pupils with SEN, support for inclusion, inter authority recoupment, fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad, educational psychology service, local authority functions in relation to child protection, therapies and other health related services, parent partnership, guidance and information, the monitoring of SEN provision and inclusion administration, assessment and co-ordination. Also included is the funding delegated to nursery, primary and secondary schools identified as "notional SEN" and the individual schools budget (ISB) for special schools.

[2] The ISB for special schools will include some general education costs for pupils with SEN in addition to those costs specifically for SEN while the figures recorded against "notional SEN" are indicative only of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN. In addition to the figures quoted above, Lancashire also budgeted £13.2 million for SEN transport expenditure in 2005–06.
[3] Financial data are collected at a local authority level and as such figures for West Lancashire are not available.
[4] Figures are in cash terms as reported by the LEA and rounded to the nearest £1,000 and may not sum due to rounding.
[5] Total Education Revenue Expenditure is the combination of the total schools budget and the total local authority budget.
[6] The data are drawn from Lancashire local authority's 2005–06 Section 52 Budget Statement (Tables 1 and 2) submitted to the DfES.

Education Authority Areas

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of children in *(a)* England and *(b)* London are attending state (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools outside the local education authority area in which they live. [27760]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Percentage of pupils attending maintained schools outside of the local authority in which they reside

	Pupils resident in London	*England*
Primary[1]		
Number	38,947	112,195
Percentage	8.1	3.3
Secondary[2]		
Number	85,632	238,454
Percentage	22.6	8.0

[1] Includes middle deemed primary schools.
[2] Includes middle deemed secondary, CTCs and academies.
Source:
Annual School Census 2005 Final.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have claimed the education maintenance allowance in each year that it has been available; and how many she expects to claim it in 2006–07. [27956]

Maria Eagle: The numbers of students who received education maintenance allowances (EMA) are:

	Number
2001/02	115,700
2002/03	125,600
2003/04	127,900
2004/05	297,600

For the academic year 2005/06, we estimate that around 465,000 young people will be eligible to receive EMA on income grounds. This includes unwaged trainees on work based learning programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). From April 2006, those aged 16–19 on Entry to Employment or Programme Led Pathways, and their parents/carers, will receive the same package of financial support as is currently available to those who stay on in full time education ie EMA, child benefit, child tax credit and other related benefits.

For the academic year 2006/07, we estimate that around 555,000 young people will be eligible to receive EMA on income grounds.

So far, the national EMA scheme has been rolled out to 16 and 17-year-olds. However, in pilot areas EMA is also available to those aged 18. The national scheme will be rolled out to 18-year-olds in September 2006. Unwaged trainees aged 16–19 will be eligible from April 2006.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the education maintenance allowance was per capita in each year in which it has been available; and what it will be in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08. [27957]

Maria Eagle: The education maintenance allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment of £10, £20 or £30 dependant upon household income paid directly to young people who stay on in learning after they reach the statutory school leaving age. Young people may also receive bonuses of £100 if they remain on their course and make good progress with their learning.

The household income thresholds for EMA payments in the academic year 2004/05 were:

Up to £19,630 for the weekly £30 EMA payment

More than £19,630 but less than or equal to £24,030 for the weekly £20 EMA payment

More than £24,030 but less than or equal to £30,000 for the weekly £10 EMA payment

The current household income thresholds for EMA payments (effective from the academic year 2005/06) are:

Up to £20,270 for the weekly £30 EMA payment

More than £20,270 but less than or equal to £24,850 for the weekly £20 EMA payment

More than £24,850 but less than or equal to £30,000 for the weekly £10 EMA payment.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of students receiving the education maintenance allowance completed their qualifications in each year that the allowance has been available. [27958]

Maria Eagle: This information is not available as we do not separately record information on qualification completion rates for those claiming education maintenance allowances.

Education White Paper

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role she expects local education authorities to fulfil in relation to *(a)* promoting, *(b)* monitoring and *(c)* commenting on personalised learning in schools in relation to the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Education for All. [26814]

Jacqui Smith: We expect all local authorities in their new role as commissioners of education and under their duty to raise educational standards to be promoting and

monitoring personalisation of learning to ensure that all schools meet the needs of parents and pupils in their area.

Local authorities, through their National Strategies consultants and other school improvement staff, will play a vital role in promoting and spreading best practice about personalised learning to all their schools.

Under the New Relationship with Schools, local authorities will have access to up-to-date and authoritative information to monitor and assess how their schools are serving all their pupils: from the pupil-level data now available; from the School Improvement Partners (SIPs) they employ; and from the more frequent school inspections conducted by Ofsted. Also, through the SIP—a nationally accredited expert, typically a head teacher—local authorities will be able to support, challenge and hold school accountable locally around personalised learning specifically, and continuous school improvement, more generally.

Gifted and Talented Youth

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 118W, on gifted and talented youth, how many and what proportion of members of the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth attended *(a)* maintained and *(b)* non-maintained secondary schools in 2004–05, broken down by local education authority. [28185]

Jacqui Smith: The information, as supplied by the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, is set out in the following table.

		Members in independent schools	*Percentage of total NAGTY membership*	*Members in maintained schools*	*Percentage of total NAGTY membership*	*Total members*
		As at 31 March 2005				
England		218	6.991	50,820	93.009	54,640
North-east		7	0.399	3,340	6.113	3,558
841	Darlington	6	0.013	172	0.315	179
840	Durham	0	0.011	185	0.339	191
390	Gateshead	0	0.000	160	0.293	160
805	Hartlepool	74	0.000	363	0.664	363
806	Middlesbrough	11	0.135	88	0.161	162
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	0	0.020	707	1.294	718
392	North Tyneside	16	0.000	553	1.012	553
929	Northumberland	0	0.029	144	0.264	160
807	Redcar and Cleveland	0	0.000	191	0.350	191
393	South Tyneside	84	0.000	235	0.430	235
808	Stockton-on-Tees	20	0.154	248	0.454	332
394	Sunderland		0.037	294	0.538	314
North-west		432	0.791	6,610	12.097	7,042
889	Blackburn with Darwen	0	0.000	107	0.196	107
890	Blackpool	2	0.004	100	0.183	102
350	Bolton	0	0.000	167	0.306	167
351	Bury	2	0.004	7	0.013	9
875	Cheshire	0	0.000	573	1.049	573
909	Cumbria	6	0.011	280	0.512	286
876	Halton	0	0.000	62	0.113	62
340	Knowsley	0	0.000	24	0.044	24
888	Lancashire	52	0.095	595	1.089	647
341	Liverpool	215	0.393	642	1.175	857
352	Manchester	2	0.004	164	0.300	166
353	Oldham	0	0.000	527	0.964	527
354	Rochdale	0	0.000	210	0.384	210
355	Salford	0	0.000	160	0.293	160
343	Sefton	5	0.009	390	0.714	395
342	St. Helens	0	0.000	346	0.633	346
356	Stockport	2	0.004	71	0.130	73
357	Tameside	0	0.000	143	0.262	143
358	Trafford	0	0.000	110	0.201	110
877	Warrington	0	0.000	282	0.516	282
359	Wigan	0	0.000	890	1.629	890
344	Wirral	146	0.267	760	1.391	906
Yorkshire and the Humber		102	0.187	6,050	11.072	6,152
370	Barnsley	0	0.000	536	0.981	536
380	Bradford	0	0.000	376	0.688	376
381	Calderdale	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
371	Doncaster	0	0.000	424	0.776	424
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	0	0.000	628	1.149	628
810	Kingston Upon Hull, City of	21	0.038	238	0.436	259
382	Kirklees	1	0.002	409	0.749	410
383	Leeds	31	0.057	274	0.501	305
812	North East Lincolnshire	1	0.002	106	0.194	107
813	North Lincolnshire	0	0.000	275	0.503	275
815	North Yorkshire	21	0.038	983	1.799	1,004
372	Rotherham	0	0.000	242	0.443	242
373	Sheffield	20	0.037	659	1.206	679
384	Wakefield	5	0.009	152	0.278	157
816	York	2	0.004	748	1.369	750

		Members in independent schools	Percentage of total NAGTY membership	Members in maintained schools	Percentage of total NAGTY membership	Total members
		As at 31 March 2005				
East Midlands		174	0.318	6,167	11.287	6,341
831	Derby	1	0.002	324	0.593	325
830	Derbyshire	3	0.005	1,460	2.672	1,463
856	Leicester	155	0.284	483	0.884	638
855	Leicestershire	6	0.011	884	1.618	890
925	Lincolnshire	2	0.004	1,261	2.308	1,263
928	Northamptonshire	1	0.002	557	1.019	558
892	Nottingham	2	0.004	520	0.952	522
891	Nottinghamshire	0	0.000	678	1.241	678
857	Rutland	4	0.007	0	0.000	4
West Midlands		278	0.509	4,909	8.984	5,187
330	Birmingham	17	0.031	330	0.604	347
331	Coventry	5	0.009	606	1.109	611
332	Dudley	0	0.000	347	0.635	347
884	Herefordshire	2	0.004	32	0.059	34
333	Sandwell	0	0.000	249	0.456	249
893	Shropshire	2	0.004	406	0.743	408
334	Solihull	2	0.004	199	0.364	201
860	Staffordshire	113	0.207	650	1.190	763
861	Stoke-on-Trent	0	0.000	343	0.628	343
894	Telford and Wrekin	0	0.000	117	0.214	117
335	Walsall	0	0.000	281	0.514	281
937	Warwickshire	16	0.029	563	1.030	579
336	Wolverhampton	2	0.004	211	0.386	213
885	Worcestershire	119	0.218	575	1.052	694
East of England		383	0.701	7,205	13.186	7,588
820	Bedfordshire	7	0.013	511	0.935	518
873	Cambridgeshire	7	0.013	1,161	2.125	1,168
881	Essex	15	0.027	891	1.631	906
919	Hertfordshire	225	0.412	2,954	5.406	3,179
821	Luton	0	0.000	318	0.582	318
926	Norfolk	126	0.231	281	0.514	407
874	Peterborough	1	0.002	400	0.732	401
882	Southend-on-Sea	0	0.000	438	0.802	438
935	Suffolk	2	0.004	223	0.408	225
883	Thurrock	0	0.000	28	0.051	28
London		880	1.611	5,367	9.822	6,247
Inner London		54	0.099	1,705	3.120	1,759
202	Camden	0	0.000	210	0.384	210
201	City of London	12	0.022	0	0.000	12
204	Hackney	0	0.000	59	0.108	59
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	2	0.004	82	0.150	84
309	Haringey	1	0.002	42	0.077	43
206	Islington	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
207	Kensington and Chelsea	0	0.000	98	0.179	98
208	Lambeth	1	0.002	36	0.066	37
209	Lewisham	0	0.000	38	0.070	38
316	Newham	0	0.000	256	0.469	256
210	Southwark	5	0.009	244	0.447	249
211	Tower Hamlets	0	0.000	20	0.037	20
212	Wandsworth	9	0.016	481	0.880	490
213	Westminster	24	0.044	139	0.254	163
Outer London		826	1.512	3,662	6.702	4,488
301	Barking and Dagenham	0	0.000	173	0.317	173
302	Barnet	44	0.081	107	0.196	151
303	Bexley	0	0.000	218	0.399	218
304	Brent	29	0.053	356	0.652	385
305	Bromley	370	0.677	208	0.381	578
306	Croydon	34	0.062	256	0.469	290
307	Ealing	197	0.361	292	0.534	489
308	Enfield	0	0.000	110	0.201	110
203	Greenwich	17	0.031	38	0.070	55
310	Harrow	32	0.059	111	0.203	143
311	Havering	0	0.000	352	0.644	352
312	Hillingdon	2	0.004	114	0.209	116
313	Hounslow	0	0.000	430	0.787	430
314	Kingston upon Thames	2	0.004	101	0.185	103
315	Merton	2	0.004	4	0.007	6
317	Redbridge	6	0.011	412	0.754	418
318	Richmond upon Thames	3	0.005	130	0.238	133
319	Sutton	82	0.150	135	0.247	217
320	Waltham Forest	6	0.011	115	0.210	121
South-east		886	1.622	6,834	12.507	7,720
867	Bracknell Forest	4	0.007	44	0.081	48

		Members in independent schools	Percentage of total NAGTY membership	Members in maintained schools	Percentage of total NAGTY membership	Total members
		As at 31 March 2005				
846	Brighton and Hove	10	0.018	200	0.366	210
825	Buckinghamshire	21	0.038	182	0.333	203
845	East Sussex	48	0.088	110	0.201	158
850	Hampshire	16	0.029	894	1.636	910
921	Isle of Wight	2	0.004	99	0.181	101
886	Kent	55	0.101	1,529	2.798	1,584
887	Medway	0	0.000	89	0.163	89
826	Milton Keynes	0	0.000	31	0.057	31
931	Oxfordshire	45	0.082	699	1.279	744
851	Portsmouth	2	0.004	90	0.165	92
870	Reading	0	0.000	572	1.047	572
871	Slough	0	0.000	30	0.055	30
852	Southampton	3	0.005	130	0.238	133
936	Surrey	544	0.996	853	1.561	1,397
869	West Berkshire	1	0.002	235	0.430	236
938	West Sussex	22	0.040	176	0.322	198
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	113	0.207	176	0.322	289
872	Wokingham	0	0.000	695	1.272	695
		467	0.855	4,338	7.939	4,805
South-west		118	0.216	284	0.520	402
800	Bath and North East Somerset	2	0.004	30	0.055	32
837	Bournemouth	12	0.022	493	0.902	505
801	Bristol, City of	5	0.009	636	1.164	641
908	Cornwall	77	0.141	758	1.387	835
878	Devon	0	0.000	200	0.366	200
835	Dorset	1	0.002	278	0.509	279
916	Gloucestershire	0	0.000	0	0.000	0
420	Isles of Scilly	0	0.000	287	0.525	287
802	North Somerset	2	0.004	273	0.500	275
879	Plymouth	0	0.000	22	0.040	22
836	Poole	213	0.390	589	1.078	802
933	Somerset	0	0.000	140	0.256	140
803	South Gloucestershire	0	0.000	200	0.366	200
866	Swindon	0	0.000	64	0.117	64
880	Torbay	37	0.068	84	0.154	121
865	Wiltshire					

Looked-after Children

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on progress with the target for the level of education achieved by care leavers aged 19 years. [26783]

Maria Eagle: The Department publishes progress against all its outstanding PSA targets in its annual departmental report and autumn performance report. Progress against our last spending review targets for 2002, including the one referred to in this question, was reported most recently in the 2004 autumn report, published last November 2004, together with commentary where appropriate. A copy of the report is available from the House of Commons Library.

Public Service Agreements

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will assess progress on the public service agreement target to halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 years by 2010. [26789]

Jacqui Smith: The public service agreement to halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole is the joint responsibility of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, the Secretary of State for Health, and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Joint cross-departmental programme management arrangements have been established to drive action to meet this target. Progress against the target will be measured through the Health Survey for England. The baseline will be established for the years 2002–04: data from the 2004 Health Survey will be available this winter. The 2005 Health Survey data will be available next winter, 2006–07, for the period 2003–05. We shall assess progress at that point.

There is no single intervention for obesity. A wide variety of Government programmes make a valuable contribution to tackling the causes of obesity, including, from this Department, advice and support to parents in establishing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle delivered through Sure Start local programmes and children's centres, the Healthy Schools programme, new standards to improve the quality and healthiness of food in schools, increases in the time spent by pupils in PE and school sport delivered through the roll-out of the national PE, School Sports and Club Links strategy, and measures to improve the well-being and emotional health of children and to develop their social and emotional skills.

School Computers

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her most recent estimate is of the ratio of pupils to computers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools. [24483]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: Full-time equivalent number of pupils per computer[2], January 2005, England

	Number
Maintained primary	6.7
Maintained secondary	4.1

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

Sexual Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the responses to the Working Together to Safeguard Children consultation exercise. [28249]

Maria Eagle: The consultation ended on 28 October. The Department will publish an analysis of the consultation responses within three months of this date, in line with standard DfES practice.

Teachers

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers are employed within the state education sector teaching children aged five to 11 years. [27770]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held in the format requested.

The full-time equivalent number of regular primary school teachers, including middle deemed primary school teachers, and excluding nursery schools, in service in January 2005 was 194,800.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the potential impact of introducing banding to admission procedures upon under-achievement by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26055]

Jacqui Smith: Banding systems can have the effect of reducing inequalities in school intakes, ensuring fair access to all and reducing the clustering of disadvantaged pupils in certain schools. Combined with our proposals to extend entitlement to free school transport for more disadvantaged families, the introduction of fair banding could enable more children to access schools to which they were previously unable to gain admission.

Research has suggested that pupils' attainment at key stage 4 is affected by the characteristics of the school. Schools with a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils tend to have lower results, even after taking account of the prior attainment and other characteristics of the pupils measured in the pupil level annual schools census. Reducing the clustering of disadvantaged pupils in certain schools can benefit these pupils and give them a better chance of achieving their potential in secondary schools.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Casinos

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many representations she has received on increasing the number of regional casinos provided for in the Gambling Act 2005. [28828]

Mr. Caborn: We have received a number of letters from local authorities and others in support of an increase in the number of regional casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005.

Despite these representations, we do not believe the case has yet been made out for an increase, and we are therefore proceeding with implementation on the basis of the one regional casino specified in the Act.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what factors she will consider when reviewing the number of regional casinos provided for in the Gambling Act 2005. [28829]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have made it clear that they wish to take a cautious approach to the development of new casinos, in order to assess whether their introduction leads to an increase in problem gambling. The decision to reduce the number of regional casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005 from eight to one was consistent with this cautious approach.

We have not ruled out the possibility of asking Parliament to agree to more regional casino licences, up to a maximum of eight, being made available, if further evidence is presented to us that it is safe and prudent in regulatory terms to do so. A judgment would have to be made which balanced the risks of enlarging the number of people potentially affected against the risks of drawing the initial phase too narrowly to produce reliable evidence.

However, we do not believe that case has yet been made, and we have no plans to return to Parliament on this issue.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Casino Advisory Panel may recommend an increase in the number of regional casinos provided for in the Gambling Act 2005. [28830]

Mr. Caborn: No. The role of the independent casino advisory panel is to recommend the areas in which the 17 new casinos permitted by the Act should be located.

Commonwealth Institute Building

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public funding has been spent on the maintenance of the Commonwealth Institute building in each of the last five years; and if she will make further funding available for this purpose. [28340]

Mr. Lammy: The Commonwealth Institute ceased to be a non-departmental public body in 2000. It was established as a registered charity and company limited by guarantee with an endowment of £8 million, half of which was for maintenance of the building. In accordance with the severance agreements, it has received no public funding for the last five years. There are no plans to provide funds for maintenance of the building.

Government Art Collection

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 896W, on departmental spending, if she will itemise the works of art bought in 2004–05; and what the cost of each was. [28754]

Mr. Lammy: The works of art purchased by the Government Art Collection (GAC) in the 2004–05 financial year are listed in a separate document. I am arranging for copies of the document to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The GAC does not publish the prices paid for individual works of art purchased directly from the artist, individual or from a dealer as information of this nature would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests both of the GAC in its purchasing activities generally and of the relevant artist, individual or dealer. This practice is consistent with the practice of the national collections.

However, the prices paid for works of art acquired at auction are published by the auction houses, and in these cases are listed in the document referred to previously.

The Government Art Collection is part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; its acquisition policy is guided by the Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection which is a non-departmental public body. Members are both independent and ex-officio, including the directors of the National Galleries.

Olympic Games

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations her Department has made to the Treasury on funding for the British Olympic Association programme Clearing the Bar; and what her policy is on the source of baseline funding for the UK Olympic team in preparation for 2012. [25973]

Mr. Caborn: I understand that the British Olympic Association's report 'Clearing the Bar' will be available later this year. We will consider the report then in discussion with UK Sport, the Government's lead adviser on high performance sport.

Lottery funding is the primary source of public funding for UK's elite athletes. Some Exchequer funding supports UK Sport's World Class Performance Programme by focusing on corporate governance and organisational performance.

The Government are investing considerable amounts of public funding in high performance sport. In advance of the Beijing Olympic Games, UK Sport will invest a total of £121.6 million lottery and exchequer money in elite sport (2005–09). This includes investing £75.3 million in the World Class Performance Programme to support the National Governing Bodies in financing their performance plans, and £22.5 million for the Athletes Personal Awards scheme to help athletes pay their sporting and living costs.

Public Libraries

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* books, *(b)* videos, *(c)* DVDs and *(d)* CDs were lent by public libraries in (i) Tamworth and (ii) Staffordshire in each year since 1997. [27496]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally. However, the following table shows the number of loans of sound recordings (encompassing music and talking books) and videos and DVDs for Staffordshire for the period 1997–98 to 2003–04. This information is drawn from the Public Library Statistics, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. These are collected at library authority level and do not contain comparable details for the Tamworth borough area.

	Sound recordings	*Videos/DVDs*
1997–98	299,348	56,344
1998–99	287,702	65,518
1999–2000	266,706	75,927
2000–01	287,637	92,259
2001–02	329,090	126,336
2002–03	332,476	151,122
2003–04	316,509	167,565

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many employees in her Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28967]

Mr. Lammy: None of my employees were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October.

TRANSPORT

A19

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 597W, on the A19, how many fatalities took place on the A19 between Tyneside and Teesside in the last five years. [28758]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of fatalities between 2000 and 2004 on the A19 between Teesside and Tyneside are shown in the table.

	Fatalities
2000	5
2001	2
2002	4
2003	3
2004	6

Cycling

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what basis local authorities determine *(a)* along which stretches of major roads cycle lanes are provided and *(b)* how those cycle lanes are to interlink with other infrastructure, with particular reference to bus stops. [28082]

Derek Twigg: The provision of cycle lanes on major and other roads is a matter for individual highway authorities as is the way in which cycle lanes interlink with other public transport infrastructure such as rail and bus stations.

Advice to highway authorities on the planning and design of facilities for cycling is given in "Cycle-friendly Infrastructure" published jointly by the Department, the Institution of Highways and Transportation, the Cyclists Touring Club and the Bicycle Association. This publication provides specific advice on cycle lanes and how cycling infrastructure can be integrated with public transport.

The Department plans to publish an updated version of "Cycle-friendly Infrastructure" in 2006.

DfT Rail

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs were of winding up the Strategic Rail Authority and forming DfT Rail; and what the sources were of these funds. [27946]

Derek Twigg: The winding up of the Strategic Rail Authority will not be complete until the end of this financial year. As such, final outturn costs are not available. The current estimate of the financial costs and benefits is set out in the table.

£ million

	DfT extra costs	*SRA cost savings*	*SRA building savings*	*Transition costs*	*Net cost (benefit)*
2005–06	21.0	19.5	0	11.6	13.1
2006–07	34.8	39	4.1	0	(8.3)
2007–08	34.8	39	5.5	0	(9.7)
2008–09	34.8	39	5.5	0	(9.7)
2009–10	34.8	39	5.5	0	(9.7)
2010–11	34.8	39	5.5	0	(9.7)

Freight

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken to increase the use of rail to move freight. [28055]

Derek Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 71–73 WS, setting out the Government's policy towards rail freight.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether an assessment has been made of the steps taken by rail franchisees to increase the level of freight moved by rail. [28056]

Derek Twigg: Only passenger services are let by franchise. Freight services are provided by freight operating companies (FOCs) who use the rail network under 'open access' provisions.

Efforts to increase level of freight moved are therefore a matter of private sector competition in the marketplace.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of effects on other freight users of the Royal Mail's renegotiation of its night rail contracts. [28057]

Derek Twigg: The Royal Mail's re-negotiation of its rail contracts is a commercial matter for the parties involved.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much freight was moved by rail in 2004–05, broken down by *(a)* region, *(b)* rail franchisee and *(c)* time of day that the freight is moved. [28058]

Derek Twigg: The total amount of freight moved by rail in 2004–05 was 20.7 billion net tonne kilometres. The Department does not hold a breakdown of this figure into the categories specified.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost to the rail industry in upgrading freight services to accommodate high cube non-standard containers. [28084]

Derek Twigg: Overall cost estimates of network upgrades to accommodate larger containers are carried out on an individual project or route basis. The Department does not hold overall figures.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what compensation arrangements will be put in place for freight transporters affected by the Crossrail development. [20801]

Derek Twigg: If freight transporters' property rights are affected they will be entitled to compensation under the National Compensation Code. If freight services are disrupted by Crossrail construction, the appropriate rail industry arrangements will apply. In the unlikely event that contractual access rights need to be altered to allow for the operation of Crossrail, the Crossrail Bill provides for compensation.

M1/M18 (Roadworks)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when he expects the roadworks on the M1 motorway south of Junction 21 to be completed; what the original length of the works contract was; and whether the work is likely to be completed on of time; [27361]

(2) why the roadworks on the M1 motorway south of Junction 21 are not being carried out on a 24-hour basis. [27362]

Dr. Ladyman: The resurfacing work on a 6 km length of the M1 south of Junction 21 is due to be completed on 22 December. Work began on 8 July but delays due to bad weather mean that the original completion date of the end of November will not be met.

Work is being carried out 24 hours a day but, due to health and safety requirements and technical constraints associated with the materials used, most of the surfacing and concrete repairs are carried out in daylight hours. Non safety critical elements such as drainage work are carried out overnight.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the M18 motorway was closed at Junction 4 between Friday 16 September and Monday 19 September; for what reasons phased lane closures were not used; and if he will make a statement. [27360]

Dr. Ladyman: The M18 at Junction 4 was closed between 20.00 on Friday 16 September and 06.00 on Monday 19 September at the request of Doncaster metropolitan borough council to allow them to reconstruct and resurface the roundabout at this junction and resurface the A630.

The Highways Agency requested phased lane closures however Doncaster metropolitan borough council advised that a full closure was needed for safety reasons and to limit the duration of the disruption to road users.

Merseytravel

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what appraisal documents relating to Merseytram Line 2 he has received from Merseytravel and its consultants; when they were received; when they were audited by the Department and its consultants; what the conclusions of that audit were; and what steps he is taking in considering whether to give Merseytram Line 2 programme entry status. [27932]

Derek Twigg: The Department received business case submissions that included appraisal information from Merseytravel in August 2003 and February 2005. The latter updated the 2003 submission in accordance with changes to the scope and costs of the scheme, and also alterations were made to the appraisal to reflect changes in the Department's appraisal guidance. Merseytravel sent a number of additional documents necessary for the appraisal to meet the Department's guidance throughout February and March 2005. These included an Economic Impact Report, a Quantified Risk Assessment, and details of consultation on the environmental impacts of the scheme.

The Department has worked with Merseytravel on the appraisal of Merseytram Line 2 since 2003. The Department's assessment of the appraisal documentation began in early 2004, although before that, in 2003, it also audited the highway model used to underpin the appraisal results. The Department could not complete its assessment of the appraisal as the documentation was incomplete and it became apparent that the cost estimates for the project were changing. The 2005 documentation goes further towards addressing the Department's concerns, but the Department's focus this year has been to work with Merseytravel on the appraisal of line 1. The line 2 appraisal assumes that in its opening year line 1 will already be open and operational.

Therefore some of the benefits claimed in the line 2 appraisal are contingent on city centre sections that would be provided only if the line 1 project goes ahead.

Motorcycle Licences

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what his policy is towards EU proposals to raise the minimum age to qualify for a motorcycle licence for machines upwards of 125cc from 17 to 19 years; and if he will make a statement: [28517]

(2) what discussions he has had with EU Ministers about proposed changes to the provisions for obtaining motorcycle licences; and if he will make a statement. [28518]

Dr. Ladyman: The European Union proposals for new requirements in respect of motorcycles are part of the proposed new European Community Directive on driving licences. The Government are continuing to negotiate the terms of the Directive with European partners, through the Council of Ministers.

The proposals for motorcycle licensing are not as the UK Government would wish, but there is very strong support in other member states and the European Parliament for staged access arrangements for young motorcyclists wishing to drive larger machines, so it is likely that such a proposal will prevail.

The current proposals involve:

classifying motorcycles into three categories: small machines not exceeding 125cc cylinder capacity, power not exceeding 11 kW and power/weight ratio not exceeding 0.1 kW/kg; middle sized machines with power not exceeding 35 kW and power/weight not exceeding 0.2 kW/kg and not derived from a vehicle of more than double its power; and large machines;

introducing a system of staged access for new licences, such that the minimum age for access to middle sized machines would be at least two years greater than the minimum age for access to small machines.

As currently proposed these rules would come into effect in the UK no sooner than 2012. In the meantime the Government would have the opportunity to take advantage of flexibilities offered by the proposals to devise an appropriate system for training, testing and developing the experience of young motorcyclists in the UK. In devising such a system, the Governn.ent intend to continue consulting a wide range of stakeho'ders with interests in road safety, motorcycling, and the motorcycle industry.

National Port Traffic

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what factors will be considered in the report commissioned by the Department in respect of national port traffic forecasts to 2030. [28080]

Dr. Ladyman: The terms of reference for the report are available in the Libraries of the House.

National Road Network

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his definition is of the national road network for the purposes of his Department's transport policy. [28591]

Dr. Ladyman: The road network consists of strategic roads (motorways and all-purpose trunk roads) which are the responsibility of the Highways Agency and local roads which are the responsibility of local highway authorities.

In December 2004, we announced that for the purpose of considering decisions on major improvement schemes, the strategic road network would be split into two categories: routes of predominantly international and national importance and routes of predominantly regional importance. The criteria used for classifying routes as of international and national importance are as follows:

to have average daily traffic flows, along the length of the route, of more than 60,000 vehicles;

to link at least two of the top 20 English cities by population, or link one of the top 20 cities with an airport/seaport or Wales/Scotland;

to carry heavy goods vehicle traffic equal to or in excess of 15 per cent. as a percentage of all traffic as an average along the length of the route;

to be represented on the European Union's trans-European transport network.

It remains our policy that the strategic road network will continue to be protected, managed and maintained by the Highways Agency as a national network.

National Travel Survey

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average *(a)* number and *(b)* distance of trips as calculated by the National Travel Survey was by (i) car driver, (ii) car passenger, (iii) bus, (iv) walking and (v) other modes of transport for the purposes of (A) commuting, (B) business, (C) education, (D) escort education, (E) shopping and (F) other reasons, broken down by (1) sex and (2) those (v) under 17 years, *(w)* 17 to 29 years, (x) 30 to 49 years, *(y)* 50 to 59 years and *(z)* over 60 years in the latest two-year period for which survey results are available. [26150]

Ms Buck: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

North Sea Coastguard

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the process for selecting the next North Sea Coastguard Rescue Helicopter contract; what discussions the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has had with Highland and Islands local authorities on this matter; what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the current service provided; and what assessment has been made of the technical issues surrounding the use of AS332 Super Puma aircraft. [28985]

Dr. Ladyman: The contract currently at issue will ensure the continued provision of Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter services at the four coastguard bases at Sumburgh, Stornoway, Portland and Lee-on-Solent. The contract for all bases is yet to be let but a preferred bidder has been selected.

The procurement process used has followed European and Government procurement rules. These do not require direct consultation with local committees.

The contract requirement is based upon operational capability and does not specify helicopter types. A range of different types of aircraft have been put forward by bidders and these have all been assessed against capability criteria.

The preferred bidder for the five year contract is CMC (Scotia) Ltd. The helicopters under consideration are the Sikorsky S92 for Sumburgh and Stornoway and the Augusta Bell AB139 for Portland and Lee-on-Solent. Both aircraft and proposed methodologies meet the operational capability requirements. The endurance and speed of the new aircraft types exceed those of the current S61N.

The evaluation team considered carefully the relative merits of the Preferred bidder's proposal to use new aircraft in the SAR role, but concluded that benefits that would derive from the use of new technology offset any potential associated risks.

The MCA remains committed to the provision of high quality SAR services in the UK, and the contract will require the continued provision of those services to the Highlands and Islands. There will be no reduction in the standard of service as a result of the proposed new contract.

Port of London Authority

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the *(a)* functions and *(b)* existence of the Port of London Authority will be reviewed in the context of the review of the Greater London Authority's functions. [27934]

Dr. Ladyman: No.

Ports Police Forces

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the establishment of ports police forces. [27933]

Dr. Ladyman: Port police forces are constituted under local Acts which provide individual ports with their statutory powers. Decisions on establishing and maintaining existing ports police force are matters for the individual ports.

Rail Services

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he expects the target of improving punctuality and reliability of rail services to at least 85 per cent. by 2006 to be met. [27482]

Derek Twigg: Current performance remains on track to achieve or better the Industry Public Performance Measure Moving Annual Average (PPM MAA) target of 85 per cent. by March 2006.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the Office of the Rail Regulator to make a decision regarding the bid by Grand Central to run a rail service between Sunderland, Hartlepool and London. [28937]

Derek Twigg: I am advised by the Office of Rail Regulation that it hopes to reach a decision on the application by Grand Central by early February 2006.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on rail services in Kent with particular reference to issues raised with the Rail Minister at a meeting with hon. Members representing constituencies in Kent on 9 June. [28194]

Derek Twigg: The future pattern of rail services in Kent will be determined through the new Integrated Kent Franchise to be awarded before the end of this year. I have written to the hon. Member following our meeting.

Railways

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* total liabilities are and *(b)* estimated asset base is of Network Rail; and whether all the (i) assets and (ii) liabilities are on the Government balance sheet. [27041]

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the off-balance sheet liabilities are of Network Rail; and whether this amount is gross of any assets. [26226]

Derek Twigg: Full details of Network Rail's liabilities and assets are set out in the company's Annual Report 2005, available from the website:

www.networkrail.co.uk

Network Rail has been classified as a private sector entity by the Office for National Statistics for the purposes of the UK National Accounts. The Secretary of State provides credit support arrangements for Network Rail's borrowing which are recorded as contingent liabilities in the Department for Transport's accounts. As at 31 March 2005, these arrangements supported £15.6 billion of net borrowing by Network Rail.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether his Department is working on rail network access options for the proposed Crossrail services which would seek to ensure that all users of the rail network are provided with open and reliable access; [26525]

(2) for what reasons other rail network users have not been consulted on the development of rail network access options for the proposed Crossrail services; [26526]

(3) whether there are plans to use the acquisition power provided to the operators of Crossrail. [26527]

Derek Twigg: I shall publish a consultation paper describing the content of the Crossrail access option that will be developed and submitted to the Office of Rail Regulation for approval. The access option would in due course confer access rights for Crossrail services on Network Rail's network and the consultation paper describes how these rights relate to other users. In parallel a cross-industry timetabling working group is examining the timetable simulation work undertaken so far. It will identify and seek to resolve pinch points between the access needs of all operators, where possible by adjusting the timetable. If this is insufficient to resolve the problem it will report options to a railway forum that I chair.

The Crossrail Bill contains a variety of acquisition powers in relation to land and other rights in connection with the construction and operation of Crossrail. The Secretary of State, not the operator, has certain powers in relation to railway access rights.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is for ensuring the personal safety of travellers on railways; and what measures the Department has in place to ensure passenger safety is maintained. [27943]

Derek Twigg: The Department and the Health & Safety Executive's HM Railway Inspectorate work closely with the British Transport Police and the rail industry in seeking to maintain passenger safety.

We are committed to reducing crime and the fear of crime wherever it occurs in the transport system. For example in 1998 we launched the Secure Stations Scheme, which is designed to improve security at overground and underground stations for passengers and staff, and we have recently published guidance on improving personal security on trains.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress the Department has made towards making sure railways meet the requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 2004; how he measures progress; and what procedures will be in put place to deal with non-compliance. [27931]

Derek Twigg: Accessibility improvements are being delivered by different mechanisms such as franchising, major projects, investment in rolling stock and maintenance and renewal of the rail network.

The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998 (RVAR) made under Part 5 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 require that all new passenger rolling stock introduced from 1 January 1999 is accessible to disabled people, including wheelchair users. By the end of this year 4,500 rail vehicles will have been introduced which meet the requirements of those regulations.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires that from no later than 1 January 2020 all rail vehicles will have to comply. It also provides for a certification regime for new rail vehicles and an enforcement regime based on civil rather than the criminal sanctions provided in the 1995 Act. We plan to bring in those changes from the end of next year.

On stations, under Part 3 of the Act operators are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people do not find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to access their services. Where a disabled person believes that they have been discriminated against contrary to Part 3 they can bring a claim against the operator to the county court (in England and Wales) and to the sheriff's court (in Scotland).

From the end of 2006 it is proposed that similar duties should also apply to the train service itself though, given the provisions of the RVAR, those duties will not extend to making physical alterations to vehicles.

We will be publishing a strategy for rail accessibility in the new year which will include details of the initial allocation of the £370 million ring-fenced Access for All funding which we announced in March 2004 to deliver station access improvements over the next 10 years.

Road Accidents

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* fatal motor vehicle accidents, *(b)* fatalities, *(c)* motor vehicle accidents resulting in serious injury and *(d)* motor vehicle accidents requiring the attendance of an ambulance there were on the A47 Acle Straight in each of the last five years. [28043]

Dr. Ladyman: The data related to A47 Acle Straight are in a format supplied by the Highways Agency.

The period of data covers 1 January 2000 to 30 September 2005.

Total accidents involving personal injury

	Fatal	*Serious*	*Slight*	*Total*
2000	0	1	11	12
2001	0	7	24	31
2002	1	3	18	22
2003	0	2	18	20
2004	1	5	14	20
2005[1]	1	0	8	9
Total	3	18	93	114

Number of casualties involved in those accidents

	Fatal	*Serious*	*Slight*	*Total*
2000	0	1	14	15
2001	0	7	45	52
2002	1	3	28	32
2003	0	2	28	30
2004	1	7	21	29
2005[1]	1	1	20	22
Total	3	21	156	180

[1] 2005 data are current up to 30 September 2005.

The Highways Agency does not hold information on the attendance of ambulances at accidents. The Ambulance Service may be able to provide this information.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatal automobile accidents occurred in Coventry South in the last 12 months. [28063]

Dr. Ladyman: There were two fatal accidents involving cars in Coventry South in 2004, the last 12 months for which data is available.

Road Maintenance

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the relationship between the relative level of expenditure on routine road maintenance by highway authorities and the cost of capital road replacement works by those authorities. [27311]

Dr. Ladyman: For local authorities funding for routine road maintenance is provided through the formula spending share element of revenue support grant and for capital road maintenance through the maintenance block element of the Local Transport Plan settlement. Neither of these provisions is ring fenced. Routine maintenance consists of work to keep the road network safe and in good condition, for example, minor repairs, drainage cleansing, sign cleaning, grass cutting, gritting in winter, street lighting work and energy, etc.

Capital maintenance consists of structural work to strengthen and renew carriageways, footways, bridges and street lighting columns.

The following table shows the outturns for revenue and capital maintenance in England outside London for the six years to 2003–04, the last year for which outturn figures are available.

Road maintenance in London is a matter for the Mayor and the Greater London Assembly. Figures for motorways and trunk road maintenance are not comparable with local roads as the method of accounting used, renewals accounting, is different.

Local highway maintenance expenditure—England excluding London

£ million

	Capital outturn	*Revenue outturn*	*Total outturn*
1998–99	256	1,358	1,614
1999–2000	308	1,394	1,702
2000–01	373	1,429	1,802
2001–02	648	1,401	2,049
2002–03	815	1,278	2,093
2003–04	795	1,362	2,157

Speed Cameras

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the amount of revenue raised from speed cameras in Coventry. [28062]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department's information on fines following offences detected by safety cameras (both speed and red light cameras) relates to the totals for safety camera partnerships, and not to individual camera sites or boroughs.

Coventry is part of the West Midlands Safety Camera Partnership. The following table shows the total of fines following offences detected by the West Midlands partnership since joining the national programme in October 2002:

	Total fines
2002–03 (6 months)	704,520
2003–04	2,760,000

As a result of the partnership joining in October 2002, the total fines collected in 2002–03 relate to six months only and reflect the fact that the partnership was in its early stages. Figures for 2004–05 will be published on the DfT website in due course.

Train Operating Companies

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which company holds each rail franchise; what targets each has *(a)* met and *(b)* missed; and when each franchise (i) began and (ii) will expire. [25642]

Derek Twigg: Details of franchise holders and the start and end dates of their franchises are set out in the table.

Franchise agreements contain numerous targets relating to service quality, punctuality, financial performance, customer service and a range of other issues. It is not practicable to list them all here. However, customer service information is available from the Office of Rail Regulation's website and punctuality data from Network Rail's website.

Franchise agreements and associated documents are available through the Department for Transport's Public Register.

Franchise operator	*Franchisee*	*Franchise start date*	*Franchise end date*
West Coast Trains Limited	Virgin Rail Group Ltd.	19 February 1997	31 March 2012
Crosscountry Trains Limited	Virgin Rail Group Ltd.	5 January 1997	11 November 2007
Chiltern	M40 Trains Ltd.	3 March 2002 (with a shrink-back provision if future enhancements are not met. At present the minimum franchise term is confirmed at 12 years)	31 December 2021
Central Trains Limited	National Express Group plc.	2 March 1997	31 March 2006
Silverlink Train Services Limited	National Express Group plc.	6 February 1997	15 October 2006
Southern	Govia Ltd.	12 May 2003	31 December 2009 (or an earlier date if notice served on franchise *(c)*
Gatwick Express	National Express Group plc.	28 April 1996	29 April 2011
First Great Western Link	Great Western Holdings Ltd. (First Group plc.)	1 April 2004	1 April 2006
First Great Western Trains	Great Western Holdings Ltd. (First Group plc.)	5 February 1996	1 April 2006
Arriva Trains Wales	Arriva Trains Ltd.	8 December 2003	14 October 2018
C2c Rail Limited	National Express Group plc.	26 May 1996	25 May 2011
Wessex (Interim franchise agreement)	National Express Group plc.	14 October 2001	31 March 2006
Midland Mainline	National Express Group plc.	28 April 1996	26 April 2008
WAGN	National Express Group plc.	Original Franchise Agreement made on 5 December 1996 extended on 1 April 2004	Original termination date 1 April 2004 extended to 1 April 2006
Thameslink	Govia Ltd.	Original Franchise Agreement made on 10 February 1997 extended on 1 April 2004	Original termination date 1 April 2004 extended to 1 April 2006
Trans Pennine Express	First/Keolis TransPennine Holdings Ltd.	1 February 2004	1 February 2012 (with a possible five years extension of not more than 65 reporting periods)
ONE	National Express Group plc.	1 April 2004	1 April 2014
South West Trains	Stagecoach Group plc.	2 February 2004	2 February 2007
South Eastern Trains	SET (Holdings) Ltd.	9 November 2003	1 April 2006

Franchise operator	Franchisee	Franchise start date	Franchise end date
Northern	Northern rail Ltd.	12 December 2004	18 September 2011
GNER	Great North Eastern Rail Ltd.	1 May 2005	1 May 2012 (with an automatic further 3 years if targets are met)[1]
Island Line	Stagecoach Group plc.	4 February 2004	4 February 2007

[1] but to be further extended to 11 November 2007

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultations have taken place with the rail franchises on safety; how much each franchisee spent on safety in 2004–05; what assessment has been made by the Department about the adequacy of this spending. [26514]

Derek Twigg: As a condition of their licence from the Office of Rail Regulation, train operators are required to have a Railway Safety Case which has been assessed and accepted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), or an agreed exemption. Operators' safety cases are reviewed by HSE every three years. In addition, during the re-franchising process HSE is consulted and provides advice to the Department for Transport on the quality of bidders' proposals in terms of health and safety. Spending on safety is not separately accounted for by train operators.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what level of liaison is required to take place between rail franchises and passenger groups; how many of these meetings have taken place; and what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of such meetings. [26517]

Derek Twigg: Franchise agreements requires train operators to consult with statutory consumer bodies over any changes that will impact on passengers. These consumer bodies are the Rail Passengers Council and London TravelWatch. Both of these organisations are able to pursue any dissatisfaction they may have on the effectiveness of such meetings with the Department for Transport and the Office of Rail Regulation, as the appropriate enforcement bodies. No such representations have been received.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what percentage of train operating companies' total costs were represented by labour costs in each year between 1997 and 2004; and if he will make a statement; [26946]

(2) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total combined operating profit of train operating companies before interest and tax (i) without and (ii) including subsidies was in each year between 1997 and 2004; and if he will make a statement; [26947]

(3) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total combined amount of dividends paid by train operating companies to their parent companies was in each year between 1997 and 2004; and if he will make a statement; [26948]

(4) how many emergency bailouts of train operating companies there were in each year between 1997 and 2004; what the total cost of each bailout was; and if he will make a statement; [26950]

(5) what the total amount of subsidies paid by the Strategic Rail Authority to train operating companies was in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1998, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2000, *(e)* 2001, *(f)* 2002, *(g)* 2003 and *(h)* 2004; and if he will make a statement. [26951]

Derek Twigg: I will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent to which franchising agreements between Network Rail and train operating companies *(a)* ensure value for money, *(b)* encourage competition in the railway industry, *(c)* are in the interest of taxpayers, *(d)* protect the interest of passengers and *(e)* transfer risk to the private sector. [26953]

Derek Twigg: Franchising agreements are made between the Department and the train operators rather than with Network Rail.

The Department seeks to ensure that the interests of passengers and the taxpayer are protected through the franchise specification and tendering process. The assessment of value for money is undertaken at the point of franchise re-letting when the costs and benefits of propositions from franchise bidders are evaluated.

The new franchise template is designed to ensure that an appropriate level of risk is transferred to the private sector.

Competition within the rail industry is secured through the competitive tendering process for franchises. The delivery of these benefits is monitored and enforced through continuous management of the franchise contract, which is carried out by a specialist team within the Department.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what residual interest he retains in the pension funds of the train operating companies; and if he will make a statement. [27650]

Derek Twigg: Train operating companies (TOCs) participate in the Railways Pension Scheme, with generally separate sections for each TOC-employer. It is the responsibility of each TOC to manage the pension arrangements for its staff, in accordance with general pensions legislation and the specific legislation relating to railway pensions.

The Secretary of State's interest in the pension funds of the TOCs is contained in the terms of the franchise agreement with each franchise holder.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial requirements are made of rail franchisees during the tendering process. [28053]

Derek Twigg: No additional financial burden is placed on incumbent franchisees during the tendering process. They are, however, required to provide access to information (including financial and operational information) in connection with the preparation for the re-letting of a franchise and to provide information in response to bidders' clarification questions during the bidding process.

Violence Against Passengers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers travelling by *(a)* rail, *(b)* bus and *(c)* taxi have been the victims of offences of violence in (i) Surrey and (ii) England in each of the last 10 years. [25694]

Derek Twigg: The number of victims of violence recorded by the British Transport Police over the last seven financial years in Surrey and England is shown in the table.

	Surrey	*England*
1998–99	154	7,847
1999–2000	140	8,649
2000–01	179	8,933
2001–02	264	9,603
2002–03	272	9,838
2003–04	324	11,177
2004–05	344	11,642

Comparable figures are not available for years before 1998–99, due to a change in Home Office counting rules.

The Department does not collect statistics on the number of passengers who have been victims of violent offences while travelling on buses or in taxis.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants with recorded job entries in the UK, excluding Pathways to Work pilot areas, *(a)* returned to incapacity benefits and *(b)* claimed jobseeker's allowance within (i) one month (ii) two months (iii) six months and (iv) 12 months in the latest period for which data are available. [28988]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measure of sustainability for recorded job entries his Department uses for assessing job entries for people on incapacity benefits and severe disability allowance in *(a)* Pathways to Work pilot areas and *(b)* the UK excluding Pathways areas. [28990]

Mrs. McGuire: The definition of sustained employment used in the new deal for disabled people, where referral has been made through a Job Broker, is employment for 13 out of 39 weeks.

Information on incapacity benefits recipients returning to sustained employment is not currently available. However, this will be examined as part of the evaluation of the Pathways to Work pilots and we will publish this information once it becomes available.

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Scotland do not receive a social security benefit. [28452]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many compensation payments have been made by the Child Support Agency for maladministration since 1 January 1998; how many of these exceeded *(a)* £1,000, *(b)* £10,000, *(c)* £50,000 and *(d)* £90,000; and if he will make a statement. [28478]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 15 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many compensation payments had been made by the Child Support Agency for maladministration since 1st January 1998; how many of these had exceeded *(a)* £1,000 *(b)* £10,000 *(c)* £50,000 and *(d)* £90,000 and if he would make a statement.

The CSA does not hold sufficiently robust information for dates before 1 December 2001 for me to give you the data over the entire period requested. I apologise for this but can give you information on payments, in accordance with the Departmental Guide to Financial Redress for Maladministration, made since 1 December 2001 up until 10 November 2005.

The table below contains the available information:

Total number of payments	£
Made since 1 December 2001	35,558
Under £1,000	33,227
Between £1,000 and £9,999	2,289
Between £10,000 and £49,999	42
Over £50,000	0

Please note that whilst the minimum that we pay on consolatory payment is £25, there may also be awards for less than that amount to reimburse costs such as telephone charges that a client may have incurred in contacting the Agency. The figure of 33,227 contains these amounts.

I hope this is helpful.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Office from May 1997 broken down by act. [28986]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is as follows.

(a) Social Security Act 1998

(i) section 60 substitutes a new section 113 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 which confers power for regulations under defined social security legislation to provide that any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any provision contained in the regulations shall be guilty of an offence;

(ii) section 61 substitutes a new section 114 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 which makes it an offence for a person to be knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of contributions which he or another person is liable to pay;

(b) Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999

(i) section 9 inserts a new section 111A into the Pension Schemes Act 1993 (monitoring of employers payments to personal pension schemes), subsection (12) of which makes it an offence

for a person to be knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of the direct payment arrangements under that section so far as they affect deductions on behalf of the employee;

(ii) section 10(1) substitutes for section 49(8) of the Pension Schemes Act 1993 new subsections (8) to (13), subsection (11) of which makes it an offence for a person to be knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of the obligation imposed by subsection (8).

(c) Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000

(i) section 13 inserts a new section 14 A into the Child Support Act 1991 which makes it an offence for a person required to comply with regulations under section 4 (4) and 7(5) of that Act, or persons specified in regulations under section 14(1)*(a)* of that Act, to make a representation which he knows to be false or to provide or knowingly cause or allow to be provided a document or other information which he knows to be false;

(ii) section 16(5) also amends section 27(3) of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 to make it an offence for a person to fail to produce his driving licence and its counterpart to a court as required by section 40 B of the Child Support Act 1991;

(d) Social Security Fraud Act 2001

(i) section 2(3)*(a)* inserts a new paragraph (ab) into subsection (1) of section 111 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 to make it an offence for a person to refuse or neglect to comply with any requirements under section 109BA or 110A (power of the Secretary of State or local authority to require electronic access to information) or with any requirement of any arrangement entered under that section to allow authorised officers access;

(ii) section 16 amends section 111A of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (dishonest representations for obtaining benefit etc.) to extend the circumstances in which a person is to be guilty of an offence if there has been a change of circumstances which he knows will affect entitlement to benefit (either his or another person's), the change is not one which is excluded by regulations from the changes which are required to be notified, and he dishonestly fails, or dishonestly causes or allows another person to fail, to give a prompt notification of the change;

(iii) section 16 also amends section 112 of that Act (false representations for obtaining benefit etc) to extend the circumstances in which a person is to be guilty of an offence if he fails or causes another to fail to give a prompt notification of any change which he knows affect entitlement to any benefit;

(e) Pensions Act 2004

(i) section 77(1) makes it an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to refuse to provide information or produce a document when required to do so under section 72 by the Regulator;

(ii) section 77(2) makes it an offence for a person to intentionally delay or obstruct an inspector exercising powers under sections 73 to 75 or to refuse to produce or secure the production of any document or to answer a question or provide information when required;

(iii) section 77(5) makes it an offence for a person intentionally or without reasonable excuse to alter, suppress or destroy any document which he is required to produce under section 72 or 75;

(iv) section 80 makes it an offence for a person to knowingly or recklessly provide the Regulator with information which is false or misleading in a material particular in certain specified circumstances;

(v) section 82 makes it an offence for a person to disclose restricted information in contravention of that section;

(vi) section 193 makes it an offence for a person to fail to provide information to the Board of the Pension Protection Fund or to obstruct a person appointed by the Board or to refuse to produce a document in circumstances similar to those described under (i) to (iii);

(vii) section 195 and 197 respectively make similar provision as in (iv) and (v) for providing information which is false or misleading to the Board or disclosing restricted information;

(viii) section 256 makes it an offence for a trustee or manager to be reimbursed out of the assets of a pension schemes for fines or penalties in contravention of that section;

(ix) Schedule 4, paragraph 11 makes it an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to refuse or fail to attend or to give evidence to the Pensions Regulator Tribunal or to alter, suppress or destroy any document which he is liable to produce to the Tribunal or to refuse to produce a document;

(f) Disability Discrimination Act 2005

(i) section 10(3) inserts a new subsection (2B) into section 16B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which makes it an offence for a person to knowingly or recklessly make a statement to the effect that publication of a particular advert would not be unlawful by reason of the operation of subsection(2);

(ii) section 7(2) *(b)* prospectively adds to the definition of relevant document in section 49 (1) of the 1995 Act a rail vehicle accessibility compliance certificate so as to make it an offence for such a document to be forged, altered etc or for a false statement to be made for the purpose of obtaining such a certificate;

(iii) section 8(2) prospectively inserts a new subsection (5) into section 49 of the 1995 Act to make it an offence to falsely pretend to be a person authorised to inspect rail vehicles;

(iv) section 9 inserts a new section 21A into the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 in relation to badges issued outside Great Britain, subsections (4) and (8) of which respectively make it an offence to display a badge purporting to be a recognised badge unless it is a recognised badge and is displayed in accordance with regulations and to fail, without reasonable excuse, to produce a badge when required to do so by a constable or enforcement officer.

Denise Christina Arathoon

Andrew Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants of *(a)* income support and *(b)* other benefits are affected by the outcome of Denise Christina Arathoon *v.* Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; and what estimate he has made of the overall cost to his Department of the judgment of the Court of Appeal of 24 June. [24522]

Mr. Plaskitt: We estimate that the number of claimants affected will be less than 2,000. It is not possible to break this down by benefit. The total overall estimated cost is £110,350 which consists of estimated Departmental legal costs of £10,350 plus additional benefit expenditure estimated at £100,000.

Departmental Expenditure

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will break down by expenditure and capital the 2003–04 Departmental Expenditure Limit baseline against which the financial savings of £960 million from annual efficiencies outlined in the Spending Review 2004 are calculated. [27633]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The information requested can be found in the DWP Departmental Report 2005, Chapter 6, Table 1, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will provide a financial reconciliation between the Department of Work and Pensions 2004–05 Capital Budget of £435 million in the 2004 Spending Review (Table 19.1) and the 2004–05 estimated outturn Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit of £299 million in the Department of Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2005. [27635]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The reason for the difference between the capital budget of £435 million in the 2004 Spending Review (Table 19.1) and the estimated outturn of £299 million was due to delayed spending on this budget as a result of rescheduling activities and associated expenditure on the Department's Change Programme, primarily on the rationalisation and modernisation of the estate and IT projects.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will provide a financial reconciliation between the Department of Work and Pensions 2004–05 Resource Budget of £7,849 million in the 2004 Spending Review (Table 19.1) and the 2004–05 estimated outturn Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit of £8391million in the Department of Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2005. [27636]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Department for Work and Pensions 2004–05 Resource Budget of £7,849 million represents the Department's funding budget as calculated for Spending Review 2004 baseline purposes. This excluded the Department's stock of accumulated end year flexibility and made adjustments for other non recurrent funding streams. The reconciliation between the Resource Budget and the estimated outturn on the Departmental Expenditure Limit of £8,391 million is set out in the table.

	£ million
Resource budget per 2004 Spending Review (Table 19.1)	7,849
Use of end year flexibility—main items:	
Welfare modernisation programme	115
Roll out of Jobcentre Plus offices	87
Grant spending on European social fund programmes	67
Housing and council tax benefit administration grants	48
Spending Review 2004 Adjustments:	
Assumed transfer of resources from revenue to capital—variance	152
Other adjustments—non recurrent funds	60
Other items	13
Resource Outturn per Departmental Report 2005	8,391

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will break down the leasehold improvements expenditure for 2003–04 and the estimated outturn for 2004–05 noted in Table 4 of the Department of Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2005 (Cm 6539) *(a)* by activity, *(b)* leasehold property and *(c)* expenditure type. [27637]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The figures in Table 4 are not the in year expenditure, rather they are the closing net book value of the asset category. That is the value of the accumulated expenditure less the accumulated depreciation.

2003–04 Leasehold improvements spend

	£ million
Opening net book value	12
Reclassification	107
Additions	237
Less Depreciation	(26)
Closing net book value	330

The leasehold improvements relate to a programme of refurbishment of the Jobcentre Plus customer facing offices following the creation of the agency from the former Employment Service and Benefits Agency. The expenditure includes items such as structural improvements, flooring, ceilings, signage, painting and decorating.

The reclassification figure included above relates to refurbishment costs that were previously included under the asset category of fixtures and fittings, and more accurately recorded as leasehold improvements in 2003–04.

2004–05 Estimated outturn

	£ million
Opening net book value	118
Additions	162
Less Depreciation	(21)
Closing net book value	259

The estimated figures for 2004–05 were prepared at the time of the Spending Review 2004 calculations and are subject to subsequent changes in forecast outturns and adjustments, such as reclassifications, hence the variance on closing and opening book values between finance years.

Housing Benefit Sanctions

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will list those that *(a)* rejected and *(b)* supported the introduction of housing benefit sanctions for those guilty of antisocial behaviour in responding to consultation on this proposal in August 2003; [28808]

(2) how many and what proportion of *(a)* local authority, *(b)* registered social landlord, *(c)* private landlord and *(d)* Community Safety Partnership respondents to his Department's consultation in August 2003 on housing benefit sanctions against those guilty of antisocial behaviour were against the proposals; [28809]

(3) what view the Social Security Advisory Committee expressed in response to his Department's consultation in August 2003 on housing benefit sanctions against those guilty of antisocial behaviour; [28810]

(4) for what reasons his Department decided not to implement housing benefit sanctions for those guilty of antisocial behaviour following consultation in 2003; and if he will make a statement; [28811]

(5) what assessment his Department made of the potential impact of housing benefit sanctions on family members of a person committing antisocial behaviour who were not themselves responsible for antisocial behaviour. [28812]

Mr. Plaskitt: The outcome of the consultation on housing benefit sanctions for antisocial behaviour was published on 27 January 2004 and an analysis of responses is available in the Library. This analysis sets out which organisations supported the proposals or not, including the response from the Social Security Advisory Committee. On the same day, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Chris Pond, issued a written ministerial statement explaining the Government's reasons for deciding not to proceed 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 9–10WS.

In considering whether to proceed with a sanction, the Department looked at a number of issues, including the implications of sanctioning family members not involved in antisocial behaviour. The Department did not assess what the practical effect of a sanction would be although had we gone ahead, we would have tested the impact by piloting first.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23494]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has registered) in excess of 600 projects since its inception, including initiatives that were first registered by the Department for Social Security and the Department for Employment and Education. DWP does not differentiate between information technology projects and other types of project such as business change. Currently the Department has in excess of 100 individual projects, which embraces both information technology and business change.

All Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway Reviews are conducted on a confidential basis for the senior responsible owner (SRO) and ownership of the report rests with the SRO. This approach promotes an open and honest exchange between the programme/project and review teams delivering maximum added value. The DWP has a strong record in adopting OGC policy and best practice initiatives and all the Department's mission critical/high and medium risk projects are subject to OGC Gateway Reviews. The Department does not publish Gateway Review Reports as a matter of course, in line with OGC policy. OGC and Departments have received a number of Gateway requests under Freedom of Information and the first of these is currently on appeal to the Information Commissioner.

Lone Parents

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of lone parents on income support have been on the benefit for *(a)* less than two years, *(b)* less than five years and *(c)* less than 10 years. [25260]

Margaret Hodge: The information is in the table.

Lone parents in receipt of income support, by duration: Great Britain May 2005

Duration	*Number of lone parents*	*Proportion of lone parents*
All	787,400	100.0
Up to 2 years	279,600	35.5
2 years and up to 5 years	223,300	28.4
5 years and up to 10 years	169,900	21.6
10 years and over	114,600	14.6

Notes:

1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Percentages are given to one decimal place.
3. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
4. 'Lone Parents' are defined as single recipients of income support aged under 60, with a child under 16, and who are not in receipt of incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Pensions

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the net cost to his Department of raising the level of the basic state pension to that of minimum income under the Pension credit system. [23287]

Mr. Timms: The additional cost to the Exchequer, net of savings in income-related benefits and additional tax revenues, of paying a basic state pension at the rate of the guarantee credit element of pension credit is £8.1 billion in 2006–07.

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain in 2005–06 price terms, using the GDP deflator index, rounded to the nearest £100 million. It assumes that the policy change takes place from 2006–07.

2. The costs which are all net take into account income-related benefit offsets such as pension credit and housing benefit, and tax offsets, which are calculated using the DWP simulation model and April 2006 benefit rates and are projected forward.

3. Gross costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with Budget 2005 assumptions and use 2003 based population projections.

4. The standard method of treatment of couples and category B rates were used. This implies that the category B rates are not the guarantee credit couple-single rates, but approx 60 per cent. of the single rate.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will change the policy on the starting date for an individual's state pension from the Monday after their 65th birthday, to the day of their 65th birthday. [26109]

Mr. Timms: Entitlement to state pension begins with the pay-day on or following the day on which the individual attains state pension age—currently age 60 for women and 65 for men. The payday is commonly a Monday. There are no plans to change these arrangements.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much tax relief was given to people with stakeholder pensions in each year since their introduction; [26147]

(2) what representations he has received on *(a)* the future of stakeholder pensions and *(b)* the level of tax relief levels they receive. [26218]

Mr. Timms: The last written consultation exercise undertaken on stakeholder pensions was on the 2005 amendment regulations, which introduced provisions on lifestyling, and the charge cap. The consultation ended on 17 December 2004, and we received 22 responses to the exercise, none of which commented on the tax relief.

The estimates for the cost of tax relief on contributions to stakeholder pensions for each year are in the table.

	£ million
2001–02	250
2002–03	400
2003–04	600
2004–05	750

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether research has been commissioned into the pension prospects for *(a)* lone parents and *(b)* black and minority ethnic women over the next 20 years. [26545]

Mr. Timms: The report "Women and pensions: The evidence" published on 2 November, and available in the Library, provides a detailed analysis of women's pension position and draws together the latest research findings on key influences on women's ability to build up pension entitlement. The report considers the impact of lone parenthood and family caring responsibilities and examines pension entitlement among ethnic minority women.

The Department for Work and Pensions has also commissioned new research which will examine the expectations, priorities and saving and working decisions among both working-age people and pensioners from ethnic minority groups.

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Scotland are in receipt of a state pension. [28453]

Mr. Timms: The information is in the table.

Number of people in Scotland in receipt of a state pension as at 31 May 2005

	Number
Total	939,700
Female	602,300
Male	337,400

Note:
Case load figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

State Pension Claimants

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of the UK state pension were resident in *(a)* Pakistan and *(b)* the Indian sub-continent in the last year for which figures are available. [26850]

Mr. Timms: The information is in the table.

Country	Number of recipients of UK state pension as at 31 May 2005
Pakistan	4,900
India	4,100
Bangladesh	2,600
Nepal	[1]
Bhutan	[1]
Sri Lanka	600
Maldive Islands	[1]

[1] Less than 50.

Note:
Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate. Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Telephone Helplines

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many telephone calls were made to the pension credit helpline in each month from April 2001 to September 2005; how many of these calls *(a)* were handled, *(b)* received an engaged tone and *(c)* were abandoned; and if he will make a statement. [24539]

Mr. Timms: The administration of The Pension Service is a matter for the Chief Executive, Miss Alexis Cleveland. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Alexis Cleveland to Mr. David Laws, dated 15 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many calls were made to the Pension Credit Application Line (PCAL) in each month from April 2001 to September 2005; and how many of these calls were *(a)* handled *(b)* received an engaged tone and *(c)* abandoned. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Pension Service.

Advance applications to Pension Credit commenced in April 2003 and PCAL opened their lines to the public on 7th April 2003. Since its opening, the Pension Credit Application Line has answered over five million phone calls up to the end of September 2005.

I am sorry to say that an error has been identified in my previous reply to your question "To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pension, how many calls made to the Pension Service have *(a)* met an engaged tone *(b)* been received and *(c)* been handled by an adviser in the last 24 months broken down by call centre. [18621]". The correct figure for the sub total calculations for PCAL, calls answered should be 5,083,496 and no. 5,083,456.

The following table shows calls received at the centre, calls answered by an advisor; calls receiving an engaged tone and calls abandoned. The data is from 7th April 2003 until the end of September 2005.

	Calls offered	Calls handled by an adviser	Calls receiving an engaged tone	Abandoned: Before adviser queue	Abandoned: In adviser queue
April 2003	20,811	19,836	n/a	n/a	975
May 2003	32,752	32,733	n/a	n/a	18
June 2003	60,235	58,446	n/a	n/a	386
July 2003	118,223	113,483	n/a	n/a	948
August 2003	181,861	177,540	n/a	n/a	313
September 2003	427,896	380,488	n/a	13,699	15,794
October 2003	482,782	451,642	1	14,134	13,370
November 2003	318,278	303,385	45	11,841	2,831
December 2003	193,895	184,057	0	7,846	1,165
January 2004	495,558	458,136	3	24,547	12,079
February 2004	433,790	402,247	8	18,734	11,839
March 2004	430,072	404,959	0	17,814	8,154
April 2004	346,887	302,121	1	9,102	31,934
May 2004	234,576	224,137	0	6,194	2,834
June 2004	315,197	298,392	0	7,455	8,175
July 2004	239,982	228,406	0	5,829	3,521
August 2004	151,541	146,199	4	3,605	1,402
September 2004	174,322	158,307	0	3,979	11,843
October 2004	127,126	120,822	0	3,688	2,607
November 2004	102,542	97,027	0	2,847	1,751
December 2004	75,028	72,076	0	1,441	1,292
January 2005	93,593	89,721	0	1,959	1,689
February 2005	112,970	93,929	0	3,618	7,806
March 2005	138,049	129,007	1	2,154	6,788
April 2005	74,841	71,299	0	1,660	1,857
May 2005	55,081	52,562	0	1,325	1,145
June 2005	60,249	57,641	0	1,418	1,012
July 2005	94,737	91,213	1	1,614	1,831
August 2005	92,868	88,183	0	1,629	2,912
September 05	107,418	102,101	0	1,901	3,590
Total April 2003 to September 2005	5,793,160	5,410,095	64	170,033	161,861

Note:
Some clients abandon their call during the PCAL recorded welcome message. These calls are not available to agents to answer, and therefore in terms of PCAL performance against targets, calls abandoned during the recorded message are not included in the abandoned calls calculation. This can result in calls answered and abandoned not totalling calls offered.

Widow's Benefit

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will compensate fathers who were widowed before 9 April 2001 following the European Court of Human Rights ruling on widows' benefits. [26220]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Government will consider the offer of friendly settlements on claims for discrimination relating to widowed mothers' allowance and widow's payment, but only to those widowers who have an admissible case in the European Court of Human Rights and who satisfy the benefit conditions and made their original claim at the correct time. Widowers who were unsuccessful in the recent cases before the House of Lords could have taken their case to Europe provided they had done so by 4 November 2005 (six months from the House of Lords ruling). We will go on to consider these cases also.

Any claims for widows payment or widowed mothers allowance by a man whose wife died before 9 April 2001 and who has not previously made an application to the European Court or was not involved with the domestic cases will now be too late. We have been guided by previous admissibility decisions of the European Court of Human Rights in widowers' cases.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people over 80 years of age have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* Great Yarmouth constituency, *(b)* Norfolk, *(c)* the eastern region and *(d)* England and Wales since their inception; [28017]

(2) how many people have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* Great Yarmouth constituency, *(b)* Norfolk, *(c)* the eastern region and *(d)* England and Wales since their inception. [28018]

Mr. Timms: Information relating to winter fuel payments for the winters of 1997–98 and 1998–99 is not available. The information from winter 1999–2000 is in the following table. Figures are only available from 2002–03 for payments made to those aged 80 or over. These figures are also available in the Library.

Parliamentary constituency/region	Winter fuel payments made	Payments made to those aged 80 or over
Great Yarmouth		
1999–2000	19,015	n/a
2000–01	20,980	n/a
2001–02	21,330	n/a
2002–03	21,745	4,520
2003–04	22,220	4,680
2004–05	29,925	4,535
Norfolk local authority		
1999–2000	171,480	n/a
2000–01	190,005	n/a
2001–02	192,850	n/a
2002–03	196,335	41,385
2003–04	199,610	42,735
2004–05	199,005	42,125

Parliamentary constituency/region	Winter fuel payments made	Payments made to those aged 80 or over
East of England		
1999–2000	971,115	n/a
Government office region		
2000–01	1,075,650	n/a
2001–02	1,090,720	n/a
2002–03	1,110,685	229,390
2003–04	1,128,190	235,970
2004–05	1,128,650	233,955
England		
1999–2000	8,631,865	n/a
2000–01	9,505,370	n/a
2001–02	9,585,755	n/a
2002–03	9,709,935	1,978,030
2003–04	9,813,095	2,021,450
2004–05	9,761,975	2,002,210
Wales		
1999–2000	553,920	n/a
2000–01	613,540	n/a
2001–02	619,720	n/a
2002–03	629,025	126,100
2003–04	636,255	129,195
2004–05	631,315	127,935

Notes:

1. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
3. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample

HEALTH

British Standard 7799

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what mechanisms she plans to put in place to ensure that private sector organisations treating NHS patients are British Standard 7799 compliant; and if she will make a statement; [22587]

(2) what plans she has to change local self-assessment for British Standard 7799 NHS compliance; and if she will make a statement; [22588]

(3) what representations she has received from the British Standards Institute regarding *(a)* NHS compliance and *(b)* processes to audit NHS compliance with British Standard 7799; and if she will make a statement; [22589]

(4) what the cost was of developing the Information Governance Toolkit; [22590]

(5) what steps she is taking to increase the number of NHS trusts in receipt of British Standard 7799 certificates; and if she will make a statement; [22591]

(6) how many NHS trusts have been issued with a British Standard 7799 certificate; and if she will make a statement; [22592]

(7) what steps she takes to ensure that electronic patient records are maintained in a manner compliant with British Standard 7799; and if she will make a statement; [22593]

(8) what mechanisms are in place to ensure NHS trust compliance with British Standard 7799; whether these are *(a)* independent and *(b)* auditable; and if she will make a statement; [22594]

(9) what assessment she has made of the compliance of each NHS trust with British Standard 7799; and if she will make a statement. [22595]

Mr. Byrne: The BS7799 part 1, recently updated and now known as ISO/IEC 17799, provides the foundation for the best practice security management of the national health service's information assets. Central arrangements have already been established that enable all NHS organisations to obtain a full reference copy of the standard for their own use. In addition, key requirements of the ISO/IEC17799 are included within the existing NHS Information Governance Framework, along with relevant topic guidance and illustrations. These are available to NHS organisations through the centrally provided and maintained NHS Information Governance Toolkit service.

The NHS Information Governance Toolkit supports NHS organisations to meet information security requirements but also numerous other closely associated requirements including best practice in terms of records management, information quality, data protection and the confidential management of records. Bringing these requirements together in this way has eliminated considerable duplication of effort as each of these aspects of information governance are based on similar principles and working practices but in the past they were addressed separately. The Information Governance Toolkit is provided free of charge to NHS organisations and replaced a range of existing data collections and has generated significant savings in staff time and resources across a wide range of NHS organisations.

Compliance assessment of NHS information security management, is based upon the ISO/IEC 17799 framework and is currently achieved on an annual basis through self-assessed organisational attainment reporting within the NHS Information Governance Toolkit. A review of these arrangements is currently under way and that will further refine and extend assurance criterion. These new arrangements should also in future form a significant part of formal NHS audit programmes at both local and national level.

In addition to contractual obligations, it is also intended that equivalent information governance assurance reporting arrangements will shortly be developed and implemented for a range of non-NHS information partner organisations, including those private sector organisations treating NHS patients. These requirements already exist for commercial service provider organisations involved in the delivery of the NHS National Programme for Information Technology and whose security management performance is routinely monitored against the ISO/IEC 17799.

Although there is no current requirement for NHS organisations to seek or maintain a formal BS7799 part 2:2002 registration, NHS organisations are able to do

so as a local decision. This part 2 of the original BS7799 standard has recently been replaced and is now known internationally as ISO/IEC 27001:2005. The Information Governance toolkit was developed, in part, to provide a cost effective alternative to individual NHS organisations requiring assistance from independent qualified lead accreditation consultants at commercial rates. As formal registration is not an NHS requirement, there are no central records of NHS organisations that may already have chosen to formally register or that may be considering doing so.

On 18 October 2005, a departmental official met with two representatives of the British Standards Institute to outline and discuss the NHS approach to BS7799. The British Standards Institute are therefore now fully aware of the significant steps taken by the Department to both adopt and promote the values of this standard to NHS organisations and relevant others.

Cataract Operations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations have been purchased in the private sector *(a)* in 2004–05 and *(b)* for the current year. [19019]

Mr. Byrne: Between October 2003 and September 2005, 14,886 cataract procedures were carried out on national health service patients through the centrally-procured independent sector treatment centre programme. It is estimated that almost a further 12,000 cataract procedures will be completed by September 2006. The volume of commissioning of independent sector services contracted locally by the NHS is not collected centrally.

Cheshire and Merseyside SHA

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much brokerage was allocated to each hospital in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area in 2004–05. [21393]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is provided in the table.

Cash brokerage is managed by strategic health authorities (SHAs), so it is not possible to confirm how much brokerage has been allocated in 2004–05 to each national health service trust in Cheshire and Merseyside SHA.

In 2004–05, some organisations have received planned support. The table shows how much planned support was given to each NHS trust in Cheshire and Merseyside SHA.

Financial support for Cheshire and Merseyside NHS Trusts	*2004–05 Planned financial support (£000)*
Mersey Regional Ambulance Service Trust	0
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	5,400
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust	12,000
The Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool NHS Trust	0
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust	0
The Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2,100
Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust	3,200
Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology Trust	0
Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	0
Walton Neurology Centre NHS Trust	0
East Cheshire NHS Trust	6,000
Royal Liverpool Broadgreen University Hospital Trust	2,643
Five Borough Partnership NHS Trust	1,153
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	9,372
Mersey Care NHS Trust	0
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	7,931
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	0
Total Support funding	49,799

Source:
2004–05 audited summarisation schedules

Community Health Care

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many responses to "Your Health Your Care Your Say" have been received from *(a)* health professionals, *(b)* organisations and *(c)* members of the public; and if she will make a statement. [22116]

Mr. Byrne: Of 1,252 people who participated in the regional and national "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" deliberative events, 133 people said they were health or social care staff. By Monday, 31 October, 19,183 completed questionnaires had been returned, including 9,654 responses from people who indicated that they worked in health or social care. In addition, more than 2,000 responses have been received from readers of "Take-a-Break" magazine and national health service publications, "Prime" and "Fit". The questions published in these magazines were a subset of the full set of questions, designed specifically for these publications and did not ask people about their employment.

We do not yet have figures from the local or devolved listening events. The process is designed to consult the public on what they want from community health and social care services. We are engaging with health and social care organisations in other ways, but mainly through five policy taskforces, which are making recommendations on the policy options that fit with the public views.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1187W, on "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say", how many people were selected to take part in each event. [22367]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

"Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation

Event	Number of people Selected	Who attended
Gateshead	110	89
Leicester	65	60
London	65	51
Plymouth	60	54
Birmingham	1,200	998

Electronic Patient Records

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects all patient records to be electronic. [22596]

Mr. Byrne: Demographic data is already held electronically for most patients, most already have an electronic primary care record and many hospitals also hold information electronically. However, these tend to be restricted to the general practice or hospital in which the record is created. The number of electronic records, linked to the NHS Care Records Service will continue to increase as health professionals find that linked electronic records improve patient care. The national programme for IT in the national health service aims to deliver the NHS Care Records Service by 2010.

General Medical Services Contract

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average remuneration of *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* consultants was in 1997; and what she estimates it will be following the introduction of the new contracts. [23754]

Mr. Byrne: Figures for general practitioners (GPs) based on information for Great Britain are shown in the table.

Remuneration of GPs , 1997–98 and 2003–04

	Intended average net remuneration/income (£)
1997–98	46,031
2003–04	67,040

Information for consultants is shown in the table.

The new consultant contract was introduced in October 2003.

Estimated average basic salary and annual equivalent total earnings for consultants in England 1998 to 2004

Annual estimated average payments[1]	Annualised average basic salary	£ Annualised average total earnings
1998	59,500	65,600
1999[2]	63,000	69,700
2000	65,100	71,700
2001[2]	67,500	74,700
2002	71,000	83,700
2003[3]	73,300	86,400
2004	74,800	89,500
2004 (new contracts only[3])	74,800	100,900

[1] Information on basic pay, allowances and other payments is calculated to provide average basic salary and average total earnings (amount paid, including allowances, overtime, etc.).

[2] There was no survey in these years so earnings have been estimated from previous years' figures.

[3] Around 77 per cent. of consultants had moved away to the new contract by October 2004.

Note:
The NHS Earnings Survey is based on a sample of payroll data from approximately 50 per cent. of NHS trusts, thus calculated figures are estimates based on best available data.

Source:
Department of Health's August NHS staff Earnings Survey (1998 to 2003) and Health and Social Care Information Earnings survey.

Healthcare Costs

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average daily cost is of *(a)* an intensive care and *(b)* a high dependency bed. [23197]

Mr. Byrne: The national average cost of an occupied bed day in a discrete critical care unit is available in the annual reference costs publication, which is available in the Library.

The national schedule of reference costs for 2004, the latest year available, shows activity undertaken within a national health service trust in England, the costs of an occupied bed day in different types of discrete critical care units, which is shown in the following table.

National schedule of reference costs 2004

Unit type	£ National average cost per occupied bed day
Intensive therapy unit/Intensive care unit	1,328
Burns intensive care unit	1,039
Neurosurgical intensive care unit	1,017
Spinal injuries intensive care unit	779
Renal intensive care unit	370
Cardiac intensive care unit	1,025
High dependency unit	584
Paediatric intensive care unit	1,702
Neonatal intensive care unit – level one	838
Neonatal intensive care unit – level two	560

Healthcare Professionals Recruitment

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many healthcare professionals from developing countries have been recruited by the NHS from private hospitals in England in each year since 2001 for which records are available, broken down by country of origin. [24206]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many healthcare recruitment agencies operating *(a)* from the UK and *(b)* from outside the UK are registered to comply with the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals. [24216]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers is responsible for monitoring the Code of Practice and maintaining the register of agencies.

NHS Employers reports that there are 225 agencies operating from the United Kingdom (UK) and 40 from outside the UK registered to comply with the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many healthcare recruitment agencies that *(a)* have and *(b)* have not registered with the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals have been used by the NHS since December 2004; and on how many occasions in each case. [24218]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally. NHS Employers are responsible for monitoring the Code of Practice and maintaining the register of agencies. The Code of Practice was revised by the Department in December 2004.

The guidance on the Code of Practice makes it clear that the national health service should not be contracting with agencies not listed under the Code of Practice.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how her Department monitors the activities of healthcare recruitment agencies that have registered under the Code of Practice of the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals. [24219]

Mr. Byrne: Monitoring compliance with the Code of Practice is now the responsibility of NHS Employers, the organisation which represents employers in the national health service. NHS Employers works closely with strategic health authorities and trusts to ensure that the NHS abides by the code.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what breaches her Department has found of the code of practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals; and what proportion of agencies registered have been investigated for breaches. [24220]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally. NHS Employers is responsible for monitoring the code of practice and maintaining the register of agencies.

Hospital Waiting Times

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time in hospitals in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* England has been in each year since 1997. [21051]

Mr. Byrne: The median waiting times for in-patient admission at South Tyneside Healthcare National Health Service Trust, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Special Health Authority and England are shown in the table.

Estimated average time patients have been waiting for elective admission, March 1997 to June 2005—provider based

	Median waiting time (weeks)				
	March				
	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
South Tyneside Healthcare NHS Trust	15.6	16.4	14.9	12.4	10.5
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	11.9	12.3	11.9	11.2	11.1
England	13.2	14.8	12.8	12.9	12.6

	March				*June*
	2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2005*
South Tyneside Healthcare NHS Trust	9.5	8.7	8.3	6.3	5.8
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	11.8	10.8	9.6	7.5	7.1
England	12.7	11.9	10.2	8.4	8.0

Source:
Department of Health form KH07

Infection Control

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many infection control nurses have been employed in the NHS in each of the last three years; and what the ratio of infection control nurses to beds has been in each of the last three years. [23030]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

In-patient Beds

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department has issued on the minimum safe number of in- -patient beds per head of population. [23226]

Mr. Byrne: No specific guidance has been issued. The planning of health service capacity, including in-patient beds, is for strategic health authorities to lead locally, within the framework of the Department's guidance on capacity planning. The planning of in-patient beds needs to take account of services available from other parts of local health and social care systems, including primary, community, rehabilitative and long-term care.

Mental Health

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged five to 16 have a clinically diagnosed mental disorder in *(a)* Normanton constituency, *(b)* Wakefield East Primary Care Trust (PCT), *(c)* Wakefield West PCT, *(d)* Wakefield District and *(e)* West Yorkshire. [24248]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the number of children aged between five and 16 years with a primary psychiatric diagnosis (ICD-10 codes F00 to F99)[1] by gender and within the Eastern Wakefield Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Wakefield West PCTs and within the West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA), in the latest year that figures are available[2].

	Aged 5 to 16 years		
	Male	Female	All patients
West Yorkshire SHA	80	80	160
Eastern Wakefield PCT	10	10	20
Wakefield West PCT	10	10	10

[1] Diagnoses are taken from chapter V (Mental and Behavioural Disorders) of the 10th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10).

[2] Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data are ungrossed.

Note:
Disclosure rules apply due to the sensitive nature of the data; therefore, figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to be in a position to publish the Mental Health Bill. [26080]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Mental Health Bill will be introduced when the legislative timetable permits.

Modernising Medical Careers

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she was first informed that NHS trusts would replace six-month contracts for senior house officers with year-long placements to fit with the Modernising Medical Careers initiative. [18495]

Mr. Byrne: This decision was foreshadowed in a ministerial policy statement made by the four United Kingdom (UK) Health Ministers on 25 February 2003. The specific decision was taken at the meeting of the Modernising Medical Careers UK strategy group on 18 March 2005.

NHS Commissioning

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will set out the rationale behind the decision to reduce the role of primary care trusts in direct provision of health services to a minimum; and on what evidence the decision was based. [19075]

Mr. Byrne: No decisions on the future provision of community and primary healthcare services will be taken until after the White Paper on community healthcare services has been published. The White Paper will be informed by the results of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say listening exercise currently underway. Clinical services will continue to be provided by primary care trusts (PCTs) unless and until those PCTs decide otherwise. These decisions would be driven locally, following our White Paper deliberations, and will only be implemented following full local public and staff consultation.

Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have recently submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of PCTs, which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. These proposals will be assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests. The panel will determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS" (July 2005). If the criteria are judged to have been met, the proposals will go forward to a three-month public consultation. No further decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she expects that some doctors, nurses and managers will reform their practices into limited companies and contract as private and not-for-profit companies for the provision of practice services following the implementation of her proposals on Commissioning in the NHS. [19149]

Mr. Byrne: There is no expectation for practices to reform themselves into limited companies as a result of "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS". Changing the way that healthcare services currently provided by primary care trusts (PCTs) is a matter for them. A White Paper on social care and community healthcare services will be published at the turn of the year and this will be informed by the results of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say public listening exercise currently under way. Any proposals on the future provision of PCT services will also be subject to full local and staff consultation in the usual way.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has given primary care trusts on the future of medical and allied services currently provided directly by them which would be provided by alternative providers following the implementation of her policy to turn primary care trusts into commissioning bodies. [19154]

Mr. Byrne: No guidance has been issued to primary care trusts on the future provision of medical and allied healthcare services.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what safeguards she plans to put in place to ensure that an outsourced provider of the commissioning function of a primary care trust is not owned by an organisation that is also competing to provide services in the same area. [20965]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has received proposals from all strategic health authorities setting out their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs) in order to strengthen their commissioning function. The proposals will shortly be assessed by an external panel, representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether they meet the criteria stipulated in July's "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS". Proposals that meet these criteria will then be subject to a full three-month public consultation. No further decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

NHS Deficits

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been issued to NHS trusts with regard to *(a)* the recovery of historic deficits and *(b)* the management of deficit control totals. [17963]

Mr. Byrne: National health service organisations are expected to achieve financial balance each and every year. It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to performance manage the organisations in

their area, and deliver overall financial balance for their local health communities. The Department has contacted all organisations with a deficit in 2004–05 to emphasise the importance of sound financial management and ensuring value for money of public expenditure. Through this and other mechanisms, the Department explained the key role of implementing the system reform programme, and other efficiency measures, in delivering better services for patients within the funding available. The Department recognises that SHAs carry forward deficits and surplus to future years which ensures that organisations do not benefit from having a deficit and are not disadvantaged by a heavy surplus.

NHS Drug Costs

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total *(a)* gross and *(b)* net cost of drugs to the NHS has been in (i) nominal and (ii) real terms in each year since 1979; what the percentage increase was in each year to the next in real terms; and what proportion of this percentage increase has been due to drug price inflation in each year. [19129]

Mr. Byrne: It is not possible to calculate drug price inflation. Drug prices can be affected by many factors; these include advances in drug therapy, new drugs substituting existing ones and price reduction due to generic competition. These factors can vary from year to year, from drug to drug, and vary in magnitude. This complexity prevents us from being able to calculate drug price inflation. The gross and net cost of drugs to the national health service in nominal terms, and percentage increase each year are shown in table 1.

Table 1: NHS drugs spend in nominal terms—England

	Gross		Net	
	Outturn (£ million)	Percentage	Outturn (£ million)	Percentage
1987–88	1,899	—	1,888	—
1988–89	2,137	12.6	2,124	12.5
1989–90	2,365	10.7	2,356	10.9
1990–91	2,552	7.9	2,540	7.8
1991–92	2,926	14.7	2,908	14.5
1992–93	3,294	12.6	3,284	12.9
1993–94	3,689	12.0	3,661	11.5
1994–95	4,016	8.9	3,994	9.1
1995–96	4,379	9.0	4,372	9.5
1996–97	4,769	8.9	4,735	8.3
1997–98	5,195	8.9	5,173	9.3
1998–99	5,567	7.2	5,550	7.3
1999–2000	6,220	11.7	6,202	11.7
2000–01	6,690	—	6,688	—
2001–02	7,454	11.4	7,447	11.3
2002–03	8,358	12.1	8,355	12.2
2003–04	9,274	11.0	9,267	10.9

The gross and net cost of drugs to the NHS in real terms, and percentage increase each year are shown in table 2.

Table 2: NHS drugs spend in real terms (2003–04 prices)—England

	Gross		Net	
	Outturn (£ million)	Percentage	Outturn (£ million)	Percentage
1987–88	3,369	—	3,350	—
1988–89	3,544	5.2	3,523	5.1
1989–90	3,662	3.3	3,648	3.6
1990–91	3,664	0.1	3,647	0.0
1991–92	3,962	8.1	3,938	8.0
1992–93	4,323	9.1	4,310	9.5
1993–94	4,722	9.2	4,685	8.7
1994–95	5,062	7.2	5,034	7.4
1995–96	5,369	6.1	5,360	6.5
1996–97	5,647	5.2	5,607	4.6
1997–98	5,975	5.8	5,950	6.1
1998–99	6,242	4.5	6,222	4.6
1999–2000	6,839	9.6	6,819	9.6
2000–01	7,260	—	7,258	—
2001–02	7,895	8.7	7,887	8.7
2002–03	8,579	8.7	8,576	8.7
2003–04	9,274	8.1	9,267	8.0

Notes:
1. Net figures include pharmaceutical price regulation scheme receipt savings.
2. The total drugs spend include spend within the family health service and also the hospital and community health service.
3. From 2000–01 figures are in resource terms, prior to this figures are in cash terms. Cash figures relate to February to January prescribing due to delay in prescription processing and payment calculations. Resource figures represent the actual cost between April to March.
4. We do not have data prior to 1987.
5. The gross domestic product deflator at September 2005 has been used to calculate spend in real terms at 2003–04 prices.

Sources:
Prescription Pricing Authority, England and Department of Health finance division.

NHS Finance

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the deficit or surplus was at year end 2004–05 for *(a)* the NHS in England, *(b)* each strategic health authority, *(c)* each NHS trust and *(d)* each primary care trust. [18893]

Mr. Byrne: The audited accounts show that the national health service as a whole will end 2004–05 with an overall deficit of around £250 million. This represents around 0.4 per cent. of overall NHS resources.

The 2004–05 audited financial position of all NHS organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) is available on the Department's website. A copy of this information has been placed in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cumulative deficit is for each strategic health authority. [20956]

Mr. Byrne: The cumulative deficit for strategic health authorities (SHAs) is the deficit that was incurred in the previous year.

The latest available data on the financial position of all SHAs is based on the 2004–05 audited accounts which is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/94/12/04119412.pdf.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library copies of the month five financial forecasts submitted to her Department by each strategic health authority. [22978]

Mr. Byrne: The latest available audited data on the financial position of national health service trusts is for 2004–05. The 2004–05 financial position of strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the letter dated 23 September sent by the chief executive of the NHS to NHS organisations in deficit in 2004–05, which *(a)* NHS bodies and *(b)* centrally financed budgets were required to underspend in 2004–05; and if she will list the NHS organisations to which this letter was sent. [23975]

Mr. Byrne: The 2004–05 audited financial position of strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and national health service trusts is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

This information shows those NHS organisations that ended 2004–05 with an underspend and those NHS organisations that reported an overspend.

The letter sent by the NHS chief executive to NHS organisations on financial management went to all NHS bodies that reported an overspend in 2004–05.

The overall central programme was managed to achieve the appropriate underspend rather than issue detailed underspend figures to departmental budget managers.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of NHS bodies are insolvent. [21569]

Mr. Byrne: No NHS organisations are insolvent. All national health service organisations have sufficient funding to pay their bills within a reasonable time.

NHS Pay Review

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what appeal mechanism is in place for NHS staff in relation to their banding in the NHS Agenda for Change pay review; and which primary care trusts do not have such mechanisms in place. [19174]

Mr. Byrne: Within the Agenda for Change agreement, there are provisions for staff to request reviews of the payband to which they have been band matched. As the request for a review is to their employer, each national health service employer will need to have put the mechanisms in place.

NHS Trust Deficits

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect of NHS trust deficits on the number of nurses employed by them. [21655]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance. Organisations need to continue to look at the way they provide services to ensure they are delivering the best possible value for money.

The number of nurses in the national health service in England has grown by 25 per cent. or nearly 80,000 between September 1997 and 2004. Any changes in local circumstances need to be seen in that context.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of NHS trusts which will end the current financial year in deficit. [20794]

Mr. Byrne: The number of national health service trusts that ended the financial year 2004–05 in deficit was 66. It is too early to say what the position will be in 2005–06.

Out-patient Appointments

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what proportion of NHS patients booking out-patient appointments have done so through the choose and book system in 2005; and how many such bookings included full integration of service with a GP referral letter. [18174]

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many referrals to secondary care there were in the NHS in England in 2005; how many and what percentage were made under choose and book; and if she will make a statement. [18900]

Mr. Byrne: Approximately 20,000 general practitioner (GP) outpatient appointments or referrals have been made so far in 2005. The volume of bookings is increasing rapidly. choose and book new bookings are currently over 3,400 per week. This equates to around 2 per cent. of GP referrals per week.

Information on how many such bookings included full integration of service with a GP referral letter is not separately identified.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of the savings to the Exchequer of introducing a pension scheme retirement age of 65 years for all NHS staff and employees of her Department and its agencies from 2025; and if she will make a statement. [21424]

Mr. Byrne: Delaying to 2025 the introduction of a normal pension age (NPA) of 65 for members of the national health service, teachers' or civil service would not reflect Government policy or be consistent with the principles agreed at the public services forum. Those principles provide for NPA 65 to be introduced for new entrants as soon as practicable, and for the pension terms of existing members to be discussed in scheme specific negotiations. The estimated net present value of the savings arising from reform of the public service schemes generally is expected to be around £13 billion over the next 50 years.

Savings to the Exchequer from introducing NPA 65 from 2025 have not been estimated and could be done only at disproportionate cost. It is, however, likely that delaying the introduction of NPA 65 until 2025 for the NHS, teachers' or civil service pension schemes would

absorb a substantial part of the expected £13 billion savings that will arise from the immediate implementation of scheme reform within the framework of the principles agreed at the public services forum.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many physiotherapists are practising in the public sector; and how many of these *(a)* hold a degree in physiotherapy, *(b)* hold a degree in a related medical field and *(c)* hold a degree in another field. [23660]

Mr. Byrne: At September 2004, the number of qualified physiotherapists employed in the national health service was 19,139, which is an increase of 34 per cent. since 1997. Information is not collected centrally on the specific qualifications of NHS staff, nor on the number of physiotherapists employed elsewhere in the public sector.

Primary care trusts commission physiotherapy services from a range of providers on behalf of their local communities.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list primary care trusts which have an unaddressed financial risk of over £1 million pounds. [22410]

Mr. Byrne: We have interpreted the issue of unaddressed financial risk to mean those primary care trusts (PCTs) that overspent in 2004–05 by £1 million pounds or more. This is shown in the table.

The latest data available on the financial position of national health service organisations (strategic health authorities, PCTs and NHS trusts) are for 2004–05. This information was made available on the Department's publications website on 19 September 2005.

PCTs that have overspent by £1 million or more in 2004–05

PCT name	£000 *Final surplus/ (deficits)*
Kensington and Chelsea	-17,976
Bedfordshire Heartlands	-14,536
Hillingdon	-13,470
Suffolk West	-12,510
Kennet and North Wiltshire	-10,159
Ipswich	-10,119
New Forest	-8,592
Wandsworth	-8,237
Cambridge City	-7,621
Southern Norfolk	-7,152
Chelmsford	-7,144
North Stoke	-6,810
Fareham and Gosport	-6,757
North and East Cornwall	-6,668
Selby and York	-6,598
Suffolk Coastal	-6,174
Hounslow	-6,171
Yorkshire Wolds and Coast	-6,116
Luton	-6,038
Guildford and Waverley	-5,887
West of Cornwall	-5,669
Central Cornwall	-5,294
North Norfolk	-5,294
North Devon	-5,263
North Somerset	-5,202
East Hampshire	-5,199
South West Oxfordshire	-5,172
Vale of Aylesbury	-4,916
Hertsmere	-4,897
Milton Keynes	-4,860
Dacorum	-4,840
Cotswold and Vale	-4,809
East Lincolnshire	-4,483
Broadland	-4,444
Cherwell Vale	-4,404
North Hertfordshire and Stevenage	-3,860
Central Suffolk	-3,837
South Western Staffordshire	-3,750
Staffordshire Moorlands	-3,725
Maidstone Weald	-3,714
Havering	-3,258
Witham, Braintree and Halstead Care Trust	-3,141
West Gloucestershire	-3,110
West Wiltshire	-2,803
Bexley Care Trust	-2,749
Blackwater Valley and Hart	-2,676
South Cambridgeshire	-2,583
East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey	-2,563
Waltham Forest	-2,538
South and East Dorset	-2,424
Canterbury and Coastal	-2,276
Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth	-2,111
Wyre Forest	-1,968
North East Oxfordshire	-1,938
Watford and Three Rivers	-1,928
Kingston	-1,853
Sussex Downs and Weald	-1,819
South Stoke	-1,719
South Wiltshire	-1,535
Waveney	-1,533
St Albans and Harpenden	-1,526
Huntingdonshire	-1,516
Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire	-1,494
Maldon and South Chelmsford	-1,489
West Norfolk	-1,482
Colchester	-1,470
North Birmingham	-1,339
Eastleigh and Test Valley South	-1,283
Cannock Chase	-1,235
Charnwood and North West Leicestershire	-1,200
Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford	-1,123
Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley	-1,086

Note:
2004–05 data must be treated as provisional until signed off by National Audit Officer/Chief Executive.
Source:
Audited summarisation schedules 2004–05.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which providers each primary care trust has commissioned under the requirement to offer a choice of at least four secondary care providers to patients by 1 January 2006 in each of the top 15 specialties. [23116]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested can be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

The Department is putting in place a programme of support to help patients exercise choice of hospital, which includes the development of a patient information leaflet tailored to each primary care trust (PCT) The leaflet will show patients the choices available to them locally as commissioned by their PCT.

Radiotherapy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether patients will be allowed to book appointments for radiotherapy through the infrastructure of the National Programme for IT. [23966]

Mr. Byrne: The choose and book system currently covers referrals from primary care to the first consultant out-patient appointment. Radiotherapy appointments are typically booked after detailed consultations between clinicians and this means they fall within secondary or tertiary care. Therefore, radiotherapy appointments are outside of the current scope of the choose and book service.

Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* historic and *(b)* in-year debt is of Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust. [21392]

Mr. Byrne: The cumulative deficit for the Southport and Ormskirk national health service trust in 2004–05 was £1,179,000. The in-year deficit for the trust during the same period was £1,189,000.

Notes:

1. It is assumed that historic debt means the cumulative deficit position of the NHS Trust.

2. It is assumed that in-year debt means the deficit incurred in the 2004–05 financial year.

Waiting Lists/Times

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long the central collection of statistics on waiting times for *(a)* CT scans, *(b)* MRI scans and *(c)* other imaging and diagnostic tests takes, including the production of reports; and if she will make a statement. [18560]

Mr. Byrne: Data on waiting times for diagnostic tests and procedures are not currently collected centrally.

However, to support delivery of the 18-week patient pathway, the Department, working with the national health service, has developed a commissioner-based diagnostics waiting times data collection, which will be introduced in January 2006. This will look at waiting times for a number of diagnostic tests and procedures, including magnetic resonance imaging and computerised tomography.

During the piloting phase, pilot sites were submitting diagnostics data on the 15th working day after the month end. It is anticipated that we will follow a similar timetable for national roll-out of the diagnostics data collection.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what interim waiting time targets have been put in place in order to progress towards the 18-week waiting time target by 2008. [18379]

Mr. Byrne: No formal interim targets have been set for the national health service. The Department has agreed a framework of milestones with strategic health authorities to help them assess the robustness of local delivery plans and monitor progress against them. Further information on the 18-week target can be found at www.18weeks.nhs.uk. The Department is currently consulting on the rules and definitions to underpin the implementation of the 18 week target, and the responses may also influence how we choose to measure progress in future.

West Yorkshire Health Services

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the merits of contestability in the provision of health services in West Yorkshire. [21048]

Mr. Byrne: The decision to include West Yorkshire in wave two elective independent sector procurement has been made on the basis of local capacity planning and the need to increase patient choice.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Azerbaijan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he plans to have with the Government of Azerbaijan regarding *(a)* good governance, *(b)* democratic values and *(c)* tackling corruption. [27026]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: These issues are often raised by our ambassador to Baku in his dialogue with the Azerbaijan Government and will be raised again, on instruction, in the aftermath of this election. They are also due to be discussed at the EU-Azerbaijan Co-operation Council on 12 December. The EU is developing an action plan with Azerbaijan as part of its European Neighbourhood Policy. The action plan aims to establish a set of shared common values in exchange for a deeper relationship with the EU. Strengthening democracy, strengthening the protection of human rights and of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law and strengthening the fight against corruption are all areas identified as priorities in the action plan.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether the recent elections in Azerbaijan were *(a)* free and *(b)* fair. [27027]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government accept the assessment of the International Election Observation Mission led by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Their preliminary findings were released on 7 November. These found that the Azerbaijan parliamentary elections did not meet a number of OSCE and Council of Europe standards and commitments for democratic elections, suggesting that the elections were not free or fair. The UK, holding the presidency of the European Union, issued a statement on 7 November in response to the preliminary findings. This can be found on the presidency website at www.eu2005.gov.uk.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Mr Richard Horsey, the British employee of the International Labour Organisation, who has left Burma after receiving death threats. [26768]

Ian Pearson: Our Embassy in Rangoon is in regular contact with Mr Richard Horsey. We understand from him that he has left Burma temporarily for reasons unconnected with the death threats he has received.

We are very concerned about reports that Burma has recently indicated its intention to withdraw from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Our Ambassador in Rangoon called on the Burmese Ministers for Labour and Foreign Affairs on 31 October and, on behalf of the EU, expressed our concern over these reports and over the death threat campaign. She urged the Burmese authorities to continue to co-operate with the ILO to eliminate forced labour and raised individual cases of harassment of those complaining of forced labour.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made *(a)* of the announcement by Burma's military junta that it has begun to move ministries to Pyinmana and *(b)* its implications for civilians in the Shan, Chin and Karen states; [27013]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of the Burmese Government's move to Pyinmana upon the local population; [27033]

(3) what assessment he has made of the likelihood of forced labour being used to construct the Burmese Government's development in Pyinmana; [27034]

(4) what assessment he has made of the implications of the decision by Burma's military junta to relocate to Pyinmana for the upholding of human rights in the region. [27035]

Ian Pearson: Diplomatic Missions in Rangoon were formally notified of the Burmese authorities' decision to relocate the seat of administration to Pyinmana on 7 November. The State Peace and Development Council claims that moving to a more central location will enable the government to carry out the development of the whole nation more effectively.

It is too early to assess the full impact of the move on human rights or on populations locally or in the ethnic areas. We are aware of reports of forced relocations of villages in the construction area. It appears that in most cases some compensation was paid for land that was requisitioned, although not at full market rate.

We are also aware of press reports of the use of forced labour during the construction. Forced labour has been used in the past for large scale infrastructure projects. Our position on forced labour is well known.

China

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* occasions and *(b)* dates when he has raised human rights in (i) Tibet and (ii) China with members of the Chinese Government in each of the last three years. [26878]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Human Rights Reports for 2004 and 2005 list ministerial engagements, including those of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, on human rights in China, including Tibet. The reports can be found at: www.fco.gov.uk/humanrightsreport2004 and http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/HumanRights2005.pdf. My right. hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and the Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing, also discussed Tibet-related issues at their meetings in New York on 19 September 2005 and in London on 8 November 2005.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the meeting between the Chinese Government and representatives of the Dalai Lama in Berne on 1st July. [27066]

Ian Pearson: The European Union, under the UK Presidency, issued a statement welcoming the talks between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama's representatives which took place in Berne on 30 June to 1 July. We hope the talks will bring about serious negotiations, without pre-conditions, which will lead to a peaceful, sustainable and legitimate solution for Tibet.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives the UK Government plans to take to advance the dialogue between the Chinese government and representatives of the Dalai Lama when China's President Hu Jintao visits the UK in November. [27067]

Ian Pearson: The Government's views on the Chinese role in Tibet and what needs to be done to improve the situation there is a matter of public record. We have encouraged the Chinese Government to enter into meaningful dialogue without pre-conditions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives in order to achieve a peaceful, sustainable and legitimate solution.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will develop a set of criteria that will allow him to evaluate the progress of formal contact between China and the Tibetan Government in exile. [27068]

Ian Pearson: We regularly ask both Chinese and Tibetan interlocutors about their engagement and contact. We are able to judge the progress or lack of it from the information received during such exchanges. We have no plans to develop further criteria by which to evaluate progress.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK Government have asked China *(a)* by what criteria it assesses the progress of formal contact with the Dalai Lama's representatives and *(b)* how China decides when future meetings between the two sides will take place. [27069]

Ian Pearson: The Government regularly urges China into meaningful dialogue without pre-conditions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials did so most recently at a meeting with Assistant Foreign Minister Shen Guofang on 25 October. We regularly inquire when the next round of talks will take place.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the current status is of the EU/China arms embargo; what the policy of the UK Government is on proposals to lift the embargo; and if he will make a statement. [27071]

Ian Pearson: The European Union arms embargo on China has been under review since the decision by the European Council in December 2003 to launch a review. The December 2004 European Council set out Conclusions on the embargo and recalled these in June 2005. Pending any decision on lift, the Government continues to fully implement the embargo.

Colombia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Colombia about *(a)* tackling paramilitary forces and *(b)* ensuring that there is justice for the victims of violence. [26990]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have regular discussions with the Government of Colombia about the peace process. These discussions, which cover issues of truth, justice and reparation for victims of the internal armed conflict, are carried out between our Embassy in Bogota and the Government of Colombia. They are also covered during high level visits in both directions. For example, when President Uribe and Foreign Minister Barco were in the UK in July, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) raised these important matters.

We support the efforts of the Government of President Uribe to bring an end to Colombia's inter-connected problems of internal armed conflict, illegal drugs trade and human rights abuses. We strongly believe that the only answer to these problems lies through a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Iran

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many requests the UK Government have made to Iran for the repatriation of Royal Navy equipment seized in the Shatt-Al-Arab; and how many responses it has had from the Iranian Government. [25661]

Dr. Howells: We have pressed the Iranian authorities on numerous occasions, at both ministerial and senior official level, in Tehran and London, to return the boats and equipment they have detained since June 2004. Our discussions are ongoing.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the decision by the Government of Iran to replace diplomats regarded as being too liberal. [26771]

Dr. Howells: Media reports suggest that Iran's new Government may be making a number of changes to Iran's Ambassadors overseas. Such appointments are a matter for Iran.

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he proposes should be taken if Iran continues to develop nuclear weapons and delivery systems. [26845]

Dr. Howells: Iran's nuclear programme continues to be of serious concern. The EU has called on Iran to address the requests made in successive resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, including by reinstating a full suspension of all uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. We have also urged Iran to return to talks with the E3/EU on the basis of the Paris Agreement. At its last meeting, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution finding Iran to have been in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations under the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty. We have made clear to Iran that it can, by the actions it now decides to take, influence the timing and nature of the IAEA's report of this non-compliance to the United Nations Security Council. We will be consulting closely with major partners ahead of the next meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, which begins on 24 November.

Iraq

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has received of Iranian involvement in supplying bomb technology used to attack British troop convoys in Iraq. [26843]

Dr. Howells: As a matter of routine, we examine weapons used against British Forces with a view to determine their origins. The nature of certain explosive devices used suggests a connection to elements linked to Iran or Lebanese Hizballah, which has close links to elements in Iran. We are withholding details on the grounds that to release it would prejudice the capability, effectiveness, and security of the armed forces.

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons the possible involvement of Iran in bomb attacks on British troops in Iraq was revealed to the media by an official. [26844]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said the nature of certain explosive devices used against British and other troops suggests a connection to elements linked to Iran or Lebanese Hizballah, which has close links to elements in Iran. We have pressed Iran on many occasions to improve border security, fight terrorism and not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. The official was responding to media questions as part of a routine background briefing on Iraq.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26595]

Mr. Straw: Only one of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's IT projects has been scrutinised by the Public accounts committee since 1997. That project was Focus, which was scrutinised in April/May 2003 following cancellation of the Programme.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26597]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has introduced 11 IT related programmes costing more than £1 million since 1997. In roughly chronological order: Firecrest, Minerva, the FCO Telecommunications Network, Prism, Focus, I-Con, I-Visas, the FCO website, Knowledge, Future Firecrest and the High Classification Programme. Each programme is made up of smaller projects. Some of these projects will have associated costs of £1 million or more. To identify each project will require in-depth investigation and therefore could be obtained only at

disproportionate cost. Since introduction, the deliverables of each programme are still in use by the FCO.

Ivory Coast

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* UN reports that the Ivory Coast has begun rebuilding its airforce and *(b)* the implications of these reports for the maintenance of the ceasefire. [27014]

Ian Pearson: The situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains fragile and the Government are concerned at any report of activities by either the Côte d'Ivoire Government or rebels which could re-ignite conflict. United Nations Security Council resolutions 1572 and 1584 imposed an arms embargo on all parties involved in the conflict, to be closely monitored by the UN. A group of experts has recently submitted a report to the Security Council on the present state of the embargo. We and other Security Council members are now carefully considering this report. We would view with the utmost concern evidence of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire rebuilding their airforce, which would clearly contravene the embargo and threaten the fragile ceasefire. We also strongly support recent efforts by the UN, African Union and the Economic Community of West African States to move the peace process forward following the postponed elections of 30 October.

Kosovo

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Serbian Orthodox churches in Kosovo have been destroyed since KFOR's presence there; how many of the perpetrators have been *(a)* arrested and *(b)* convicted; and if he will make a statement. [27531]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Based on the information available to us, approximately 140 churches have been damaged or destroyed since 1999, 30 of them during the March 2004 violence. Charges have been pressed against 424 people following the March violence. Some of these relate to damage or destruction to churches. To date, 211 people have been convicted.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG) and the Serbian Orthodox Church, the PISG pledged €4.2 million to the reconstruction of Serbian Orthodox sites. In addition, the Kosovo Minister of Culture, Mr. Astrit Haraqija, pledged a further €1.5 million when he met the Serbian Minister of Culture, Mr. Dragan Kojadinovic, in Belgrade on 23 September 2005.

The Reconstruction Commission has begun to operate; 34 sites have been identified to receive aid. The Commission has begun work on 11 sites, and hopes to begin work on a further 19 sites by the end of this year.

Overseas Pensioners

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place the matter of pensions that are frozen and not up-rated annually in line with inflation for British pensioners living in *(a)* Canada, *(b)* New Zealand, *(c)* Australia, *(d)* South Africa and *(e)* Zimbabwe on the agenda at the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta. [27129]

Ian Pearson: The agenda for the Valletta Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was drawn up by Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon, in consultation with the Government of Malta and Commonwealth members. Malta's chosen keynote theme is "Networking the Commonwealth for Development". Heads of Government will also discuss terrorism, tolerance and world trade.

Sudan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on funding for the African Union mission in Darfur. [26970]

Ian Pearson: We continue to work with international partners, including in our role as presidency of the EU, in support of the African Union's (AU) efforts to resolve the crisis in Darfur. The EU has recently given political approval to provide a further €70 million from the African Peace Facility to support the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), bringing the total EU contribution to AMIS to €162 million. My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), also discussed the matter with the EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, during the EU Troika ministerial visit to Sudan in October. Funding for the AU mission was also discussed at a meeting for key international partners, including the European Commission and the Council Secretariat which we hosted in London on 1 November.

Tanzania

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether the recent elections in Zanzibar were free and fair. [26772]

Ian Pearson: We welcome the third multi-party election on 30 October in Zanzibar.

Representatives from the British High Commission followed the electoral process closely and we noted the broad assessment by international observer groups that the electoral process was a marked improvement on past polls, and that it was generally administered in an efficient manner.

Nevertheless, there were instances, particularly on Unguja, where there were irregularities and a lack of transparency. A number of observer groups have called for a thorough investigation of these anomalies. The UK supports this call.

Uzbekistan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how regularly the Uzbek authorities provide the British security services with intelligence information; what assessment he has made of whether information provided by those

authorities has been obtained by torture; and if he will assess the effect of that information on the maintenance of British security. [27255]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Visas

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the UK overseas posts which have had an increase in the number of staff handling visa applications over the last 12 months; by how many the staff numbers have increased in each case; and how many staff there were handling visa applications in each such post in each of the last 10 years. [26851]

Dr. Howells: The information is as follows.

Visa section	*UK based staff 2004–05*	*UK based 2005–06*	*Increase*
Baghdad	0	1	1
Basra	0	1	1
Chennai	10	11	1
Colombo	6	7	1
Dusseldorf	2	3	1
Hong Kong	2	3	1
Accra	22	24	2
Amman	2	4	2
Ankara	2	4	2
Dhaka	17	19	2
Guangzhou	5	7	2
Bangkok	5	8	3
Chongqing	2	5	3
Manila	5	8	3
Islamabad	54	59	5
Lagos	30	43	13

Notes:
1. UKvisas does not have data about staff numbers previous to financial year 2004–05.
2. The above figures are based on the number of full time UK based entry clearance officers (ECOs) and entry clearance managers (ECMs) at each visa section. However, visa sections also rely on locally engaged staff and officers on temporary duty or short term duties to operate. Furthermore, some ECOs or ECMs also jointly hold other Foreign and Commonwealth Office positions and therefore entry clearance may only be a proportion of their work load.

Source:
UKvisas Staffing Schedules 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the 20 UK overseas posts with the largest increase in visa applications over the last 12 months for which figures are available; and how many visa applications each such post handled in each of the last 10 years. [26852]

Dr. Howells: The information is as follows.

Post	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Karachi	28,342	27,873	26,678	28,063	30,286	32,450
Ankara	3,760	4,396	4770	4,530	4,695	5,304
Mexico City	720	870	1,107	1,228	1,339	1,636
Lagos	35,750	42,797	42,648	44,129	55,319	62,123
Lilongwe	291	297	337	374	456	437
Rio de Janeiro	1,046	833	616	735	720	806
Seoul	788	928	1,536	839	974	1,166
Kuala Lumpur	5,225	3,878	3,893	2,655	2,956	2,645
Tokyo	4,631	4,956	5,590	5,443	5,044	5,131
Hong Kong	21,021	22,485	13,365	11,846	6,390	5,833
Tirana	—	—	—	206	1,703	2,071
Abuja	5,830	6,641	7,930	11,487	16,782	21,602
Tunis	7,856	7,804	7,374	7,507	7,310	7,809
Victoria	224	203	198	192	268	282
Tel Aviv	1,289	1,339	1,601	1,696	1,431	1,585
Honiara	24	15	38	11	23	22
Gaborone	455	639	671	790	820	946
Phnom Penh	33	59	—	—	—	—
Pt. Moresby	334	629	626	609	676	567
Panama City	141	128	4	162	161	167

Post	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Percentage increase 2003–04 to 2004–05*
Karachi	36,539	11,757	1,802	21,305	1,082.3
Ankara	3,801	4,890	6,546	16,934	158.7
Mexico City	573	531	996	2,145	115.4
Lagos	85,293	115,300	85,877	176,866	106.0
Lilongwe	446	588	879	1,765	100.8
Rio de Janeiro	712	923	1,696	3,386	99.6
Seoul	1,151	1,859	5,199	10,180	95.8
Kuala Lumpur	2,889	4,180	6,948	12,748	83.5
Tokyo	5,361	5,422	9,672	17,449	80.4
Hong Kong	5,306	5,480	7,957	13,958	75.4
Tirana	2,891	3,672	5,933	10,397	75.2
Abuja	23,155	28,945	35,274	60,736	72.2
Tunis	7,110	4,880	5,195	8,926	71.8
Victoria	254	174	207	347	67.6
Tel Aviv	1,200	1,446	1,760	2,857	62.3
Honiara	31	13	11	17	54.5

Post	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Percentage increase 2003–04 to 2004–05*
Gaborone	1,226	1,391	1,529	2,353	53.9
Phnom Penh	—	—	222	339	52.7
Pt. Moresby	468	395	107	163	52.3
Panama City	123	198	220	332	50.9

'—' = posts not open.

Notes:

1. Prior to 2001–02 entry clearance statistics were published by calendar year, since 2001–02 statistics are published by financial year.
2. UKvisas publishes annual entry clearance statistics for 2001–02 onwards, on its website, www.ukvisas.gov.uk. Copies are also placed in the Library of the House.

Source:

UKvisas' Published Entry Clearance Statistics.

Western Sahara

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to facilitate the self-determination of the Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement. [25984]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The UK fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and his new Personal Envoy to Western Sahara, Pete Van Walsum, to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The UK is in regular contact with representatives of the parties to the dispute and the UN. The UK will continue to encourage all parties to engage with the UN process.

On 28 October, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1634 which renewed the mandate for the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. The Government supported this. There are, however, no plans for a UN referendum to be held in the near future.

Zanzibar

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of irregularities in the presidential elections in Zanzibar; what representations he has made to *(a)* the Zanzibar authorities and *(b)* the Tanzanian Government about such irregularities; and if he will make a statement. [28806]

Mr. Straw: Representatives from the British High Commission followed the electoral process closely. It was the broad assessment of international observer groups that the electoral process was a marked improvement on past polls, and was generally administered in an efficient manner.

Nevertheless, there were instances, particularly on Unguja, where there were irregularities and a lack of transparency. A number of observer groups have called for a thorough investigation of these anomalies. The UK and European Union support this call. We have conveyed these views to the Governments of Zanzibar and the United Republic of Tanzania.

My hon. Friend the former Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Chris Mullin), went to Zanzibar to observe the election as a Special Envoy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He met Chama Cha Mapinduzi Presidential candidate Kikwete on 1 November and discussed the importance of addressing the deeply polarised nature of Zanzibari politics.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what account was taken of the validity of the election in the decision that the UK's High Commissioner to Zanzibar attend the recent inauguration of the President. [28807]

Mr. Straw: The UK's High Commissioner attended the Zanzibar Presidential inauguration as European Union (EU) Presidency. EU missions followed the electoral process closely. In its statement of 1 November, the EU welcomed this third multi-party election and noted the broad assessment by international observer groups that the process was a marked improvement on past polls, and was generally administered in an efficient manner. The EU statement also made clear that there were instances of irregularities and lack of transparency, and that there should be a thorough investigation of these anomalies.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A and E Departments

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients were treated in the accident and emergency departments of hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [28856]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is shown in the table.

People who attended a hospital A&E department in Northern Ireland

	Number
1994–95	639,925
1995–96	672,811
1996–97	654,288
1997–98	664,549
1998–99	663,046
1999–2000	675,589
2000–01	672,654
2001–02	672,782
2002–03	659,659
2003–04	678,998
2004–05	690,386

Source:

Departmental Information Return KH09.

Abortions

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many abortions were carried out in Northern Ireland in the past 12 months. [28558]

Mr. Woodward: There were 64 medical abortions recorded in Northern Ireland hospitals in the year 2004–05, the latest 12 month period for which data are available.

Abuse of the Elderly

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people aged 65 years or over in Northern Ireland reported that they had suffered abuse in the last 12 months. [28164]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Apprenticeships

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many trainees entered electrical installation modern apprenticeships in each year between 2001–02 and 2005–06, broken down by *(a)* training provider and location and *(b)* council district in Northern Ireland. [26754]

Angela E. Smith: Since 1998 the Electrical Training Trust (ETT) is the training provider which has been contracted by the Department to manage all entrants to the electrical installation Jobskills Modern Apprenticeship programme. The following table sets out the number of young people who entered a Modern Apprenticeship in electrical engineering from 2001–02 to 2005–06. The Department does not have information by district council area.

Cohort	*Number*
2001–02	441
2002–03	418
2003–04	433
2004–05	396
2005–06[1]	330
Total	2,018

[1] Figures for the 2005–06 cohort are enrolments up to 30 September 2005.

Civil Service (Religious Affiliation)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the breakdown of religious affiliation of senior management is in each Government Department in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [25018]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Department	*Protestant*	*Roman Catholic*	*Not determined*	*Total*
OFMDFM	19	8	1	28
DARD	13	5	3	21
DCAL	—	—	—	6
DE	6	9	0	15
DEL	—	—	—	9
DETI	—	—	—	9
DOE	10	6	0	16
DFP	21	17	2	40
DHSSPS	18	10	6	34
DRD	—	—	—	22
DSD	11	8	1	20
NIO	18	6	1	25
Other	—	—	—	3
Totals	149	79	20	248

The table includes all members of the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service who work in the 11 Northern Ireland Departments, agencies and the Northern Ireland Office. In some cases it has not been possible to show the perceived religious affiliation of staff, due to the small numbers involved, in order to protect the confidentiality of the information held.

It is the stated policy of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work.

Where analysis of monitoring information reveals a possible lack of fair participation by one or other community, the NICS takes lawful affirmative action measures by encouraging job applications from the under-represented community when advertising vacancies.

Contraception

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines his Department issues to *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* others in Northern Ireland in relation to advising or informing the parents of children and young people for whom contraception is prescribed. [27715]

Mr. Woodward: Separate guidance has not been issued to health and social services personnel on this matter but it is covered by the Reference Guide to Consent for Examination, Treatment and Care issued by my Department in March 2003. This guidance states that where the child is competent to consent and the decision will have ongoing implications such as long-term use of contraception it is good practice to encourage the child to inform his or her parents unless it would clearly not be in the child's best interest to do so.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department between the end of the 2003–04 session and the end of April 2005, broken down by Act. [28472]

Mr. Hanson: No criminal offences were created by Acts in the period in question. For the sake of completeness however two offences were created by Northern Ireland Order in Council.

Public Processions (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005

Article 4—knowingly failing to comply with a condition imposed on a public protest

Article 5—knowingly taking part in a protest meeting which a person knows has been prohibited

Demographics

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in numbers of residents aged 85 years and over living in Northern Ireland has been since 1995. [27395]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the official estimate of the population of Northern Ireland of residents aged 85 years and over, at 30 June 1995 and 30 June 2004.

Northern Ireland mid-year population residents aged 85 years and over, 1995 and 2004

	Number
1995	21,700
2004	24,000
Difference	2,300

ELB Redundancies

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what procedures are in place to ensure that all education and library boards are following the accountancy practices laid down for treatment of expenditure on redundancies. [25547]

Angela E. Smith: Education and library boards must prepare accounts in accordance with the accounts direction given by the Department of Education, with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel, in accordance with article 12 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003. Expenditure on redundancies is calculated by education and library boards in accordance with statutory requirements, contractual obligations, Northern Ireland Local Government Officer Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) estimates of entitlements and costs, and the agreed five board scheme for premature retirement on the grounds of redundancy. Each education and library board's annual accounts are subject to audit by the Northern Ireland Audit Office to determine if they provide a true and fair view of the reported financial position including the expenditure recorded.

Energy Reduction

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans for energy reduction have been put in place in each Northern Ireland Department since 2003. [25785]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland Departments have adopted the targets for improvements in energy performance contained in the 2003 Government White Paper "Our energy future—creating a low carbon economy". Departments are accommodated in buildings provided and managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel, which conducts a continuous programme of improvements of building energy performance in pursuit of the targets.

Since 2003, within the office estate planned actions have included conducting surveys to identify and implement cost-effective energy conservation measures; converting suitable buildings from oil or electric heating to natural gas; and purchasing green electricity, where this represents value for money. Similar actions have been taken in the specialised buildings within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development,

Official vehicle fleets are now generally diesel fuelled, and the official car pool has purchased two petrol/electric hybrid cars. Local plans are also in place covering car travel.

Food Poisoning

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many food poisoning outbreaks have occurred in each health trust area in each of the past five years; and how many of these have been identified as having originated in *(a)* the Republic of Ireland and *(b)* elsewhere outside Northern Ireland. [28204]

Mr. Woodward: The number of food poisoning outbreaks that have occurred in each health trust area is not available. However, the number of food poisoning outbreaks that have occurred in each health board area and whether they originated from within Northern Ireland or abroad is available. These figures, as reported to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre Northern Ireland, (CDSCN1), are detailed in the following table for each of the last five years for which data are available.

	Total	NI	Outbreak originating in: (a) Republic of Ireland	(b) Abroad
EHSSB	3	3	0	0
NHSSB	3	3	0	0
SHSSB	0	0	0	0
WHSSB	1	1	0	0
EHSSB	4	4	0	0
NHSSB	3	2	0	1
SHSSB	0	0	0	0
WHSSB	0	0	0	0
EHSSB	0	0	0	0
NHSSB	2	2	0	0
SHSSB	0	0	0	0
WHSSB	0	0	0	0
EHSSB	2	2	0	0
NHSSB	2	2	0	0
SHSSB	0	0	0	0
WHSSB	1	1	0	0
NI Outbreak	1	0	0	1
EHSSB	6	0	0	0
NHSSB	0	0	0	0
SHSSB	0	0	0	0
WHSSB	0	0	0	0
NI Outbreak	2	0	0	2

Notes:

1. There were no food-borne outbreaks reported as originating in ROI.

2. Figures for NI Outbreak are presented separately as they cannot be attributed to any particular health board area.

Home Adaptations

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time taken to carry out home adaptations by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive following a recommendation by an occupational therapist was in each year since 2003. [27713]

Mr. Hanson: The Housing Executive measures the time taken from receipt of a recommendation from an occupational therapist (OT) to the commencement of works against agreed standards and a classification of cases according to their urgency/priority. Each adaptation is tailored to the specific needs of the individual person concerned. The length of time taken by a contractor to then complete a job is variable and can range from a few days to a few months for extensions.

From the receipt of an OT recommendation to work starting, in the public sector, the figures are as follows:

Percentage

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Lifts			
Within 12 weeks	66	91	89
Within 22 weeks	93	97	97
Extensions			
Started within 30 weeks	20	23	36
Started within 46 weeks	53	56	64
Started within 60 weeks	70	71	79

[1] To end September 2005.

Percentage

	April to September 2005
Showers	
Within 10 weeks	72[1]
Within 40 weeks	77[2]

[1] Urgent cases.
[2] Non-urgent cases.

Note:
Figures only available from 2004.

Private sector

The average length of time taken to carry out home adaptations in the private sector with Northern Ireland Housing Executive Grant aid following an occupational therapist's recommendation is as follows:

	Weeks
2003–04	116
2004–05	121
2005–06	117

Much of the period indicated above is outside the Housing Executive's direct control. For example:

The period for the applicant to complete a formal grant application. This includes getting plans drawn up and approved by the occupational therapist and the Housing Executive. This type of work often requires building control and planning approval and ordinarily Housing Executive allows six months for completion of this stage.

The period for the Housing Executive to undertake the means test and calculate the costs of the grant-aided works.

The period for the applicant to engage a contractor and have the works carried out and the period for sign-off of the final approval of the completed works and making the final payment.

Housing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average amount of outstanding debt owed by *(a)* tenants and *(b)* past tenants of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was at the end of 2004, broken down by constituency. [27018]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the form requested. The following table details past and current tenant arrears by NIHE district office at the end of the financial year 2004–05.

Rent/rates arrears at end 2004–05

	Current tenants	*Past tenants*	£ *Total*
Belfast 1	485,544	107,938	593,482
Belfast 2	649,625	205,479	855,104
Belfast 3	401,547	74,104	475,651
Belfast 4	747,688	245,187	992,875
Belfast 5	745,808	280,770	1,026,578
Belfast 6	412,668	178,762	591,429
Belfast 7	739,693	186,245	925,938
Belfast area	4,182,573	1,278,485	5,461,058
Bangor	631,552	101,367	732,919
N'ards	556,235	164,924	721,159
Castlereagh	625,561	241 ,624	867,185
Lisburn	670,231	285,165	955,396
Lisburn 3	320,578	87,838	408,416
D'patrick	355,090	118,311	473,401
S east area	3,159,248	999,229	4,158,477
Banbridge	270,926	82,594	353,520
Newry	324,153	90,802	414,955
Armagh	169,272	62,270	231,543
Lurgan/B'low	290,775	70,472	361,246
P'down	248,778	86,684	335,461
Dungannon	249,417	62,335	311,753
Fermanagh	228,029	33,948	261,977
South area	1,781,350	489,105	2,270,455
B'mena	241,397	62,678	304,075
Antrim	292,106	42,037	334,143
N'abbey 1	325,319	40,325	365,644
N'abbey 2	237,667	116,012	353,679
Carrick	229,263	56,984	286,247
Larne	148,411	99,911	248,322
B'castle	66,536	19,626	86,161
B'money	129,991	28,503	158,494
Coleraine	324,696	142,514	467,210
N east area	1,995,385	608,589	2,603,973
W'loo place	223,704	28,755	252,459
Waterside	535,554	232,563	768,116
Coll terr	415,556	97,301	512,857
Limavady	275,691	66,669	342,360
M'felt	235,848	48,842	284,689
Strabane	465,588	99,149	564,738
Omagh	276,218	58,374	334,592
Cookstown	182,663	14,720	197,383
West area	2,610,823	646,373	3,257,195
NI Total	13,729,379	4,021,780	17,751,158

Mental Health

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on perinatal mental illness in Northern Ireland. [28854]

Mr. Woodward: Care for those suffering from perinatal mental health problems, including psychiatric illness, takes place at all levels within the health care system (psychiatric services, maternity and child welfare services and primary health care). Overall information in relation to perinatal mental illness is not available.

Out-patients (Waiting Times)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time was for out-patients to be treated at accident and emergency

units of the main hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the 12 months to *(a)* September 2004 and *(b)* September 2005. [27394]

Mr. Woodward: Information on average waiting times for out-patients treated at accident and emergency units is not collected centrally.

Railways

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of passenger train journeys made on *(a)* the lesser used lines and *(b)* the core network in Northern Ireland since 1 January were undertaken by train sets acquired in the past two years. [26579]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available. However, Translink is currently collating information on train operations on the core network and on the lesser used lines and when this becomes available I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

Religious Profiles

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information his Department has collected about the extent to which the religious composition of the population of each ward in the province has changed in the last 30 years. [26959]

Angela E. Smith: The census of population provides information on the religious composition of each electoral ward. However, ward boundaries are reviewed periodically, and the results are presented for the wards current at the time of the census, The outputs from the last three censuses were thus based on different ward structures and it is not possible to track change at ward level over time directly from available census outputs. Estimates on a single ward geography could be made for each census using best-fit approximations, but this would require additional work and the interpretation of any observed trends would need to take cognisance of factors such as changes in the questionnaire wording, differences in the levels of non-response to the religion question, different population bases and different treatments of non-response in each census.

Safefood/Food Standards Agency

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the extent of the level of interaction is between safefood and the Foods Standards Agency; and what assessment he has made of the merits of reviewing the relationship between the two bodies to promote effectiveness and cost efficiency. [28463]

Mr. Woodward: Section 34 of the Food Standards Act 1999, which established the Food Standards Agency (FSA), states that the FSA must take account of, and consult with, the Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB)—also known as safefood—in carrying out its activities.

There has been significant contact between the FSA Board, particularly through the Northern Ireland member on that body, and the FSPB. In the current year, the Northern Ireland member has met with the chair of the FSPB Advisory Board, and addressed a formal meeting of the FSPB governing body. The FSPB chief executive has also made a presentation on relationships between his organisation and the FSA at a meeting of the NI Food Advisory Committee, which is chaired by the FSA's Northern Ireland Board member.

At official level, a concordat has been established between the FSA and FSPB to guide working relations. Two formal meetings of senior management teams from both organisations have taken place, with the next meeting planned for March 2006,

Practical examples of both organisations working together in the past year include: the Director of FSA NI Chairs an All Island Nutrition Forum—the Secretariat is provided by the FSPB; representation from FSA NI on the FSPB's Consumer Focused Review; a jointly resourced stand at the Balmoral Show; jointly co-ordinated and sponsored National Food Safety Week initiatives in Northern Ireland; a jointly organised and resourced seminar in Dublin, on the subject of salt consumption. Both organisations continue to explore how they jointly carry out their work in an effective and efficient way, and this scope for review is enshrined in the UK legislation and in the concordat between the FSA and FSPB. The relationship between both bodies continues to develop and this can only further enhance the effectiveness of their joint work and ensure cost efficiencies for the taxpayer. A good example of this are plans in 2007 for FSA to carry out a major UK-wide survey on food consumption, the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, which will for the first time include a sample for Northern Ireland. The costs of the sample for Northern Ireland are high, and could not be met out of the current FSA NI budget. The FSPB has agreed to make a significant financial contribution to facilitate the survey.

Sexual Health

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what services are provided in each Health Board Area in respect of sexually transmitted infections; and what the *(a)* budget, *(b)* staffing profile and *(c)* service level is in each. [26821]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows.

Service provision/level

	Provision
EHSSB	
Royal Group of Hospitals	Consultant-led GUM clinics Monday to Friday, morning and afternoon. Additional nurse-led sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday
SHSSB	
Daisy Hill Hospital	Consultant-led GUM clinics on Wednesday mornings. Additional nurse-led session on Monday evening
NHSSB	
Causeway Hospital	Consultant-led GUM clinics twice per week
WHSSB	
Altnagelvin Hospital	Consultant-led GUM clinics, six times per week

Funding provision 2004–05

	£
EHSSB	2,237,000
SHSSB	510,000
NHSSB	330,000
WHSSB	246,000

Staffing levels

	Number
EHSSB	
Consultants	[1]2.6
Specialist Registrars	2
Trainees	2
Nursing Staff	[1]11
Health advisers	2
Clerical/secretarial staff	[1]4.75
Staff grades	n/k
Hospital practitioners	n/k
Clinical assistants	n/k
SHSSB	
Consultant	1
GP's with Specialist interest in GUM	3
Nurses	4
Sexual Health Adviser	1
Healthcare Assistant	1
Nursing Auxiliary	1
Senior Health Promotion Officer	1
NHSSB	
Consultant	1
GPs	3
Nurses	5
Senior Health Promotion Officer	1
WHSSB	
Visiting Consultant	1
Hospital Practitioners	3
Grade G Charge Nurse	1
Grade E Staff Nurse	2

'n/k' = not known
[1] WTE

Sexual Offences Act

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to bring Northern Ireland legislation into line with sections 1–14 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. [27714]

Mr. Hanson: The Government are currently considering the options for reform of the law on sexual offences in Northern Ireland.

Smoking

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of smoking-related diseases in Northern Ireland. [28220]

Mr. Woodward: This information is not available. However, for the purposes of the draft Regulatory Impact Assessment, which was prepared to inform the policy on controlling smoking in enclosed public places and work places, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has estimated that, in 2003–04, the Northern Ireland hospital costs of treating circulatory and respiratory diseases of which active smoking could be a contributory factor was £74 million.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of people in Northern Ireland who smoke; and if he will make a statement. [28221]

Mr. Woodward: Smoking prevalence in Northern Ireland since 1996–97 is set out in the table.

Financial Year	*Prevalence*
1996–97	29
1998–99	29
2000–01	27
2002–03	26
2004–05	26

Source:
Continuous Household Survey.

Further data on smoking prevalence in Northern Ireland are available on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency website:
www.csu.nisra.gov.uk

In 2003, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety published a Five Year Tobacco Action Plan to tackle smoking. The Department continues to fund public information campaigns on tobacco arid the development of a range of smoking cessation services across Northern Ireland.

South Eastern ELB

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* area high schools within the South Eastern education and library board area are being considered for closure; and if he will make a statement. [28157]

Angela E. Smith: The South Eastern education and library board plans to create two primary schools through the amalgamation of four schools in Lisburn and two in Holywood.

The board is also currently undertaking strategic reviews of controlled school provision in the Lisburn, Dunmurry, Castlereagh, Bangor and North East Ards areas. These reviews have been subject to consultation and they identify options, including some potential rationalisations. Further detailed consideration of the options will be required before any decisions are made.

There are currently no plans for maintained school closures in the board area.

Vocational Qualifications

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of young people in the Province acquired *(a)* apprentice, *(b)* skilled craft and *(c)* technician level vocational qualifications in each of the last five years. [25790]

Angela E. Smith: The following table details the percentage of young people (aged 16–19) in Northern Ireland who gained a vocational qualification at levels of study 2 to 4 (assumed to equate to apprentice, skilled craft and technician level vocational qualifications) in the 5-year period 1999–2000 to 2003–04. The data relate to schools, further education provision and jobskills qualifications.

	Percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds who obtained a vocational qualification at levels of study 2–4
1999–2000	14
2000–01	15
2001–02	16
2002–03	14
2003–04	13

Note:
16-year-olds cannot generally obtain vocational qualifications at school.

TREASURY

Alcohol and Smoking-related Deaths

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many deaths in *(a)* England and *(b)* West Lancashire (i) consumption of alcohol and (ii) smoking was the main cause in the last year for which figures are available. [27695]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Rosie Cooper, dated 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking in how many deaths in *(a)* England and *(b)* West Lancashire (i) consumption of alcohol and (ii) smoking was the main cause in the last year for which figures are available. I am replying in her absence. (27695)

The most recently available information for mortality is deaths registered in 2004. The table below shows numbers of deaths among residents of England and West Lancashire local authority, where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in 2004.

Information is not recorded on the death certificate on smoking. Estimates can however be made of the number of deaths attributable to smoking, by making use of information on the contribution of smoking to specific conditions recorded at death. The most recent estimates for England were published by the Health Development Agency in 2004[1]. This report estimated that between 1998 and 2002 an annual average of 86,500 deaths were caused by smoking in England.

Estimates were not published at parliamentary constituency or local authority level. However maps based on the estimated percentage of all deaths from causes attributable to smoking, at ages 35 and over, were published for Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). For West Lancashire it was estimated that 32 per cent. of all deaths of those aged 35 and over were attributable to smoking[2]. West Lancashire PCT is coterminous with West Lancashire local authority.

[1] Twigg L, Moon G and Walker S. The smoking epidemic in England. Health Development Agency, 2004.

[2] Information supplied by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] to usual residents of England and West Lancashire local authority, registered 2004

Area of residence	*Number of deaths*
England	6,125
West Lancashire	14

[1] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol.
Notes:
1. Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
2. The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A. and Rooney C. (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths where alcohol was the primary cause there were in West Lancashire in the last five years. [27847]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Rosie Cooper, dated 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths where alcohol was the primary cause there were in West Lancashire in the last five years. I am replying in her absence. (27847)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. The attached table shows the numbers of deaths among residents of West Lancashire local authority where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 2000 to 2004.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] to usual residents of West Lancashire local authority, registered 2000–04

	Number of deaths
2000	13
2001	18
2002	13
2003	18
2004	14

[1] For the year 2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol
For the years 2001–04 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol
Notes:
1. Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
2. The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A. and Rooney C. (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.

Birth Statistics

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many births there were to women resident in Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority area at *(a)* individual maternity hospitals, *(b)* midwife-led units, *(c)* home and *(d)* other locations in each year since 2000. [27498]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the number of births to women resident in the Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority at (a) individual maternity hospitals, (b) midwife-led units, (c) home and (d) other locatons in each year since 2000. I am replying in her absence. (27498)

The attached table relates to babies born in England and Wales to women usually resident in the Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority area at the tme of the birth. Figures are presented for categories (a) and (b) combined, (c) and (d). Information is not available centrally on which of these institutions are mid-wife led units, so these are not listed separately.

Hospitals where more than 30 live births took place over the period 2000 to 2004 have been shown individually; the remaining ones have been aggregated in the 'Other hospitals' sub-total. Births in the 'Elsewhere' category are mainly those occurring on the way to hospital or at a private residence which is not that of the mother.

Live births by place of occurrence for women resident in Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA area 2000–04

		Year of occurrence				
	Place of occurrence	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*20043*	*2004*
a) + b)	Maternity hospital/unit					
	North Staffs Maternity Hospital	4,774	4,626	4,633	4,860	5,242
	Royal Shrewsbury Hospital	3,536	3,419	3,522	3,679	3,698
	District Hospital, Stafford	1,984	2,020	1,966	2,088	2,195
	Burton District Hospital Centre	1,801	1,855	1,877	1,933	1,970
	Good Hope Hospital	699	665	616	706	716
	Wrekin Maternity Unit, Princess Royal Hospital, Telford	124	449	464	426	479
	New Cross Hospital	401	404	372	374	366
	Manor Hospital, Walsall	314	328	310	307	284
	Victoria Hospital, Lichfield	237	292	265	326	313
	Wordsley Hospital	220	211	181	192	224
	Macclesfield District General	175	171	184	190	203
	Ysbyty Maelor, Wrexham	78	72	107	107	119
	Ludlow Hospital	74	83	79	77	98
	Orthopaedic and District Hospital, Oswestry	88	85	79	67	65
	Bridgnorth Hospital	85	57	81	67	68
	Wrekin Hospital	272	0	0	0	0
	Birmingham Women's Hospital, Edgbaston	48	51	54	47	36
	Derby City General	46	46	47	38	43
	Maternity Hospital, Nuneaton	39	40	35	35	46
	Leighton Hospital	28	32	31	31	30
	County Hospital, Hereford	18	16	26	21	28
	Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Newtown	0	0	30	37	37
	Royal Infirmary (Ronkswood), Worcester	26	34	13	0	0
	Countess of Chester Hospital	9	16	8	12	13
	Birmingham Heartlands Hospital	9	7	7	9	5
	Liverpool Women's Hospital	5	7	10	8	5
	City Hospital Winson Green, Birmingham	4	3	12	10	6
	Other hospitals*	78	83	75	73	86
c)	At home	243	211	189	258	269
d)	Elsewhere	24	23	34	27	22
	Total	15,439	15,306	15,307	16,005	16,666

*There were 112 hospitals/units in the 'Other' category where there was a least one birth in the period 2000 to 2004.

Child Trust Fund

Anne Moffat: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children in East Lothian are eligible to receive the Child Trust Fund. [28836]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. Information on the number of live births in East Lothian will be updated and placed in the House of Commons Library in due course. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Anne Moffat: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much is being spent in 2005–06 on newspaper advertising to improve the take-up rate of the Child Trust Fund in the UK. [28837]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Gentleman for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 47–48W.

Anne Moffat: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much is being spent in 2005–06 on commercial radio in Scotland to improve the take-up rate of the Child Trust Fund. [28838]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HMRC is not currently running any radio advertising about the Child Trust Fund.

Anne Moffat: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which companies are providing the Helpline for Child Trust Fund inquiries; and how many staff they employ. [28839]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Child Trust Fund Helpline is provided by 25 HM Revenue and Customs employees based at the Bathgate Call Centre.

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the tax credit office expects to be able to reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birkenhead regarding the problems affecting the tax credits of his constituent, Mr Longsdale. [25130]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credit office sent a reply to my right hon. Friend on 9 November 2005.

Council Tax Rebate

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Treasury has budgeted for the £200 council tax rebate. [27952]

Dawn Primarolo: The 2004 pre-Budget report and Budget 2005 both announced additional payments for pensioners to help with council tax bills and other living expenses. Further information on the cost of these measures can be found at table 1.2 of the 2005 Budget document and table 1.2 of the 2004 pre-Budget report document.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27735]

John Healey: The only amount of damages the Treasury paid in 2004–05 was one payment of £79 for damage to an official's clothing.

EU Corporation Tax

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy to support the creation of a single corporation tax base within the European Union; what assessment he has made of the development of such a base through decisions of the European Court; and what his policy is on the Kovacs' measures on tax harmonisation within the EU. [28610]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government's view is that fair tax competition is the way forward for Europe, not proposals for tax harmonisation including company tax base consolidation.

Decisions of the European Court are considered, as a matter of course, to see whether there are any potential implications for the UK.

Gershon Review

Tim Farron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to ensure that no Inland Revenue and Customs office customer service offices in Cumbria are closed as part of the current review. [28265]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 90W.

Gold Sales

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 366W, on gold sales, (1) what assumptions were used in measuring the risk, when calculating the value-at-risk reduction of approximately 30 per cent.; [27964]

(2) whether the Treasury conducted a value-at-risk calculation on the alternative structure of the foreign exchange reserves at that time for comparative purposes; [27965]

(3), what the total return from the reinvested proceeds of the sale were, including interest in pounds sterling, from the announcement in May 1999 to October 2005; and what estimate he has made of the likely total return over the same period if the gold had not been sold. [27966]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the value at risk calculations that were conducted and the assumptions made can be found at Annex B "Review of the sale of part of the UK gold reserves" published in October 2002, which is available on the Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.aov.uk/media//9EFEF/GoldReserves.PDF

The decision to rebalance the reserves portfolio by selling gold was a long-term investment decision not a short-term attempt to play the market. Reducing the riskiness of the portfolio can only be assessed meaningfully in the medium to long term because in the meantime short-term fluctuations in assets prices could mask the benefits of risk reduction.

Illegal Drug Deaths

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths have been caused in West Lancashire by illegal drugs since 1997. [28093]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Rosie Cooper, dated 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many deaths have been caused in West Lancashire by illegal drugs since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (28093)

Figures readily available from death certification relate deaths due to drug poisoning, not the total number that were attributable to drug use. These figures are produced from a special database which contains deaths where the underlying cause was drug poisoning. Deaths that may be caused indirectly by drug use, for example HIV infection or road traffic accidents, are not included. Death registration data are not the best source of information on these "indirect" deaths, because information on the role of drug use in the death may not be provided on the death certificate.

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2003. There were 14 deaths certified as due to drug poisoning[1] and involving drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act to residents of West Lancashire[2] in the seven years 1997 to 2003[3]. We cannot provide a further breakdown by year due to possible individual disclosure resulting from the small numbers of deaths involved.

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision for 2001–2003: F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85 and the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision for 1997–2000: 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5

[2] Usual residents of West Lancashire.

[3] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year

Immunisation

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the potential debt liability arising from the International Finance Facility for Immunisation when it is drawn down. [28352]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: No debt liability will arise for the UK from the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm). The UK has pledged 35 per cent. of the total resources required for a $4 billion IFFIm, equivalent to payments of $130 million a year, which will be recorded as government expenditure on an annual basis, in the year they are made.

This follows the decision on 2 August of Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, which stated that the borrowing of the IFFIm should not be considered as a liability of donor countries, and that donations to the IFFIm should be scored as government expenditure in the year in which they are made.

The IFFIm, launched on 9 September, will provide an additional $4 billion over the next 10 years to fund immunisation in the world's poorest countries, saving an estimated 10 million lives.

Income Tax

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of taxpayers in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* the UK paid tax at the (i) basic rate and (ii) higher rate in 2004–05. [27843]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to table 2.1 'Number of individual income taxpayers' on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/table2–1.pdf.

The percentages of individuals paying income tax at the basic rate and higher rate in the UK can be calculated from the data provided in the table.

The income tax information is based upon the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) projected forward to 2004–05 in line with Budget 2005 assumptions.

Latest information on the estimated number of income taxpayers and their mean and median total income in West Lancashire constituency is shown in table 3.15 'Total Income by Parliamentary Constituency' on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/table-3–15.xls.

Similar information for West Lancashire district is shown in table 3.14 'Total income by borough and district or unitary authority' http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#314.

A breakdown by tax bands is not available because the sample sizes for marginal rates at constituency and district level are very small and demonstrate a large variability year on year.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first-class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27680]

John Healey: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end

of the current financial year. Detailed analysis of other forms of ministerial travel could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within his Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and who accompanied the ministers on each trip. [27803]

John Healey: In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used, and shows how many officials accompanied Ministers in those circumstances. The Government have also published on an annual basis the

cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–06. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Equivalent detail about domestic travel could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

National Debt

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the long-term impact on tax rates of the national debt. [28647]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The sustainable investment rule ensures public sector net debt and debt interest payments stay at a low and sustainable level. This ensures the Government's objective of sound public finances and that spending and taxation impact fairly within and between generations.

Budget 2005 projections show public sector net debt remains low, stabilising at around 37 per cent. of GDP by the end of the forecast period, well below the 40 per cent. level and comfortably meeting the sustainable investment rule.

Updated projections will be published in the 2005 pre-Budget report as usual, taking into account all relevant factors and developments.

P11D Returns

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to *(a)* amend the current definition of those subject to P11D returns as higher rate earners and *(b)* raise the threshold for the requirement to submit a P11D return. [28623]

Dawn Primarolo: The current definition of those subject to P11D returns is "a director or employee who earned at a rate of £8,500 a year or more". There are no plans to change the criteria or to raise the threshold.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people on the national minimum wage he estimates are required to submit P11D returns as higher rate earners. [28624]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when he will provide substantive answers to the questions from the hon. Member for Birkenhead tabled on 19 October 2005, (references 21082 and 21173.); [26809]

(2) when he will provide substantive answers to the questions from the hon. Member for Birkenhead tabled on 19 October 2005 (references 21141 and 21147); [26810]

(3) when he will provide a substantive answer to the question from the hon. Member for Birkenhead tabled on 21 October 2005 (reference 22002). [26812]

Dawn Primarolo: I have answered the five questions concerned.

Peformance-related Pay

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs are to receive performance-related pay (PRP) in 2005–06; and for how many staff PRP is directly linked to revenue collection targets. [28611]

Dawn Primarolo: In HMRC, all pay awards are performance-related, because staff must achieve a satisfactory standard of performance to qualify for an award.

From 2006, the top 20 per cent. of staff will receive an additional non-consolidated, non-pensionable bonus. Approximately 85 per cent. of HMRC staff work in business units concerned with revenue collection. The PRP of these staff is directly linked to revenue collection targets.

The remaining 15 per cent. of staff work in business units, which support the work of those delivering revenue collection targets. There is therefore an indirect link between revenue collection targets and the PRP of these staff.

Pensions

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 306W, on pensions, what the total public sector pension deficit liability was in 1997 calculated on any available basis; and what the basis of the calculation was of the £460 billion figure given. [27369]

Mr. Des Browne: An estimate of the total of pension assets and liabilities across the public sector is not available.

For the basis of the calculation of the £460 billion figure for the unfunded public service pension liabilities I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member on 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 775–76W.

PFI Deals

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in including estimates of the finance lease loan element of private finance initiative deals in public sector debt figures; and if he will make a statement. [27758]

John Healey: Ms Karen Dunnell, the National Statistician, told the Treasury Select Committee on 9 November 2005 that she hoped to complete the work in the summer of 2006.

Dr. Cable: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the impact on public sector debt of the finance lease loan element of private finance initiative deals; and if he will make a statement. [27759]

John Healey: The Office for National Statistics has not yet made an estimate of the impact on Public Sector Net Debt (PSND) of including the implied debt in on-balance-sheet private finance initiative deals. Work is in hand to produce a robust number for inclusion in PSND.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28167]

John Healey: The Treasury has no call centres.

Small Businesses

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of providing tax relief to small businesses investing in measures to protect themselves against crime. [28205]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government keeps all tax reliefs under review. Expenditure incurred by businesses on the protection of business premises or the safeguarding of staff is eligible for relief providing it satisfies the general rules that provide relief for business expenditure. In addition, where relief might not otherwise be allowable under the general rules because of the personal benefit to the employee or proprietor, there is special provision for relief for security expenditure relating to threats to employees and proprietors of businesses.

Suicides

Rosie Cooper: To ask The Chancellor of the Exchequer how many suicides there were in West Lancashire, in the most recent year for which figures are available, by young people aged 15 to 24 years, *(a)* broken down by sex and *(b)* expressed as a percentage of all suicides. [27840]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many suicides there were in West Lancashire in the most recent year for which figures are available by young people aged 15 to 24 years, broken down by sex and expressed as a percentage of all suicides. I am replying in her absence. (27840)

The most recently available information is for deaths registered in 2004. In this year there were no suicides of people aged 15 to 24 registered for usual residents of West Lancashire local authority.[1]

[1] In routine statistics, ONS defines suicides as deaths from both intentional self-harm and 'injury or poisoning of undetermined intent'. Data were searched using the following International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes:

Intentional self-harm—ICD-10 X60–X84.

Injury or poisoning of undetermined intent—ICD-10 Y10–Y34 excluding Y33.9 where the Coroner's verdict was pending.

Surveys and Research

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list all externally commissioned surveys and research by his Department and its agencies in each year since 1997, indicating for each *(a)* the external contractor employed, *(b)* the cost and *(c)* the time taken to complete; and if he will make a statement. [27823]

John Healey: This information is not held centrally in the Treasury or its agencies, and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons HM Revenue and Customs introduced new telephone call management and monitoring equipment to the tax credit MP hotline. [26260]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* HM Revenue and Customs introduced new telephony equipment to the tax credits MP hotline facility to provide call management information and maintain quality assurance of service it provides for hon. Members.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the *(a)* internal and *(b)* external reviews that have been conducted into the tax credit IT system (i) before it was introduced and (ii) since its introduction. [18867]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs and their IT suppliers keep the development and operation of the tax credit computer system under constant review. The Department commissioned two formal reviews of the development of the system that were carried out in September 2001 and October 2003.

There have been four formal external gateway reviews of the Tax Credits Programme carried out by the Office of Government Commerce between December 2002 and March 2005.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times manual payments of tax credits have been made when the recovery of an overpayment could not be suspended. [18869]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Revenue and Customs claims for the repayment of child tax credit are outstanding; what the total value of such claims is; whether he plans to change the system by which child tax credit payments are *(a)* assessed and *(b)* made; and if he will make a statement. [19227]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 19 October 2005]:* Details on the amount of tax credits payments outstanding at 31 March 2005 can be found in the Department of Inland Revenue 2004–05 Trust Statement.

In my written statement of 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, columns 22–23WS, I said that I had agreed six measures with HMRC to improve the administration of tax credits, with particular regard to how the Department communicates with families about their tax credits award, reducing the risk of errors adding to the number of overpayments and improving procedures for recovering overpayments.

My right. hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury said in the Chamber on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 449, that where a claimant disputes the recovery of an overpayment action will be taken to prevent automatic recovery of any outstanding

amount owed until the tax credit office has looked into the case and made a decision. This applies both to the cases on hand and to new cases going forward.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many additional tax credit payments have been made in each *(a)* month, *(b)* quarter and *(c)* year since April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [19293]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 331W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have *(a)* complained about and *(b)* appealed against tax credit overpayments for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [19296]

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have *(a)* complained about and *(b)* appealed against tax credit over payments for 2003–04. [19747]

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have *(a)* complained about and *(b)* appealed against tax credit overpayments in respect of 2003–04 in West Lancashire. [27750]

Dawn Primarolo: Figures on the number of complaints received about the recovery of a tax credit overpayment are not available for 2003–04. For the number of requests received disputing the recovery of an overpayment I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2385W.

Tax credits claimants have a right of appeal against decisions about their tax credit entitlement but claimants are able to pursue with HM Revenue and Customs any disagreement concerning the recovery of an overpayment. The Department's Code of Practice 26, 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?' describes their approach to overpayments and is available on the internet at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/cop26.pdf

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit awards which are being paid off-system have received manual giro payments for *(a)* one month, *(b)* two months, *(c)* three months, *(d)* six months and *(e)* 12 months or more. [19403]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many manual payments of tax credits are being made; and if he will make a statement. [28211]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested by my right hon. Friend (the Member for Birkenhead) is not available at the requested level of detail. HM Revenue and Customs is currently making manual tax credits payments to around 16,000 households.

Mike Wood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of low income claimants have experienced gaps in tax credit payments due to *(a)* overpayment investigations and *(b)* recovery action. [19656]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints about tax credits have been received in each month since June 2004. [20016]

Dawn Primarolo: Complaints about tax credits can be made in various ways, including as part of telephone calls, visits to HM Revenue and Customs Enquiry Centres, and written correspondence from claimants where the primary purpose of the communication is to receive or provide information. No comprehensive count of such complaints is maintained.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many compensation payments have been made by the tax credits department of HM Revenue and Customs for poor service in each month since January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [20017]

Dawn Primarolo: The circumstances in which the former Inland Revenue and HM Revenue and Customs will make compensation payments to its customers are explained in the Department's code of practice 1 "Putting things right" which is available at www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/cop1.pdf

The Department will pay compensation for reasonable costs incurred as a direct result of their mistakes or delays and to recognise worry and distress caused by those mistakes and delays.

The Department will make a compensation payment if they believe it is justified even if the customer has not asked for compensation.

The total number of compensation payments in relation to tax credits, by HMRC's Tax Credit Office and contact centres, in each month is:

	Number
2004	
January	329
February	880
March	1,399
April	1,507
May	2,150
June	1,639
July	1,805
August	1,657
September	1,441
October	1,429
November	1,304
December	1,476
1995	
January	1,884
February	2,162
March	1,733
April	1,202
May	1,653
June	1,929
July	1,542
August	1,296
September	1,087

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) in what circumstances a tax credit claimant who provides *(a)* job details and hours worked but no income details and *(b)* job details and hours worked for a disabled partner but no income details as

part of a joint claim containing the disability element could receive working tax credits based on them having nil income; [21141]

(2) what measures are in place to alert staff responsible for tax credits when a claim for working tax credit contains *(a)* job details and the number of hours worked, but no income details leading to a maximum award of tax credit and *(b)* the disability element in respect of a partner in a joint claim who has given job details and hours worked but no income details. [21082]

Dawn Primarolo: Where a claimant has provided a number of hours worked but not given any income details, the Tax Credit Office will be automatically alerted to ask for further information from the claimant. The Tax Credit Office will check the income details for the award with the claimant. Any entitlement for working tax credit would be based on the information provided by the claimant at that stage.

The notes sent with the claim form inform self-employed claimants that should their business have made a loss in the preceding tax year, they should enter their income as nil. It is on this basis that a nil income claim is processed as valid.

If, for some reason, an award is established on the wrong income, the claimant would be able to check the income details on which the award is based on the award notice. Accompanying guidance asks claimants to inform HMRC if their income has gone up or down in the current year. At the end of the tax year, the claimants are asked to confirm their actual income for the year.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times the IT system supporting the MPs' tax credit hotline has been out of operation since 2003; and what the duration of the downtime was in each instance. [22006]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* New telephony equipment was introduced to the MP hotline on 7 October 2005. There has been one case of downtime since, on the 10 October 2005, when the MP hotline was down for a 30 minute period.

Prior to 7 October 2005 the hotline's telephone system was not supported by an IT system.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the estimate is of overpaid tax credits written off in 2004-05; [22826]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (2) how much official error relief for tax credits was written off in each month from January to October; and if he will make a statement. [24585]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 496–97W. Following a data cleansing exercise, which removed some duplicated records from the system, the amounts written off in June, July, August and September 2005 were around:

Month 2005	*Amount written off £000*
July	24,400
August	27,300
September	18,500

Details of the amount written off in October 2005 are not yet available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many scheduled tax credit payments were not made automatically on the first scheduled payment date after a claim was decided for each year since 2003–04; and what the average delay was in each case. [26263]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

UK Competitiveness

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received regarding *(a)* productivity levels, *(b)* business investment and *(c)* United Kingdom competitiveness. [28949]

John Healey: The Chancellor of Exchequer receives representations from a wide range of organisations and individuals. These cover a range of issues, including UK productivity and competitiveness, and business investment.

Unemployment

David Mundell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of people in Scotland receive unemployment benefit. [28450]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Mundell dated, 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question regarding the number and percentage of people who were receiving unemployment benefit in Scotland. I am replying in her absence. (28450)

The latest available statistics for September 2005 show that, on a seasonally adjusted basis, there were 85,700 people resident in Scotland who were claiming the Jobseeker's Allowance. This represented 2.7 per cent. of the working age resident population of Scotland.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the working-age population was unemployed in each ward in Rochdale constituency in each year since 1997. [28935]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Paul Rowen, dated 15 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in her absence. (28935)

The Office for National Statistics compiles statistics of employment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, estimates of employment are not available for wards as the survey sample size for such areas is too small.

Table 1 shows the 2001 Census figures for numbers of persons of working age in employment, and those in employment as a percentage of the total resident working age population, for the wards of the Rochdale constituency.

The data are published in the Labour Market profiles for wards on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Number of employed persons of working age, and working age employment rate in the wards of the Rochdale parliamentary constituency

Wards[1]	*Number in employment*	*Employment rate (%)*
Balderstone	3,755	65.7
Brimrod and Deeplish	2,914	58.8
Central and Falinge	2,882	49.3
Healey	6,300	73.7
Littleborough	6,038	77.2
Newbold	3,766	57.6
Smallbridge and Wardleworth	3,866	48.9
Spotland	3,713	71.8
Wardle	4,257	73.6
Total	37,491	

[1] Census Area Statistics Wards

Source:
2001 Census

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of youth unemployment has been in Great Yarmouth in each of the last five years. [28042]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Anthony Wright, dated 15 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about youth unemployment. (28042)

Table 1 shows the total numbers of unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 who were resident in the Great Yarmouth Parliamentary Constituency. The table covers the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 2001 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability. Changes in the estimates from year to year should be treated with particular caution.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2 shows the annual average number of JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Great Yarmouth constituency for 2000 to 2004.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Number of unemployed, aged 16 to 24, resident in the Great Yarmouth constituency

12 months ending	*Thousand Great Yarmouth*
February 2001	1
February 2002	1
February 2003	*
February 2004	*
March 2005	1

* Estimate not available, sample size less than three could be disclosive.

Note:
The estimates for local areas are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Great Yarmouth constituency.

Annual averages	*Great Yarmouth*
2000	800
2001	675
2002	635
2003	630
2004	680

Notes:
1. Computerised claims only.
2. Data rounded to nearest five for disclosure control.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Unmarried Couples (Capital Gains Tax)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether an unmarried couple who each own a home would incur a capital gains tax disadvantage by marrying. [28625]

Dawn Primarolo: A married couple may have only one home that qualifies for private residence relief regardless of the number of properties they own. Whether an unmarried couple would have a capital gains tax disadvantage if they married would depend on their particular circumstances.

VAT (Football Match Admission)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to remove VAT from the price of admission for children attending football matches; and if he will make a statement. [28989]

Dawn Primarolo: Under our agreements with our European partners, we are not able to extend our existing VAT zero rates or introduce any new ones.

Vehicle Sales Tax

Tom Brake: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been raised from vehicle sales tax in each year since 1997–98 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by vehicle type; and what estimates have been made of likely revenue in future years. [27567]

John Healey: The UK does not impose a vehicle sales tax.

Ministerial Travel

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much it cost *(a)* him and *(b)* officials from his Department to fly to and from Israel on 8 November. [28252]

(2) what the flight arrangements were for his visit to Israel on 8 November; [28253]

(3) how many Government officials accompanied him on his visit to Israel on 8 November. [28254]

Peter Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the additional cost of *(a)* his and *(b)* his officials' early return from Israel to permit him to vote in the proceedings in the Terrorism Bill. [28111]

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost was of amending his travel arrangements and returning from Israel in order to vote in the House on 9 November; and if he will make a statement. [28566]

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of rearranging his flight from Israel on 9 November, and whether the cost was met by public funds. [28886]

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was to his Department of his early return to the United Kingdom from Israel on 9 November. [28907]

John Healey *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Paragraph 10.11 of the Ministerial Code states:

> "if a Minister is abroad with permission and is called home for ministerial or parliamentary reasons—including to vote—the cost of the extra journey back and forth may be met by public funds".

It cost a total of £1,518 for the Chancellor to fly back to the UK from Israel and to return to Israel on 9 November. The Chancellor was accompanied by two Treasury officials.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether hon. Members other than the Chancellor returned to London from overseas for parliamentary votes on 9 November at his Department's expense. [29509]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 15 November. No other Members returned at the Treasury's expense.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 16 November 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Aviation Emissions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action is being taken to reduce emissions from aviation. [28596]

Mr. Morley: We are pressing for the development of an open emissions trading system for international aviation through the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly. However, we want to take advantage of the groundbreaking EU Emissions Trading Scheme and are therefore pressing for the inclusion of aviation into the EU ETS as a priority for our presidency.

The European Commission has adopted a Communication on reducing the climate change impact of aviation, favouring the inclusion of the climate impact of aviation into the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). They aim to bring forward a legislative proposal by the end of 2006. Our aim is to reach a consensus on the way forward at the December Environment Council.

The Commission have set up an Aviation Working Group under the European Climate Change Programme to discuss the design criteria involved in such a scheme.

Emissions trading would give added weight to other emissions-reducing actions for which the Government will press, including:

improved working practices by airports, airlines and air traffic controllers;

research and development by aerospace manufacturers of new technologies; and

voluntary action by airlines, airports and aerospace companies to control greenhouse gas emissions and develop sustainability strategies. Such action should include emissions reporting and targets at a company level.

We recognise that these measures may not provide a total solution, therefore we continue to explore and discuss options for the use of other economic instruments.

Climate Change

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to co-ordinate Government work on climate change. [28533]

Mr. Morley: The Department is currently leading the review of the UK Climate Change Programme through interdepartmental work involving Officials from across Government. The review is being taken forward within the framework of the Sustainable Energy Policy Network (SEPN), set up following the publication of the Energy White Paper in 2003. SEPN meets regularly at official and ministerial level to discuss progress on a range of climate change and energy policy issues.

PFI Projects

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps she is taking to ensure that private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible create the minimum of environmental damage; [28092]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of *(a)* the sustainability and environmental impacts of private finance initiative (PFI) projects and *(b)* the effectiveness of the PFI process to deliver environmentally sustainable projects; [28116]

(3) what role her Department *(a)* has and *(b)* plans to take to make the private finance initiative process more accountable and transparent in terms of environmental sustainability. [28117]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given on 25 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1495W and 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 278W.

Since then, the business-led Sustainable Procurement Task Force has been established (in May 2005) to deliver a national action plan for Sustainable Procurement across the public sector by the end of April 2006.

The Task Force is chaired by Sir Neville Simms and will build on existing work to provide Government with further actions ensuring that sustainable development considerations are taken into account in public procurement (including PFIs/PPPs).

Warm Front Grants

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average waiting time is for a Warm Front applicant for a central heating system from assessment to installation. [28391]

Mr. Morley: The average waiting time for the installation of a central heating system under Warm Front is between 3–5 months from date of assessment until date of installation.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors are taken into account when determining an application for a replacement heating system through the Warm Front grant; and to what extent elderly people are prioritised if their central heating system fails. [28392]

Mr. Morley: Warm Front provides a range of specified insulation and heating measures to households in receipt of specified qualifying benefits. The measures recommended for installation will depend upon the circumstances of the household and measures already installed. The scheme does not provide additional heating, but, where central heating systems are broken down or are performing intermittently at the time of the assessment, they can be repaired. In cases where a repair is not economically viable, the system may be replaced.

Warm Front is not intended to be an emergency repair service. All who receive assistance from the scheme are considered vulnerable and the scheme works to provide measures promptly for all households.

TRANSPORT

Air Passenger Insurance/Levy

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the additional cost per passenger of *(a)* passenger insurance and *(b)* the £1 levy per flight proposed by the Civil Aviation Authority to meet the cost of insurance against airline bankruptcy for those airlines not covered by the Association of British Travel Agents. [28290]

Ms Buck: The Civil Aviation Authority factored the cost of commercially available insurance into the analysis it carried out for the purposes of the advice it provided to Government, published in September 2005.

Air Traffic

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many aircraft flying into UK airspace the National Air Traffic Control Service computer processes in an average *(a)* day, *(b)* month and *(c)* year. [28865]

Ms Buck: This is an operational matter for National Air Traffic Services (NATS). I understand they are willing to assist and suggest the hon. Member directs his inquiries to the NATS chief executive.

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the time is of the *(a)* first and *(b)* last flights from Heathrow airport over-flying Molesey each day; [27511]

(2) what the volume of air traffic over-flying Molesey was in each of the last three years; [27512]

(3) how many *(a)* landings and *(b)* take-offs there were at Heathrow airport in each of the last three years; and how many aircraft were stacked above Molesey in each year. [27513]

Ms Buck: These are operational matters for BAA. I understand they are willing to assist and suggest the hon. Member directs his inquiries to the BAA chief executive.

British Transport Police

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many members of the British Transport Police are due to retire or step down in the next *(a)* 12 months, *(b)* five years and *(c)* 10 years. [26534]

Derek Twigg: The British Transport Police (BTP) have provided the following information:

The number of police officers who will have completed 30 years service and be 50-years-old, and will therefore be eligible for voluntary retirement during the periods indicated are:

	Total
2005–06	0
2005–10	45
2005–15	62

The number of police officers who will reach the compulsory retirement age relevant to their rank during the periods indicated are:

	Total
2005–06	9
2005–10	131
2005–15	419

Classic Aircraft (Insurance)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of recent regulatory change on insurance costs for classic aircraft. [27312]

Ms Buck: Regulation (EC) No 785/2004 on insurance requirements for air carriers and aircraft operators, which came into effect on 1 May 2005, imposes minimum passenger and third party insurance requirements on all aircraft according to weight. During the process of adoption of the regulation in the European institutions, the Department for Transport submitted a partial regulatory impact assessment to the Commons European Scrutiny Committee, informing it that the regulation would impose a regulatory burden on aircraft operators. No further assessment of the effect of the regulation on the cost of insurance for aircraft operators has been made, but some heavy historic aircraft have had to increase their insurance levels in relation to third party liability. The insurance industry has recognised the problem and sought to make premia affordable.

Commercial Aviation (Duty Hours)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions the Civil Aviation Authority has *(a)* issued warnings to and *(b)* made findings against (i) pilots and (ii) flight crew in respect of breaches of the annual limit for duty hours for commercial aviation, in the last year for which figures are available. [27688]

Ms Buck: UK airlines are required to have a flight and duty time limitation scheme approved by the Civil Aviation Authority and to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all members of their flight crew comply with the scheme. Such schemes have to include the statutory annual flight duty time limit imposed on individual members of flight crew. Flight time limitation schemes are designed to ensure that flight crew do not exceed annual duty time limits and breaches of the limits are few. The CAA does not keep a central record of breaches of duty time limits, but does audit operators records on a regular basis and, if required, ensures that changes to working patterns are instituted.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the annual limit is for duty hours for commercial aviation *(a)* pilots and *(b)* flight crew under the EU Flight Time Limitations. [27899]

Ms Buck: There is currently no EC legislation establishing detailed flight time limitations for the flight crew of commercial aircraft. However, draft legislation on airline operational standards under consideration by the EC includes flight and duty time limitations and rest requirements. This legislation will impose an annual limit on flight duty time of 900 hours (pilots and flight crew). In addition Council Directive 2000/79/EC, which implements an industry agreement on working time for mobile staff in civil aviation (pilots and flight crew), establishes a limit of 2,000 hours for total duty time and a limit of 900 hours for flight duty time.

Departmental Estate

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the buildings owned by his Department; and what the purpose is of each one. [25632]

Ms Buck: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries of the House, but information on the Highways Agency motorway maintenance depots and associated buildings can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23796]

Ms Buck: As outlined in my answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 503W, the Department for Transport operates competency based recruitment.

If written and or/numerical skills are required for a particular position candidates are required to provide evidence, in their application forms, of what they have achieved using these skills. They are then questioned more about this in interview. If appropriate for the post, a test may be used, which is conducted by a trained assessor.

Occasionally recruitment is by assessment centre, in which candidates undergo a number of work-type exercises, testing, among other skills, both writing and numeracy, as appropriate for the position.

Departmental Targets

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped in each year. [26756]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and the targets applicable at the time were the public service agreement (PSA) targets set in the 2000 Spending Review. A new set of PSA targets was agreed in subsequent Spending Reviews in 2002 and 2004.

Performance against all PSA targets is reported in the Department's Annual Report and Autumn Performance Report. These also show how targets have evolved between Spending Reviews. In addition, performance is reported on the Department's website.

Fuel Efficiency Labels

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are taken to ensure that fuel efficiency labels produced in accordance with European Directive 1999/94/EC accurately reflect vehicle carbon dioxide emissions produced under normal road use. [29352]

Dr. Ladyman: European Directive 1999/94/EC requires car fuel consumption and carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions information to be provided to consumers by means of labels and other media. The figures used are obtained by testing new vehicles to the ED fuel consumption/CO_2 driving procedure on a chassis-dynamometer (rolling-road). This standardised procedure is aimed at providing prospective new car buyers with a simple comparison of the relative efficiency of new vehicles. By its very nature it cannot anticipate the fuel consumption and CO_2 emissions that will be achieved by any particular motorist under any conditions of use. Fuel consumption on the road is significantly affected by many factors, especially driving style, traffic and road conditions, load carried, terrain, and the use of heaters, air conditioning and lights. It is therefore impossible to provide a single fuel consumption and, hence, CO_2 figure that is representative for all road users.

Gershon Review

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the Department is implementing the recommendations of the Gershon Review; and what savings have been made as a result. [28077]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State has established an efficiency programme to implement the recommendations of the Gershon Review. The Department has published an efficiency technical note on its website which gives more detailed information on the programme. A revised version of the efficiency technical note will be published by the end of November 2005.

Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual reports. Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance reports and at aggregate level in the pre-budget report.

Humber Bridge

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the amount of debt on the Humber Bridge was in each year since its opening; and what rate of interest was paid on the debt in each year. [24771]

Dr. Ladyman: The debt on the Humber Bridge since its opening and the rate of interest paid are as follows:

Debt (not including loans from Public Works and Loan Board (PWLB))

	Debt (£)	*Average yearly interest rate (percentage)*
1982–83	135,789,954	13.63
1983–84	151,701,693	13.34
1984–85	169,644,160	13.05
1985–86	189,215,633	12.81
1986–87	210,437,430	12.53
1987–88	233,231,729	12.26
1988–89	256,985,313	12.02
1989–90	282,496,818	11.85
1990–91	309,772,421	11.87

Debt (not including loans from Public Works and Loan Board (PWLB))

	Debt (£)	*Average yearly interest rate (percentage)*
1991–92	342,772,676	11.69
1992–93[1]	359,307,192	11.62
1993–94[1]	359,307,192	11.62
1994–95[1]	359,307,192	11.62
1995–96[1]	359,307,192	11.62
1996–97[1]	359,307,192	11.62
1997–98[1]	359,307,192	11.62

[1] The debt would have risen to £650 million by March 1997 without Government assistance (mainly the payment of grants of £40 million plus a year, paid under the Appropriation Acts, to cover un-met interest charges).

PWLB loans

	£	*Percentage*
1982–83	—	—
1983–84	19,000,000	10.4
1984–85	24,000,000	10.37
1985–86	44,000,000	10.09
1986–87	44,000,000	10.09
1987–88	48,000,000	10.07
1988–89	53,500,000	9.98
1989–90	58,500,000	9.97
1990–91	62,000,000	9.57
1991–92	66,000,000	9.05
1992–93	66,000,000	9.05
1993–94	66,000,000	9.05
1994–95	66,000,000	9.05
1995–96	66,000,000	9.05
1996–97	66,000,000	9.05
1997–98	66,000,000	9.05

On 1 July 1997 the Department signed a new loan agreement with the Humber Bridge board. This agreement was then subject to a parliamentary order under the Humber Bridge (Debts) Act 1996. This agreement and the Humber Bridge (Debts) Order 1998 (which came into force 19 August 1997) made the following provisions for the Humber Bridge debt:

The PWLB debt was to be paid off;

A new fixed consolidated loan interest rate of 7.75 per cent. would be applied;

Interest payments would be suspended on £240 million of the Secretary of State's debt of £359 million;

Suspended debt would be added back starting in the next financial year (in annual amounts starting at £11 million and rising by 4 per cent. per annum to reintegrate all the suspended debt);

The debt would be repaid within a maximum of 40 years;

A further £1.6 million of interest would be waived to allow for carriageway works.

Since that time, the following applies to the Humber Bridge debt:

	Total debt (£)	*Active debt (£)*	*Interest rate on active debt (percentage)*
1998–99	359,307,192	119,307,192	7.75
1999–2000	354,307,192	114,307,192	7.75
2000–01	348,952,192	119,952,192	7.75
2001–02	348,952,192	131,392,192	7.75
2002–03	348,952,192	143,289,792	7.75
2003–04	341,739,518	148,450,622	7.75
2004–05	337,250,359	156,829,907	7.75

Light Rail

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of light rail. [27945]

Derek Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 510–11W.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of light rail systems in *(a)* Manchester and *(b)* Birmingham in terms of (i) economic and (ii) environmental objectives. [28307]

Mr. Darling: Light rail systems in Birmingham and Manchester have been subject to monitoring and evaluation studies. These studies focused on the impact of the schemes on travel behaviour, particularly in terms of levels of car usage, and the local economy.

Local Transport Plans

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities have set targets for the overall level of road traffic in their area as part of their full local transport plans in each year since the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 came into force; and what targets were set in each case. [26750]

Ms Buck: Table 1[1] lists the local transport plan areas with targets for overall levels of traffic along with the targets as reported in the progress reports following the submission of the first full local transport plans in 2000. Many other plan areas set targets for levels of traffic for parts of their areas or for particular time periods (for example peak hours).

The Department requires all final second local transport plans (due for completion in March 2006) to include targets for the overall levels of road traffic. Some of the provisional second local transport plans (submitted in July 2005) have included indicative targets, although these will be superseded by those contained in the final versions of the plans.

Table 1: Area wide road traffic reduction targets in first full local transport plans (as highlighted in DfT review of early progress reports)

LT name	*Local targets or outcomes*
Blackburn with Darwen	Reduce annual peak hour traffic growth to 0 per cent. by 2006; contain off peak traffic growth to forecast local low growth levels.
Blackpool	Reduction in traffic levels.
Bristol	Reduce growth in private car traffic by 20 per cent. by 2005, and thereafter to seek a 20 per cent. reduction in private car traffic by 2015. 1996 base year: 1,228,000 (combined cordons). Base index = 100, 2005 Target = 110, 2015 Target = 80.
Cheshire	Cheshire traffic growth restrained to an overall increase of 15 per cent. on 1995 traffic levels by 2011.
County Durham	Reduce the forecast growth of traffic from 1.5 per cent. to 0.33 per cent. per annum throughout the plan period.

Table 1: Area wide road traffic reduction targets in first full local transport plans (as highlighted in DfT review of early progress reports)

LT name	*Local targets or outcomes*
Cumbria	Local areas: traffic growth of 1 per cent./yr to 2006 in Allerdale; 1 per cent./yr to 2006 in Barrow; 0 per cent./yr in 2006 in Carlisle; 1 per cent./yr to 2006 in Copeland; 0.5 per cent./yr to 2006 in Eden; 3.7 per cent./yr to 2006 in South Lakeland; 0 per cent./yr to 2006 in Lake District.
Dorset	10 per cent. reduction in traffic growth in all areas of rural Dorset by 2006 and 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. by 2016 (varies by area).
Essex	Reduce the rate of growth in traffic. Baseline—1998 traffic levels.
Gloucestershire	By 2010, average daily traffic volumes on the county's road network to increase by no more than 20 per cent., compared with 1996 levels. By 2006 the increase over 1996 to be no more than 15 per cent.
Greater Manchester	8 per cent. increase in annual car kilometres on A and B roads by 2005–06, on 1991 base. (5,957m)
Greater Nottingham	Below 2.5 per cent. per annum.
Hampshire	To halve the rate of forecast traffic growth between 1998 and 2020 from 32 per cent. to 16 per cent.
Hartlepool	Overall traffic growth to be less than 5 per cent. between base year and 2005.
Herefordshire	To restrict the growth in traffic levels in Hereford to 1 per cent. per annum during the period 2001 to 2010. To restrict the growth in traffic levels on principal rural roads to 1 per cent. per annum during the period 2001 to 2010.
Kingston upon Hull/Hull City	Reduce car flow by approximately 1 per cent. per year.
Luton-Dunstable	Reduction in the Do-Minimum traffic forecast (2011).
Merseyside	*(a)* 0 per cent. growth to 2006 in the centres for peak periods.*(b)* 0 per cent. growth for 2006–11 above 20.8 per cent. max to 2006.
Middlesbrough	Reduce daily flows to 0 per cent. growth at town centre cordon by 2005 and 2 per cent. by 2010.
North East Lincolnshire	1999 base line = 12,020 vehicles/km per 12 hour average weekday. Target = to keep annual growth to below 1999 level of 2 per cent. and to achieve zero growth by 2010.
Oxfordshire	To reduce traffic growth in the period 2000 to 2015 to half the forecast growth for Oxfordshire.
Redcar and Cleveland	Maximum 1 per cent. annual increase in traffic flows, national low growth forecast.
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Windsor and Maidenhead: traffic to increase by no more than 6 per cent. by 2006 from 1999. Rest of the borough: traffic to increase by no more than 10 per cent. by 2006 (based on vehicle numbers).
Southend on Sea	Increase in vehicle kilometres per average weekday of less than 11 per cent. by 2006.
Stockton-on-Tees	Limit traffic growth to forecast low growth figure of 4.5 per cent. (2000–05).
Stoke on Trent	Constrain traffic growth increase to 10 per cent. between 1999–2011 compared with the 1997 low-growth national projected increase of 15 per cent. over the same period.
Suffolk	Reduce growth
Surrey	To limit traffic growth (county roads only) to the 1998 level by 2016; milestone target 8 per cent. 2006; final target 2016 0 per cent.
Telford and Wrekin	Reduce to 1.6 per cent. per annum by 2010.
Tyne and Wear	Target for 2006 is to limit growth on principal roads to 2.524 billion vehicle kilometres from a base figure of 2.274 billion in 1996–97.
Warrington	Minimum 43 per cent. reduction in the predicted growth of traffic by 2011.
West Midlands	Restrict traffic growth from 1996 to 2011 to below 8 per cent.
West Sussex	Reduce by 50 per cent. the rate of traffic growth by 2016.
West Yorkshire	Traffic growth 1999–2006 not to exceed 5 per cent. (16 hour, all roads).
Wokingham	Restrain traffic growth in Wokingham (targets for borough split into five areas ranging from 4 per cent. to 8.5 per cent. between 1999 and 2006).
York	Limit overall growth in traffic to 4 per cent. (1999–2006) with a reduction of 13 per cent. on secondary and residential roads.

[1] The information in table 1 is based on an internal review and may omit some targets, The costs of a further review of the plans to checks for omissions are disproportionately high.

M1

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent information he has received on pollution levels in residential areas near the M1 motorway in Twisley, Sheffield; what assessment he has made of the likely effect on pollution levels there of plans to widen the M1; and if he will commission independent research on this matter. [28925]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has taken base level data on current pollution levels from Sheffield city council, from the agency's own monitoring and from information available from groups such as the Tinsley forum, who have been monitoring air quality in the Tinsley area since 1998.

Emissions' modelling being carried out by the agency in collaboration with Sheffield city council, the Transport Research Laboratory and the Department for Transport is currently programmed to complete in summer 2006. This will feed into the Environmental Assessment, which will form part of the Scheme Appraisal. This will give a better guide as to what effects on air quality the M1 widening would have.

Independent research on this matter is not felt necessary at this time.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will introduce proposals to construct a filter slip lane on the exit from the northbound carriageway of the M1 motorway at junction 21 to enable vehicles to reach the M69 without having to negotiate the traffic island; [28114]

(2) if he will take steps *(a)* to reduce congestion and *(b)* to ease access to and egress from the M1 motorway at junction 21. [28115]

Dr. Ladyman: A scheme to widen the M1 between junctions 21 and 30 was added to the Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI) in April 2004.

This scheme includes proposals to provide a free flow link between the M1 Southbound and M69 and the M69 to M1 northbound. This will significantly reduce traffic movements through junction 21 and a filter lane for the M1 to the M69 southbound movement is not considered necessary.

The Highways Agency plans to consult on this scheme in spring 2006 and invite comments on the published proposals.

Major Improvement Projects

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of funds in the current

spending review period are allocated to *(a)* railways, *(b)* major transport projects in London, including rail projects, *(c)* light rail, *(d)* other public transport major improvement projects and *(e)* aviation. [27940]

Ms Buck: DfT does not allocate funding on the basis of these particular categories, and so the information sought is not available in the form requested. However, a breakdown of budgets for Resource and Capital DEL by PSA objectives and spending areas is set out in Table A2 of the 2005 Annual Report (Cm 6527), a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library.

Mobile Phone Theft

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many mobile phones were stolen on the rail network in the past *(a)* 12 months, *(b)* two years and *(c)* five years. [26535]

Derek Twigg: The number of crimes recorded by the British Transport police in which mobile phones were stolen on the rail network (excluding London underground) over the last five years is given in the table:

Period	*Number*
1 November 2000 to 31 October 2001	5,971
1 November 2001 to 31 October 2002	8,106
1 November 2002 to 31 October 2003	8,876
1 November 2003 to 31 October 2004	8,579
1 November 2004 to 31 October 2005	7,188

Motorway Repairs

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance on good practice he has issued to *(a)* Highways Agency staff and *(b)* motorway police on closing lanes when members of the public have to repair a puncture on the driver's side of a vehicle; and if he will make a statement. [27645]

Dr. Ladyman: Highways Agency Traffic Officers are highly trained in many aspects of traffic management including closing lanes, if required, to allow drivers to deal with offside wheel changes.

The guidance given to Traffic Officers is comprehensive, and covers the provision of personal safety advice to drivers, including leaving the vehicle and standing in a safe place, not attempting even simple repairs and not standing between the vehicle and other traffic. Where the motorist is a member of a recovery organisation, the Traffic Officer will make contact with that organisation to arrange for them to come and change the wheel. If the motorist is not in a recovery organisation, Traffic Officers will call one out, and the motorist will be charged for the service.

For large goods vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles, the guidance covers the need to consider closing a lane. Traffic Officers are trained in implementing lane closures, and under the Traffic Management Act they have the power to direct traffic accordingly.

The Agency has issued no advice to the police on this matter.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatalities have occurred due to motorists having stopped on motorway hard shoulders *(a)* through breakdown and *(b)* for other reasons in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [27644]

Dr. Ladyman: The information available about accidents on the hard shoulder is based on data from STATS19 Accident Reporting. The data in STATS19 does not have the necessary information to enable the statistics on the two requested categories to be identified.

The information that is available covers the number of motorists killed, either in or from vehicles stopped on the hard shoulder or in vehicles travelling along, entering, and leaving a motorway hard shoulder. This information is provided in section 1 of the following table.

The total number of motorists killed, including those in the main carriageway, as a result of any accidents involving vehicles on hard shoulders of motorways, is provided in the table, section 2.

Number of fatal casualties on motorways (M and A(M)), 2000 to 2004 on the Highways Agency 2006 Trunk Road Network

	Classification	*Date*	*Casualty injury (fatal)*
Section 1	Fatal casualties associated with HS accidents—vehicles on, entering or leaving the hard shoulder (also pedestrians who were hit by such a vehicle)	2000	4
		2001	4
		2002	13
		2003	5
		2004	1
Section 2	All fatal casualties involved in HS accidents	2000	166
		2001	176
		2002	194
		2003	196
		2004	147

Source:

TRL (2005).

National Port Traffic

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many 20ft equivalent units (TEUs) were *(a)* imported and *(b)* exported through the UK's 10 busiest ports in 2004–05; what percentage of each travelled to and from these ports by (i) rail and (ii) road; what the average distance of each TEU from the point of import to the TEU's final destination was; and what percentage of total TEU traffic through the UK's 10 busiest ports consisted of transshipment in 2004–05. [28083]

Dr. Ladyman: Estimates of container imports and exports through the UK's busiest ports in 2004, in terms of TEUs, are given in the following table.

Container traffic at UK ports 2004 (thousand TEUs)

	Imports	*Exports*
Felixstowe	1,338	1,300
Southampton	735	701
London	525	452
Medway	315	316
Liverpool	254	292
Hull	166	143
Belfast	70	72
Forth	99	100
Immingham	70	63
Tees and Hartlepool	59	70

The information given includes container transhipments. Transhipped container traffic, however, is not separately identified in the returns made by shipping lines and ports to the Department, and separate estimates are not available. Information about the percentage share of container traffic travelling to and from ports by rail and road is not available.

The average distances travelled by containers by road, from the port to the final destination, are given in the following table.

Estimated average distance travelled by container by road from port to final destination, 2004

Port	*Kilometres*
Felixstowe	190
Southampton	160
London	110
Medway	170
Liverpool	100
Hull	130
Belfast[1]	90
Forth[1]	60
Grimsby and Immingham	150
Tees and Hartlepool[1]	200

[1] Estimates based on a sample of less than 50 journeys.

Comparable information is not available for rail.

Railways

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to announce his decision on the proposed train service changes along the Hastings to London Victoria line. [28216]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* An announcement on the draft Brighton Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy will be made in due course.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce a new strategic north-south rail link. [25431]

Derek Twigg: The Government have asked Sir Rod Eddington to look at, among other things, the feasibility of a new north-south high-speed link. He will report to the Secretary of State in 2006.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the impact of increasing penalty fares on the railways to 20 earlier this year. [28241]

Derek Twigg: Revenue protection is the responsibility of each train operator. The increase in penalty fare has restored and slightly increased the real value of the penalty, which had remained unchanged at £10 since 1989. We expect this increase to help train operators reduce the amount of ticketless travel on their networks.

Regional Transport Funding

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding has been allocated for regional transport funding by each regional government office in each year since 1997–98; and how much is planned to be spent in each of the next three years, broken down by region. [28240]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given him today (UIN 27568).

Road Gritting

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the average number of days on which road gritting took place on motorways and trunk roads in each year since 2000. [29080]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not available in the form requested for each year since 2000. However, with the introduction of a new monitoring system for the last winter season (2004–05), we are able to establish that road gritting took place on 58 days on average across the motorway and trunk road network. This is an average figure and there will be variations across the country.

Safest Vehicles

Mr. Geoffrey Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which *(a)* vehicle and *(b)* vehicle type has had the lowest (i) death and (ii) injury rates among drivers and passengers in the UK since 1985. [27970]

Dr. Ladyman: For drivers, the lowest fatality rate by vehicle kilometres between 1985 and 2004 in Great Britain was among Bus and Coach drivers, with a rate of 0.03 per 100 million vehicle kilometres. The lowest equivalent injury (casualties killed or seriously injured) rates were among drivers of goods vehicles, with rates of 11.66 and 11.70 for Light and Heavy Goods vehicles respectively.

For all vehicle occupants (including drivers), the lowest fatality rate by vehicle kilometres between 1985 and 2004 in Great Britain was among Light Goods

Vehicle occupants, with a rate of 0.20 per 100 million vehicle kilometres. The lowest equivalent injury rate was among occupants of Heavy Goods Vehicles, with a rate of 13.88. These rates do not take into account the different vehicle occupancy rates of different vehicles.

Comparable figures for Northern Ireland are not available.

Information on casualty rates by vehicle type is not available.

School Crossing Patrols

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many school crossing patrols there were in West Sussex in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available. [29543]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held centrally.

Speed Cameras

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the revenue from fines resulting from speed camera convictions in Wiltshire in the latest year for which figures are available; and what sums were passed to *(a)* the Treasury and *(b)* the Wiltshire Speed Camera Partnership. [28432]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest published information, as shown on the Department's website—www.dft.gov.uk—is shown on the audit certificates for financial year 2003–04. For the Wiltshire Safety Camera Partnership area, revenue collected from fixed penalty fines for speeding and/or red light offences was £2,380,800. The Wiltshire Partnership reclaimed £1,259,124 to cover their allowable costs and the balance of £1,121,676 accrued to the Treasury.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the revenue from fines resulting from speed camera convictions in Staffordshire was in the last year for which figures are available; and what sums were passed to *(a)* the Treasury and *(b)* the Staffordshire Safety Camera Partnership as a result. [29371]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest published information, as shown on the Department's website—www.dft.gov.uk—is shown on the audit certificates for financial year 2003–04. For the Staffordshire Safety Camera Partnership area, revenue collected from fixed penalty fines for speeding and/or red light offences was £2,436,240. The Staffordshire Partnership reclaimed £1,950,862 to cover their allowable costs and the balance of £485,378 accrued to the Treasury.

Taxicard Schemes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many taxicard schemes operate in England; and how much central funding was allocated to such schemes for 2005–06. [28143]

Ms Buck: The provision and funding of taxicard schemes is a matter for local authorities. We do not hold information centrally about such schemes.

Taxis

Mr. Geoffrey Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* drivers and *(b)* passengers have been killed or injured in (i) purpose-built and (ii) converted van type taxis since 1985. [27967]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Traffic Calming Measures

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has commissioned on the impact on local residents' journey times of traffic calming measures to eliminate rat-runs, with particular reference to road closures. [26766]

Ms Buck: As part of the Urban Safety Project, the Department for Transport commissioned research into the impact of area wide traffic calming schemes, some of which involved partial or total road closures; this included research into the effect on journey times. The results of this research are reported in TRRL Research Report 263 "Urban Safety Project: 3. Overall evaluation of area wide schemes", published in 1990. This report concluded that, in general, increased delays had not been a major penalty in the schemes.

Decisions regarding the implementation of traffic calming measures are for local highway authorities, in consultation with local communities. Deliberations will usually involve a wide range of safety, environment, and traffic management considerations.

Train Operating Companies

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether franchisees are supervised by the Office of Rail Regulation in relation to the number of carriages provided on peak time services. [28079]

Derek Twigg: Capacity on franchised passenger services is determined by the terms of the contract between the franchising authority and the train operator.

US Civil Aircraft

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what records are maintained of US civil registered aircraft landing at UK airports. [28814]

Ms Buck: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answer I have given to him today (UIN 28400).

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what records are maintained of US civil registered planes landing at UK *(a)* public airports and *(b)* military airfields. [28400]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport maintains records of permits granted to US airlines engaged in civil commercial traffic at United Kingdom airports, where passengers or cargo are taken on board or discharged. Airports maintain records of aircraft movements for a variety of purposes such as charging, administering noise quotas or movements at night.

TREASURY

Civil Service Jobs

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 981W, on civil service jobs, if he will break down the reduced civil service posts by *(a)* job title and *(b)* grade. [29006]

Mr. Des Browne: This information is not held centrally. Details of these reductions are a matter for individual departments.

Council Tax

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated change in an average annual council tax bill is for the next taxation year. [26543]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

The level of council tax in the coming financial year will depend on local authorities' spending decisions. The Government are committed to ensuring that local authorities can continue to improve services without imposing excessive increases in council tax. We will shortly be announcing the provisional local government finance settlement which will cover 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Excess Winter Deaths

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many excess winter deaths of people aged over 65 years there have been in *(a)* Ribble Valley, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [29041]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Nigel Evans, dated 16 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many excess winter deaths of people aged over 65 years there have been in *(a)* Ribble Valley, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. (29041)

Available figures on excess winter deaths (the excess number of deaths each winter compared to the average during other months of the year) for Ribble Valley local authority, Lancashire and England are included in the table below.

The latest available figures for England are for 2004–2005. These figures for 2004–2005 are provisional and are not available for areas smaller than Government Office Regions.

Excess winter deaths[1] (EWD) for persons aged 65 years and over for Ribble Valley local authority, Lancashire,[2] and England, 1997–98 to 2004–05

	England		Lancashire		Ribble Valley	
	EWD[1]	EWD Index[3]	EWD[1]	EWD Index[3]	EWD[1]	EWD Index[3]
1997–98	20,070	14.9	440	12.6	60	38.8
1998–99	41,110	31.3	940	27.9	80	51.5
1999–2000	42,080	32.6	1,030	31.4	80	51.3
2000–01	21,650	16.7	600	18.5	50	31.5
2001–02	24,100	18.6	670	20.3	30	22.0
2002–03	20,890	16.0	260	7.5	0	1.0
2003–04	20,420	15.6	540	16.4	60	38.8
2004–05[4]	27,000	21.4	—	—	—	—

[1] Excess winter deaths are defined by the Office for National Statistics as the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter months (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the preceding four months (August to November) and the following four months (April to July). Figures for 1997–98 to 2003–04 are rounded to the nearest 10.

[2] The figures provided relate to the current county of Lancashire. This excludes the unitary authorities of Blackburn and Darwen, and Blackpool, created in 1998, which were part of the former county.

[3] The excess winter deaths index is calculated as the excess number of winter deaths divided by the average number of non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.

[4] Figures for 2004–05 are provisional and are rounded to the nearest 100.

International Companies

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's revenue receipts from international companies operating in the UK have been in each year since 1997; and what estimate he has made of the receipts from that source in each of the next three financial years. [27052]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available. The only figures available are from a recent ad hoc exercise that indicated that large foreign owned companies paid about £7 billion of UK corporation tax in their 2004 accounts—around a fifth of total liabilities of all companies.

Local Government

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Government have to increase local government finances. [26542]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

The Spending Review 2004 settlement provides for continued investment in local authority services. This builds on the significant additional funding which we have been able to provide to councils since taking office—Government grant has increased by 33 per cent. in real terms since 1997. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will shortly be announcing the provisional local government finance settlement, which will cover 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Public Service Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) pursuant to Table 5.1 of the HM Treasury report of December 2004 long-term public finance report: an analysis of fiscal sustainability; what the projected cost of public service pensions for each decade is expected to be, based on the framework agreement announced on 18 October; [24875]

(2) if he will break down savings on public services pensions announced on 18 October 2005 by the periods *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2013–14, *(c)* 2023–24, *(d)* 2033–34, *(e)* 2043–44 and *(f)* 2053–54; and how much of the savings he expects to arise from (i) future and (ii) current employees. [24876]

Mr. Des Browne: The pattern of projected future cash flows at 10-yearly intervals over the next 50 years and the allocation of savings between current and future employees will depend on the outcomes of scheme specific negotiations and it would be premature to say what they will be.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the tax credits MPs' hotline is able to make outgoing calls on request to contact constituents of hon. Members who are suffering problems with their tax credits. [22002]

Dawn Primarolo: The MPs' hotline to the Tax Credit Office is a discrete service designed to give hon. Members a direct and accessible link into the Department to discuss matters relating to their constituents' tax credits claims.

Although the hotline has in exceptional cases been able to contact claimants directly, the service is not set up to work in this way. Doing so would divert resources from other areas, degrading the service available to MPs and other claimants.

Individual claimants should call the tax credits helpline to discuss any concerns or queries they may have. Callers can ring the tax credits helpline seven days a week any time between 8 am and 8 pm, 362 days a year.

VAT (Care Services)

Andrew Stunell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will make it his policy to exempt people with a disability from VAT charges on social care services they receive from private or not-for-profit organisations; and if he will make a statement; [28497]

(2) what recent representations he has received on zero-rating VAT charges on social care delivered by the private and not-for-profit sector; and if he will make a statement. [28499]

Dawn Primarolo: Welfare services for people with disabilities are already exempt from VAT when provided by local authorities, charities and state-regulated private welfare institutions and agencies. For the purposes of the exemption 'welfare services' includes all types of personal care, and also support and assistance with routine domestic tasks where the recipient of the service cannot perform the task safely or adequately, or without significant pain or discomfort.

This reflects the widest exemption available under our agreements with our European partners.

I am not aware of any representations having been received by the Treasury about VAT zero-rating of social care in the past year.

Under our agreements with our European partners, we are not able to extend our existing VAT zero rates or introduce any new ones.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Personnel (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 103W, on Territorial Army (Kettering), what the locations are of the units listed. [29082]

Mr. Touhig: The locations of Territorial Army units within a 35 mile radius of Kettering Town, can be found in the following table:

Unit	*Location*
118 Recovery Company Detachment, 104 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	Corby
203 Squadron Detachment, 158 Transport Regiment Royal Logistics Corps	Melton Mowbray
C (222) Medical Squadron, 4 General Supply Medical Regiment	Leicester
B Squadron, Royal Yeomanry, 118 Recovery Company Detachment, 104 Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	Leicester
C Company, East of England Regiment 46 Signals Squadron Detachment, 38 Signals Regiment	Leicester
118 Recovery Company, 104 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers C Company Detachment, East of England Regiment	Northampton
Headquarters' Sqn, 158 Transport Regimental Headquarters' and Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps Royal Anglian Band	Peterborough
89 Signals Sqn, 35 Signals Regiment	Rugby
201 Transport Squadron, 158 Transport Regiment, Royal Logistics Corps 54 Signals Squadron Detachment, 36 Signals Regiment	Bedford
E (Royal Green Jackets) Company, Royal Rifle Volunteers	Milton Keynes

Deepcut Review

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he published Joint Service Publication 751; if he will make this document available to Nicholas Blake QC for use in the Deepcut Review; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [26307]

Mr. Touhig: The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Policy and Procedures (JSP 751) was published in March 2005. A copy will be made available to Nicholas Blake QC should he request one. Copies of Joint Service Publication 751 will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1260W, on departmental spending, if he will itemise the works of art bought in 2004–05; and what the cost of each was. [28654]

Mr. Touhig: The works of art purchased during 2004–05 were a set of four paintings by Zil Hoque—"Nimbus I, II, III, IV"—the set having a cost of £160,000, excluding VAT, and a set of four paintings by Louise Cattrell—"Eyrie, Aerial, Tempest and Keep"—this set having a cost of £72,000, excluding VAT.

Drug Misuse (Armed Forces)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information his Department collects on the use of illegal recreational drugs by service personnel; and how many disciplinary cases arising from drug misuse there were in each of the armed forces in each of the past five years. [26872]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Each of the Services maintains records of all disciplinary proceedings, including those where the charges involved are related to illegal use of recreational drugs.

The numbers of convictions in disciplinary cases over the past five years[1], in which drug misuse was a factor involved, are as follows:

[1] *By calendar year.*

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Royal Navy					
Summary dealings	4	16	3	8	5
Courts martial	1	7	6	1	2
Army					
Summary dealings	n/a	29	25	21	38
Courts martial	11	17	11	10	8
Royal Air Force					
Summary dealings	4	0	2	4	1
Courts martial	3	3	6	7	3

n/a = Not available.

Defence Transport and Movements Agency

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Defence Transport and Movements Agency (DTMA) annual report and accounts 2004–05, if he will make a statement on the DTMA's *(a)* in-year management control, *(b)* financial data and *(c)* short-term planning. [24599]

Mr. Ingram: The audit of the accounts by the National Audit Office has provided the assurance that the necessary controls are in place to ensure effective in-year management.

The Defence Transport and Movements Agency, along with other parts of the Ministry of Defence, is due shortly to receive a new forecasting and budgeting computer software package which is expected to improve the flow of financial data.

The short-term planning process challenges all areas of the MOD to produce robust and affordable forward expenditure plans. DTMA, like all parts of the Department has a continued responsibility to respond to requests for savings measures. A clearer picture is, however, now emerging on how the centrally imposed savings wedges referred to in the DTMA annual report and accounts might be absorbed within individual projects.

Incremental Companies (Army)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incremental companies there are in the British Army; and to which units each Incremental Company is attached. [28981]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* There are three Incremental Companies in the British Army: Nijmegen Company, The Grenadier Guards; 7 Company, The Coldstream Guards; and F Company, The Scots Guards.

Iraq

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether British Army commanders serving in Basra recently asked for extra troops; and if he will make a statement; [22607]

(2) whether Lieutenant Colonel Henderson, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards in Basra, requested that Warrior armoured personnel carriers be made available; and if he will make a statement. [22606]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* British Army Commanders in Iraq recently requested that an element of the Theatre Reserve Battalion be deployed to Multi National Division (South East) and to this end, as I announced on 10 October to the House, an extra Company from the 1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers, based in Cyprus, would deploy for a few weeks to assist in the rotation of 12 Mechanised and seven armoured brigades.

I am not aware of a specific request from Lieutenant Colonel Henderson, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, that Warrior Armoured

personnel carriers be made available, but requests of this nature would in the first instance be discussed within the chain of command in theatre. However, the General Officer Commanding Multi National Division (South East) recently asked to retain a number of Warriors from 12 Mechanised Brigade. These have been made available to seven armoured brigade.

Munitions

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many armed forces *(a)* guns and *(b)* other weapons have been recorded as (i) lost, (ii) stolen and (iii) missing in each year since 1997. [27613]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the table:

	Pistol	*Mil rifle*	*SMG*[1]	*LMG*[2]*/GPMG*[3]	*Mortars*	*Antique/Other*	*Shot gun*	*Baton gun*	*Tgt rifle*	*Total*
Lost weapons										
1997	1	1	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	22
1998	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
2000	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
2001	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
2002	3	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
2003	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
2004	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
2005	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	16	11	7	0	0	2	20	1	0	57
Stolen weapons										
1997	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
1998	3	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
1999	0	9	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	12
2000	21	2	0	0	0	10	7	0	2	42
2001	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
2002	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
2003	6	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	2	19
2004	3	11	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	18
2005	5	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	15
Total	44	48	0	0	1	27	8	0	11	139

[1] SMG—Sub-Machine Gun
[2] LMG—Light Machine Gun
[3] GPMG—General Purpose Machine Gun

No data is collated on 'missing' weapons. Instances of missing weapons are investigated promptly and then categorised as either 'lost' or 'stolen'.

Nuclear Waste (Storage)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total volume of nuclear waste produced and requiring storage by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* military installations was in each year since 1990, broken down by category of waste; whether the waste is in (i) temporary and (ii) permanent storage; and if he will make a statement. [27661]

Mr. Ingram: No central records are held on volumes of nuclear waste produced and requiring storage for each year since 1990. However, I refer the hon. Member to the United Kingdom Radioactive Waste Inventory[1] to which the Ministry of Defence contributes, and which provides periodic snapshots on radioactive waste stocks, including categories of waste, location and whether the waste is held in temporary or permanent storage. The inventory has previously been published in 1991,1994 and 1998, and a copy of the most recent inventory, for 2001, is available in the Library of the House. A new inventory, for 2004, is in preparation and is due to be published shortly. A copy will be placed in the Library.

[1] The United Kingdom Radioactive Waste Inventory is published at three or four yearly intervals by DEFRA and NIREX. The reports provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on waste as at 1 April of the title year. The Inventory includes information on the quantities, types and characteristics of waste.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Earthquake

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of Government funding pledged for the Asia earthquake will be spent on education initiatives. [22065]

Mr. Thomas: There are no specific allocations earmarked for education within the £33 million committed to the relief effort. At present the priorities are to ensure that immediate relief needs such as shelter, water and sanitation and health are met.

The earthquake has caused extensive destruction to physical infrastructure. According to the World Bank and the Asia Development Bank Needs Assessment, most educational institution buildings have either been destroyed or rendered dangerous in the affected area. According to current estimates, 853 teachers and 18,095 students have died. As well as the terrible human cost, the financial cost of rebuilding the infrastructure is estimated to be US$335 million.

DFID will make a significant contribution towards the $5.2 billion estimated by the World Bank and the Asia Development Bank for reconstruction and the return of livelihoods to affected areas. An announcement will be made before the international donor conference in Islamabad on Saturday 19 November.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total amount of aid given to *(a)* the Pakistan Government and *(b)* aid agencies has been following the earthquake of 8 October; and if he will make a statement. [27011]

Mr. Thomas: According to the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a total of US$1.44 billion (£828 million) has been pledged by the international community towards relief and reconstruction efforts following the earthquake on 8 October. Of these pledges, US$376 million (£216 million) has been committed. At this stage, it is not possible to accurately disaggregate the total aid allocations through each funding channel.

The UK has so far pledged £33 million of which £29.6 million has already been committed through UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross movement and through direct actions including support to the NATO airbridge and UK helicopter deployment in Pakistan.

The following table presents a breakdown of UK Government spending as of 14 November. Further detail can be found in the regular situation reports available on the DFID website: www.dfid.gov.uk.

UK spending as of 14 November

	£
NGOs	5,394,171
UN (including direct to UN agencies)	7,438,250
Red Cross/ Red Crescent	3,578,250
MOD (pledged)	3,000,000
DEC Airlift	3,294,962
NATO (pledged)	4,000,000
ECHO	1,600,000
DFID Pakistan (to be programmed)	1,000,000
Search and Rescue/DFID assessment teams	347,465
Total	29,693,098

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23299]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has not operated any call centres in the years specified. While we do not have any calls centres, we do operate a Public Enquiry Point which answers telephone, email and letter inquiries. For the years specified, it has handled the following number of inquiries:

	Number of inquiries	*Of which: were calls*
2003	18,976	6,807
2004	18,820	6,784
2005 (as at 14 November)	20,902	7,113

Commission for Africa

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times the Commission for Africa has met this year. [27554]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa was established in February 2004 and finished its work at the end of July 2005. There were three full meetings of the commissioners in May 2004, October 2004 and February 2005.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many countries are members of the Commission for Africa. [27555]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa was established in February 2004. It was made up of 17 commissioners, nine from Africa, all working in an independent capacity. The Commission for Africa report, 'Our Common Interest' reflects an extensive consultation programme, which included participation from 49 African countries.

Departmental Budgetary Support

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries have been provided with direct budgetary support by his Department; and what the allocation for each country through direct budgetary support has been in each year since 1999. [19254]

Hilary Benn: The countries listed are those that have received Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) from DFID over the last five years. Amounts shown include general PRBS (i.e. a general contribution to the overall budget) and sector PRBS (i.e. support with a more restricted focus). We do not have centrally collated figures for PRBS payments made prior to this period; to obtain this information for 1999–2000 would incur a disproportionate cost.

Poverty reduction budget support

		£000
Africa		
Ethiopia	2000–01	0
	2001–02	0
	2002–03	10,000
	2003–04	20,000
	2004–05	45,000
Ghana	2000–01	40,000
	2001–02	25,000
	2002–03	20,000
	2003–04	25,000
	2004–05	35,000
Kenya	2000–01	15,000
	2001–02	0
	2002–03	0
	2003–04	0
	2004–05	0
Malawi	2000–01	30,000
	2001–02	12,500
	2002–03	0
	2003–04	10,000
	2004–05	15,000
Mozambique	2000–01	15,700
	2001–02	25,700
	2002–03	14,700
	2003–04	20,325
	2004–05	35,839

Poverty reduction budget support

		£000
Rwanda	2000-01	25,400
	2001-02	18,000
	2002-03	22,000
	2003-04	18,750
	2004-05	34,250
Sierra Leone	2000-01	19,500
	2001-02	10,000
	2002-03	10,000
	2003-04	10,000
	2004-05	12,000
Tanzania	2000-01	40,000
	2001-02	35,000
	2002-03	45,000
	2003-04	60,250
	2004-05	65,537
Uganda	2000-01	60,000
	2001-02	47,000
	2002-03	29,500
	2003-04	30,000
	2004-05	35,000
Zambia	2000-01	15,000
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	7,622
	2003-04	7,849
	2004-05	13,198
South America		
Bolivia	2000-01	0
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	2,000
	2004-05	1,250
Asia		
Afghanistan	2000-01	0
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	100
	2004-05	0
Bangladesh	2000-01	0
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	6,585
	2003-04	24
	2004-05	29,800
India	2000-01	0
	2001-02	65,000
	2002-03	30,000
	2003-04	75,000
	2004-05	71,260
Nepal	2000-01	0
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	0
	2004-05	2,107
Pakistan	2000-01	0
	2001-02	20,000
	2002-03	20,000
	2003-04	50,000
	2004-05	7,500
Vietnam	2000-01	0
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	10,000
	2004-05	20,000

Poverty reduction budget support

		£000
Europe		
Macedonia (FYR of)	2000-01	0
	2001-02	3,000
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	0
	2004-05	0
Moldova	2000-01	0
	2001-02	0
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	0
	2004-05	200
Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo)	2000-01	3,398
	2001-02	7,000
	2002-03	0
	2003-04	0
	2004-05	0

Guatemala

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian assistance provided to Guatemala after hurricane Stan. [28411]

Mr. Thomas: Following the impact of hurricane Stan on Guatemala, DFID is providing support through the non-governmental organisations CARE and Plan International. £172,000 has been provided for their humanitarian response to the disaster. The support, covering a period of three months, includes emergency food, plastic sheeting, other non-food items, water and water treatment.

In addition, the European Community's humanitarian office provided €4 million for Guatemala. This aid is to help meet the most urgent needs of 30,000 affected families in terms of water and sanitation, food security, health, emergency shelter, non food items and information management. The United Kingdom share of this European Commission support is approximately £485,000.

India (Floods)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid the Government have allocated to relief for the flooded Mumbai province in India. [25867]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is providing £2 million to the United Nations children's fund, UNICEF, for immediate relief purposes and for the restoration of public services, following flooding due to excess monsoon rains that occurred in many parts of India in July 2005. Approximately 37 per cent. (£740,000) is directed to the State of Maharashtra, of which Mumbai is the capital. A substantial proportion of this is directed to Mumbai municipality and the remainder to districts of the state which were severely flood affected.

DFID funding has been used to provide immediate relief for flood victims, including blankets, oral re-hydration salts and appropriate medicines to combat diarrhoeal diseases resulting from contamination of water supplies, and provision of safe water and sanitary

facilities and surveillance systems to reduce disease outbreaks. Provision has also been made for post disaster recovery in the slightly longer term (up to six months), including restoration of mother and child health centres, development of water supply and sanitation facilities, including in schools, and strengthening of health services.

It is worth noting that the Government of India has a well developed capacity for responding to natural disasters and rarely requests outside assistance. The request to assist with flood relief in Maharashtra and elsewhere came from UNICEF and we received timely approval from the Indian Government to proceed.

South Asian Tsunami

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding each of the G8 nations has *(a)* pledged, *(b)* committed and *(c)* spent on the relief effort in countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. [24237]

Mr. Thomas: The UK does not keep a record of how much funding other G8 nations have pledged, committed and spent on relief efforts following the Indian Tsunami. However, the Governments of Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme, are each developing a 'Development Assistance Database' (DAD) to register tsunami recovery resources and results. It is intended that once fully operational, all of these systems will be accessible online.

The UK has allocated £75 million for the immediate humanitarian relief effort following the tsunami. A total of £68.7 million of this has been committed, while the remainder has been set aside for disaster risk reduction projects.

DFID has allocated £65 million to meet reconstruction needs in the tsunami affected countries. From this allocation, £31 million has been committed to the Multi Donor Trust Fund in Indonesia, of which £6 million has so far been paid out. A further £5 million has been committed for technical assistance in Indonesia to help ensure timely, accountable and equitable provision of reconstruction assistance and rebuilding of livelihoods. A total of £2 million has been committed to Sri Lanka to help speed up implementation of reconstruction programmes and to ensure equitable distribution of assistance, and £1.5 million of this has been allocated to the North East Provincial Council to increase their capacity to deliver services to affected communities. A total of £3 million has been committed to India to provide technical assistance aimed at ensuring effective, transparent and equitable programming of tsunami reconstruction efforts. The use of the balance will depend on evidence of where this funding can be most appropriately used.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of post-tsunami British aid to the Sri Lankan Government has been spent; and if he will make a statement. [28415]

Mr. Thomas: DFID disbursed around £4.2 million for programmes specifically to meet relief needs in Sri Lanka. This was channelled through the United Nations and non-governmental organisations such as OXFAM, Save the Children Fund, the Red Cross and CARE. Sri Lanka also benefited from some of the £41.5 million DFID disbursed for regional activities.

A further £800,000 has been provided to finance technical expertise to assist in the identification and assessment of recovery needs, and to support implementation.

In addition, DFID will be providing £1.5 million to strengthen the capacity of the North East Provincial Council to plan and deliver services and assistance in the North East of Sri Lanka, which accounts for 70 per cent. of the area damaged by the tsunamis. We anticipate releasing the first £500,000 shortly. We are considering proposals for a further £500,000 of new support, which will be disbursed over the next year.

For the next 10 years, we will also be providing £41 million of Debt Relief, which will meet 10 per cent. of the cost of Sri Lanka's loan repayments to the International Development Association, the concessional lending arm of the World Bank. This will release Sri Lanka's own funds for tsunami recovery and poverty alleviation programmes. We expect to make the first payment of approximately £3.2 million in December.

Tibet

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effects of the building of the Gormo-Lhasa railway on the culture of Tibet. [24201]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is not involved in this project, either directly or through its shareholding in the multilateral banks such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These institutions along with the European Commission have confirmed that they are not involved in the project, nor have they, or DFID made any separate assessment of its impact.

Trade Justice

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to move the focus of international development from free trade to trade justice. [27338]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government are committed to the development of an open and rules-based international trading system that fulfils its potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in poorer countries. Our key policy commitments on trade and development, as well as our objectives for the current Round of multilateral trade talks, are set out in the Government's White Papers, "Making Globalisation a Force for Good" (July 2004) and "Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor" (December 2000). The UK Government are working hard to support the poorest and most vulnerable producers, be it through multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or regional trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements.

The UK Government do not support forced liberalisation or unfettered free trade. The UK Government fully supports the view that developing countries should be allowed to develop their own trade policies. At the G8 summit this principle was endorsed by others who agreed that within the WTO negotiations

> "flexibility will help least developed countries to decide, plan and sequence their overall economic reforms in line with their country led development programmes and international obligations."

In the long-term the removal of trade barriers, if managed properly, can help developing countries can gain better access to developed country markets and more competitively priced inputs. However, the agenda is broad. We must not only reduce barriers to trade such as subsidies and import tariffs but also invest in developing countries capacities to trade. To do this we are providing additional development assistance to poor countries to help them undertake this investment and give them the time and space to adjust to trade reforms.

The G8 also agreed to provide increased funds for trade related capacity building to assist developing countries take advantage of the new opportunities from a positive conclusion to the Round. There is increased international support for increased 'Aid for Trade' as reflected at the recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings and the G8 summit in Gleneagles. It is important that we build rapidly on the outcome of these meetings.

We now have less than five weeks to go before Hong Kong and are working with international partners to deliver on the ambition of Doha and build on G8 commitments. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest. These gains should include improved participation by developing countries in the world trading system, through substantially increased market access for developing countries and the dismantling of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies by industrialised countries.

Water and Sanitation (Funding)

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to increase the resources allocated to water and sanitation by the infrastructure plans of the Africa Partnership Forum. [25761]

Hilary Benn: The main role of the Africa Partners Forum relating to water and sanitation will be to monitor progress against commitments made at the G8 summit in Gleneagles. These included commitments to: implement the G8 water action plan agreed at Evian in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) initiative on rural water and sanitation, to increase aid for water and sanitation, and maintain political momentum and commitment in these areas.

As one response to these commitments, we have played a leading role in establishing the infrastructure consortium, which aims to accelerate progress towards meeting urgent infrastructure needs in Africa. It will address both national and regional constraints to infrastructure development and encourage better co-ordination and collaboration in key infrastructure sectors. The consortium is not a financing agency, but will act as a platform to broker more donor financing of infrastructure projects and programmes in Africa.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will meet the Scottish Executive to discuss putting a case to the International Olympic Committee for a separate Scottish team for the 2012 Olympics. [27333]

Mr. Caborn: As I said in my previous answer to the hon. Member on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1261, it is highly unlikely that the International Olympic Committee would consider the issue of a separate Scottish Olympic team because of Scotland's constitutional relationship with the rest of UK. I therefore have no plans to take this matter further.

London Development Agency (Tenders)

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the London Development Agency (LDA) about the tendering process for Olympic projects; and if she will ask the LDA to publish the names of companies shortlisted for tenders. [28926]

Mr. Caborn: My officials are in discussion with the Interim Olympic Delivery Authority team, based in the London Development Agency (LDA), in relation to their procurement strategy, the initial draft of which is expected to be ready in December. I will not ask the LDA to publish shortlists in all cases, as on occasion this may hinder open and effective competition. A case-by-case judgment will need to be made.

Lottery Funding

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much national lottery funding has been directed towards asylum-seeker groups in each year since 1997. [25890]

Mr. Caborn: Since 1997 lottery distributors have awarded the following amounts in each calendar year to projects relating to asylum seekers. Due to the nature of lottery awards and the way in which information is stored on the Department's lottery awards database, some of this money will have gone to a wider group of people than just those seeking asylum. Similarly other lottery awards will have indirectly benefited asylum seekers.

	Amount (£)
1997	119,352
1998	415,072
1999	548,836

	Amount (£)
2000	1,425,420
2001	5,585,659
2002	7,971,619
2003	6,317,719
2004	8,467,205
2005 (To date)	2,278,837

In total, one fifth of 1 per cent. of all lottery awards have been made to awards described in the table.

This information, derived from the Department's lottery award database, is searchable at www.lottery.culture.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the lottery distributors.

Olympic Park

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the likely number of visitors to the Olympic Park for the 2012 games. [28739]

Mr. Caborn: London 2012's candidate file includes a table that sets out estimates of average and maximum spectator numbers for all Olympic venues based on modelling work to provide an understanding of demand. Average figures are based on expected ticket sales and maximum figures are based on 87 per cent. of gross venue capacity to ensure adequate spectator transport capacity.

Estimates for the venues within the Olympic Park are as follows:

Venue	Spectators per day		Spectators per session	
	Average	Maximum	Average	Maximum
Olympic Stadium	77,200	139,200	53,400	69,600
Aquatics Centre	33,000	52,200	13,900	17,400
Velodrome	5,200	10,400	4,400	5,200
Olympic Park Arena 1	18,200	31,200	7,600	10,400
Olympic Park Arena 2 (Basketball preliminaries)	21,200	31,200	7,500	10,400
Olympic Park Arena 2 (Modern Pentathlon: shooting, fencing)	3,200	4,400	3,200	4,400
Olympic Park Arena 3	13,700	26,100	5,700	8,700
Olympic Park Arena 4	7,400	10,400	3,700	7,000
Hockey Centre	24,300	39,300	9,500	13,100
BMX Circuit	4,600	5,200	4,600	5,200

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of visitors to the 2012 games Olympic Park are expected to use *(a)* private and *(b)* public transport. [28740]

Mr. Caborn: The Olympic transport proposals contained in the candidature file submitted to the International Olympic Committee encourage all spectators to use public transport, to walk, or to cycle, except for those whose mobility is impaired, for whom car parking provision will be made.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what land is planned to be used for car parking for the 2012 games Olympic Park. [28741]

Mr. Caborn: While the exact design of the Olympic Park is yet to be finalised, it is envisaged that car parks will be kept to the minimum necessary to provide for those disabled visitors unable to use public transport, and for the vehicles needed to transport the athletes and officials.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many car parking spaces will be made available for spectators going to the 2012 games in the Olympic Park. [28742]

Mr. Caborn: The Olympic Transport Proposals—as set out in the Candidature File presented to the International Olympic Committee—encourage all spectators to use public transport, to walk, or to cycle. They therefore make no provision for spectator parking in the Olympic Park, or in the surrounding streets, except for people with impaired mobility.

Sport England

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding Sport England has allocated to areas of health inequalities in each of the last two financial years; and if she will make a statement. [28516]

Mr. Caborn: I am able to provide data from Sport England on awards (committed in the financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05) to the Spearhead Group of local authority districts that are in the bottom fifth nationally for three or more of the five indicators of health inequality.

Sport England lottery awards to Spearhead local authorities for the two financial years to 31 March 2005

	2003–04	2004–05	Total
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—
Barnsley	122,250	319,834	442,084
Barrow-in-Furness	153,072	—	153,072
Birmingham	871,652	—	871,652
Blackburn with Darwen	66,112	108,000	174,112
Blackpool	—	345,000	345,000

Sport England lottery awards to Spearhead local authorities for the two financial years to 31 March 2005

	2003–04	2004–05	Total
Blyth Valley	—	120,000	120,000
Bolsover	82,782	—	82,782
Bolton	1,830,038	320,616	2,150,654
Bradford	1,140,605	901,797	2,042,402
Burnley	—	1,000,000	1,000,000
Bury	—	—	—
Carlisle	—	398,000	398,000
Chester-le-Street	734,695	220,000	954,695
Corby	71,643	388,500	460,143
Coventry	1,493,480	—	1,493,480
Derwentside	—	420,000	420,000
Doncaster	—	—	—
Easington	—	360,000	360,000
Gateshead	—	1,800,000	1,800,000
Greenwich	—	—	—
Hackney	—	—	—
Halton	107,664	344,930	452,594
Hammersmith and Fulham	150,000	—	150,000
Haringey	—	238,840	238,840
Hartlepool	—	642,000	642,000
Hyndburn	—	—	—
Islington	106,079	2,000	108,079
Kingston upon Hull City	260,990	577,685	838,675
Knowsley	470,000	699,110	1,169,110
Lambeth	2,671,406	—	2,671,406
Leicester	3,243,251	469,046	3,712,297
Lewisham	582,602	—	582,602
Lincoln	—	251,100	251,100
Liverpool	4,618,182	300,000	4,918,182
Manchester	3,097,841	2,494,000	5,591,841
Middlesbrough	160,000	1,811,470	1,971,470
Newcastle upon Tyne	—	761,127	761,127
Newham	300,000	1,500,000	1,800,000
North East Lincolnshire	40,280	—	40,280
North Tyneside	—	900,000	900,000
Nottingham	647,450	1,419,191	2,066,641
Nuneaton and Bedworth	524,050	—	524,050
Oldham	—	150,000	150,000
Pendle	—	—	—
Preston	1,850,000	—	1,850,000
Redcar and Cleveland	—	600,000	600,000
Rochdale	—	298,904	298,904
Rossendale	—	150,000	150,000
Rotherham	57,000	—	57,000
Salford	207,000	800,000	1,007,000
Sandwell	765,045	—	765,045
Sedgefield	—	154,500	154,500
South Tyneside	40,000	161,929	201,929
Southwark	3,302,694	—	3,302,694
St. Helens	112,187	—	112,187
Stockton-on-Tees	—	—	—
Stoke-on-Trent	1,065,602	—	1,065,602
Sunderland	50,000	1,066,697	1,116,697
Tameside	61,285	1,672,779	1,734,064
Tamworth	—	—	—
Tower Hamlets	1,280,155	—	1,280,155
Wakefield	3,094,988	852,990	3,947,978
Walsall	529,000	—	529,000
Wansbeck	—	648,008	648,008
Warrington	800,000	555,000	1,355,000
Wear Valley	641,635	—	641,635
Wigan	—	742,000	742,000
Wirral	45,000	—	45,000
Wolverhampton	399,563	13,977	413,540
Grand total	37,847,278	26,979,030	64,826,308

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many employees have been dismissed by her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29123]

Mr. Lammy: The Department dismissed one employee in 2000–01, one employee in 2003–04 and two employees in 2004–05.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carers Allowance

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will reform the policy whereby widows under retirement age, unable to work because of carer's responsibilities and in receipt of a husband's pension, are not eligible for carers' allowance; and if he will make a statement. [20312]

Mrs. McGuire: It is a fundamental principle of the social security system that only one benefit at a time can be paid for income maintenance. Carer's allowance provides a measure of financial support to those who give up the opportunity of full-time paid employment to care for a severely disabled person. As such it is not an "extra-costs" benefit. To pay both benefits in full therefore would duplicate provision for the same need.

Where carer's allowance is overlapped in full, the person maintains an underlying entitlement to the benefit which, in turn, gives them access to the carer premium in the income-related benefits such as income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

There are no plans to change this policy.

Child Maintenance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what statutory obligations there are on non-resident parents who have been assessed for Child Support Agency maintenance to inform the Agency of any change of *(a)* address and *(b)* employment; and if he will make a statement. [28421]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are no statutory obligations on non-resident parents who have been assessed for child support maintenance to inform the CSA of either change of address or employment.

Council Tax Rebate

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what mechanism those not claiming pension credit will be able to claim the £200 council tax rebate. [28756]

Mr. Plaskitt: In most cases the £200 payment to help with council tax bills will be paid automatically with the winter fuel payment. Payments are being made over a number of weeks from early November until Christmas 2005. Eligible people who do not receive a winter fuel payment will need to claim.

People who need to claim or who have not received an automatic payment by Christmas 2005 should call the office that pays their benefit or the winter fuel payment helpline on 08459 15 15 15. Claims must be received by 30 March 2006.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the aims and purposes of the Child Support Agency. [21432]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency exists to deliver an efficient child support service, which plays its part in ensuring that children whose parents do not live together are financially supported.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on Government plans to reduce the complexity of Child Support Agency maintenance calculations. [21448]

Mr. Plaskitt: The introduction of the new child support scheme in March 2003 brought in a much simpler way of calculating maintenance. We know that many parents now choose to calculate maintenance themselves by using the on-line calculator on the agency's website.

Housing Benefit

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he has taken in response to the recommendation in the Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 243 that all disabled claimants and all care leavers should be made exempt from the single room rent restriction; and if he will make a statement. [28781]

Mr. Plaskitt: We are continuing to consider the issues raised by this report.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations his Department has received on the impact of the single room rent restriction on *(a)* homelessness and *(b)* poverty among young people. [28796]

Mr. Plaskitt: We have received representations concerning the single room rent from various bodies including Shelter, Centrepoint, YMCA and Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants there were in *(a)* Oxfordshire and *(b)* Wantage constituency in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2005. [25355]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Oxfordshire and the Wantage parliamentary constituency.

	May 1997	*May 2005*
Oxfordshire	12,700	14,700
Wantage parliamentary constituency	1,900	2,100

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. 1997 Figures have been produced using the 5 per cent. proportions against WPLS totals.
3. "Claimant" figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).
4. "Oxfordshire" includes the following local authorities: Cherwell, Oxford, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time spent on incapacity benefit in *(a)* pathways to work areas and *(b)* the UK excluding pathways to work pilots was in each quarter since each of the pilots began. [29211]

Mrs. McGuire: The information has been placed in the Library.

Rachel Scully (Pension)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if the Retirement Pension Forecast

team will supply Rachel Scully, a constituent of the hon. Member for Birkenhead, with a forecast which takes into account her underlying entitlement to carer's allowance and the awarding of credits for her second state pension. [20260]

Mr. Timms: The administration of the Pension Service is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Alexis Cleveland. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Alexis Cleveland to Mr. Frank Field, dated 16 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State if the Retirement Pension Forecast team will supply Rachel Scully with a forecast which takes into account her underlying entitlement to carers allowance and the awarding of credits of her second state pensions. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of The Pension Service.

I am pleased to advise you that a State Pension Forecast that takes into account her underlying entitlement to carers allowance and the award of credits for her state second pension was issued on 7th November 2005.

CABINET OFFICE

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27421]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Information relating to the number of consultants engaged by the Cabinet Office is not held centrally and may not be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs.

The total expenditure on the use of consultants since 1997 is shown in the table:

	£ million
1997–98	5.53
1998–99	8.09
1999–2000	10.81
2000–01	10.93
2001–02	16.88
2002–03	13.39
2003–04	15.93
2004–05	12.70

Notes:

1. Figures relating to financial years prior to 2001–02 include Centre for Management and Policy Studies, Regional Co-ordination Unit, Government Car and Despatch Agency and Central Office of Information.
2. Figures from 2001–02 include 'core' Cabinet Office only.

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–61WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Sales

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he had with *(a)* the Department of Trade and Industry and *(b)* major supermarket chains about a possible link between the sale of alcohol in supermarkets and street crime. [27298]

Paul Goggins: No discussions have taken place on this topic, but Ministers recently met representatives from major supermarkets to discuss sales of alcohol as part of our wider efforts to promote responsible drinking.

Asylum/Immigration

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Afhram Hasen reference A1108602 will receive notification of his immigration status. [25467]

Mr. McNulty: Mr. Hasen was notified of his immigration status on 27 October 2005.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Joseph Grant reference G11116730 will receive notification of his immigration status following the letter of 15 September to the hon. Member for Banbury. [25468]

Mr. McNulty: Mr. Grant was notified of his immigration status on 4 November 2005.

British Overseas Territories

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many British passports have been processed for each of the British overseas territories *(a)* in 2005 to date and *(b)* in each of the last three years. [27611]

Andy Burnham: The information is as follows.

(a) 4,916 British passports have been processed for each of the British overseas territories in 2005 to date.

(b) 4,938 in 2002; 8,284 in 2003; 6,281 in 2004; and 4,916 to October 2005.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23736]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department has no current plans to join the Carbon Trust CMP, it will be considered as further work on energy efficiency and climate change impacts, in response to the estate management targets of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate, is taken forward.

The Energy White Paper and the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate set targets for central Government Estate of reducing absolute carbon, from fuel and electricity used in buildings on our estate, by 12.5 percent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000 and increasing energy efficiency of the buildings on the estate by 15 percent. over the same

period. In order to address these targets the Department is benchmarking key office sites, after which we propose to undertake energy surveys at those sites above the benchmark, and thereafter will compile site-specific action plans. The public sector Prison Service has an Energy Efficiency Action Plan. A benchmarking guide has been developed and the data used to help set carbon dioxide key performance indicators for each prison.

Central European Time

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the *(a)* advantages and *(b)* disadvantages of the United Kingdom moving to Central European Time; and if he will make a statement. [27316]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

There are many arguments—and opinions—for and against a move to Central European Time. Any change would need to have full regard to a wide range of factors including the impact on social and community life, transport links with other countries, health and safety issues, such as road traffic accidents, and the views of the business community and other stakeholders. However, I do not believe there is a clear case for change.

Missing Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress he has made in establishing a nationwide child rescue alert scheme to promote early notification of missing children. [28206]

Paul Goggins: The scheme operates in five forces. Engagement with other forces through the national centre for policing excellence indicates a wider interest in the scheme, with expectation of further significant take up by spring next year.

Farj Hassan Faraj

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he was informed by the Italian authorities of the relevant deadlines relating to the extradition request of Farj Hassan Faraj; [25927]

(2) when his Department first informed Farj Hassan Faraj that he was subject to an extradition request by the Italian authorities; [25928]

(3) what reasons the Italian authorities gave the Department for withdrawing their request to extradite Farj Hassan Faraj to Italy; [26816]

(4) when Farj Hassan Faraj was released from detention. [26820]

Andy Burnham: Farj Hassan Faraj was first informed that he was the subject of an extradition request from Italy on 24 July 2003, when he was arrested on a warrant issued pursuant to that request.

In 2004 the Italian constitutional court ruled that domestic time limits on pre-trial custody applied to people in custody outside Italy for whom a request for extradition had been made. This time limit would not however have applied in Faraj's case had he been notified by the relevant UK authorities of the completion of a pre-trial investigation on him in Italy. The Italian authorities requested on eight April 2003 that such notification be given urgently.

They did not specify a deadline. Unfortunately, although an earlier request for the transmission of evidence was acted on immediately, the notification was, by oversight, not made to Faraj. The fact, and significance, of this omission were not appreciated at the time.

The UK authorities were first alerted by the Italian authorities to the implications of the constitutional court's ruling on custody time limits for the Faraj case in October 2005, and notification was then immediately given. On 10 October the Italian authorities withdrew their extradition request, stating that the order for pre-trial custody in prison had been revoked following the dismissal of proceedings. Faraj remains in immigration detention in the UK, pending further consideration of his immigration position.

Feltham Young Offenders Institution

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total complement of permanent staff is in Feltham Young Offenders Institution; broken down by *(a)* juvenile and *(b)* young offender sections how many are employed; and how many are on long-term sick leave. [21782]

Fiona Mactaggart: Staffing levels at Feltham are set out in the following table.

	Target staff number	*Staff in post*	*Staff on long-term sick leave*
Juvenile area	91	88	3
Young offender area	159	151	4
Other areas	588	548.42	13
Total	838	787.42	20

Forensic Science Service

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effect of the work structuring project undertaken by the Forensic Science Service in response to the 7th Report of the Public Accounts Committee of 1999. [26701]

Andy Burnham: The Forensic Science Service (FSS) piloted the principles of work structuring in 2002 and subsequently adopted a more comprehensive programme of work early in 2005. Work structuring focuses on the key importance of staff and their positioning in terms of work organisation. Strategies, structures and systems are assessed and redesigned to support staff.

The effects of the work structuring project are measured in terms of business performance, staff motivation and morale. The work is currently in progress and it is expected that the realisation of the benefits identified will be spread within a two to three-year time period.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the role of biometric identifiers

is in the solutions being considered for remote authentication for the proposed identity card scheme; and if he will make a statement. [26626]

Andy Burnham: At present, the identity cards scheme is looking at various alternatives that allow the implementation of secure remote authentication including use of one-time password technology. We are defining requirements which aim to evaluate the generation of one-time passwords via the use of both personal identification numbers (PINs) and biometrics in combination with an ID card and bidders will be invited to propose solutions meeting these requirements during the procurement stage.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what preparations have been made to recruit staff in anticipation of the introduction of identity cards. [26066]

Andy Burnham: The Home Office has undertaken planning and preparatory work to define an organisational structure, to define and agree the senior management roles within that structure and to define a remuneration structure for the chief executive officer. Work on recruitment of operational staff to administer the scheme will need to be informed by the procurement stage which will not commence before Royal Assent of the Identity Cards Bill.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the results of the identity card authentication pilot study undertaken by the Criminal Records Bureau and referred to on page 150 of the 2005 departmental report. [26778]

Andy Burnham: In response to the themes identified by the Bichard inquiry, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) embarked on a pilot exercise to explore and investigate the benefits and costs of facilitating the provision of an on-line identity authentication service to authenticate the identity of disclosure applicants.

To that end, in July 2004 the CRB posted a Government Opportunities Notice seeking expressions of interest from suppliers of on-line identity authentication services to take part in a three-month pilot to trial products, at the supplier's own cost, with CRB registered bodies. Following the application of a basic sift criteria the following suppliers were invited to take part in the pilot: BT, Call-credit, Equifax and Experian. The pilot involved each supplier providing his or her product directly to a registered body. No charge was made to CRB or the participating registered bodies for the use of the products deployed at the registered bodies. Importantly, the on-line authentication check did not replace the current CRB authentication rules—the check was conducted alongside the normal paper-based checks.

Each pilot ran for a period of 12 weeks, the start date largely dependent on the sector in which the body operated. Registered bodies held the responsibility for obtaining the applicants consent for the pilot, obtained through a 'Consent Statement' specifically developed by the CRB for the pilot exercise. The general view of registered bodies participating in the pilot was that, while they could see the benefits of deploying similar systems in support of the identity authentication process for disclosure applicants, the type of system trialled whereby electronic authentication is required did not in its present form add any significant benefit to the current authentication process.

It is important to note that the products deployed by the four pilot suppliers were 'off the shelf' for the purposes of the pilot although each supplier was keen to stress that bespoke solutions are available. Following the successful conclusion of the pilot exercise, the pilot report conclusions and the wider identity-related developments in government and commerce are currently under consideration by the CRB Management Board.

Licensing Act 1964

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted under (i) section 172, (ii) section 172A and (iii) section 173 of the Licensing Act 1964 in each year since 1997, broken down by (A) petty sessional division area and (B) police authority area; and if he will make a statement. [24117]

Paul Goggins: Statistics from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on the number of people prosecuted and convicted under sections 172, 172A and 173 of the Licensing Act 1964, England and Wales, 1997–2003 are contained in the tables, broken down by police force area and petty sessional area a copy will be placed in the Library. Statistics for 2004 will be available later this month.

The offence of selling alcohol to a drunken person under s172(3) of the LA 1964 was added to the penalty notice for disorder scheme from 4 April this year. This enables the police to issue persons who commit this offence with an on the spot penalty of £80. Provisional data for 2004 from January to August show that 11 penalty notices were issued for this offence.

Nottinghamshire Police

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects *(a)* to receive and *(b)* to publish HM Inspectorate of Constabulary's report into Nottinghamshire police's response to serious and violent crime. [12658]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 14 July 2005]:* I received Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's report on 6 July 2005. The report was published on 20 September 2005 and is available on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Religiously Offensive Material

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of recently introduced legislation in dealing with religiously offensive material; and if he will make a statement. [20282]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 extended the nine racially-aggravated offences introduced in sections 29–32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to include religiously aggravated conduct. These offences, which include assault, criminal damage and harassment, make available to the courts higher maximum penalties

where the offender demonstrates, or the offence is wholly or partly motivated by, hostility towards the victim based on the victim's membership or presumed membership of a religious group.

According to figures published by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in January 2005, 49 cases of religiously aggravated crimes were finalised during 2003–04. Because the new offences have only relatively recently come into force it is not yet possible to identify a trend or fully evaluate their impact.

Sex Crimes

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list organisations which have received funding from his Department to help individuals who claim to have been falsely accused of sexual crime; and how much each organisation received in the last five years for which figures are available. [27256]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has not provided any funding to organisations helping those who claim to have been falsely accused of sexual crime in the last five years. The Office for Criminal Justice Reform does provide funding for the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC).

People who believe they have been wrongly convicted or sentenced and who have exhausted all the normal review procedures can ask the CCRC to review their case. The CCRC can refer the case back to the appropriate appeal court if they conclude that there was a real possibility that the conviction or sentence would be overturned.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding sentencing of sexual offenders. [25853]

Paul Goggins: The Sexual Offences Act 2003 overhauled the law regarding sex offences. The Act followed a fundamental review of the legislation and a major public consultation. The consultation document, "Setting the Boundaries", made a wide range of recommendations that were considered carefully in the light of over 700 responses received during the public consultation period. I also receive correspondence from Members of Parliament and the public regarding the sentencing of sexual offenders in relation to specific cases.

Sex Industry

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many women he estimates to be working illegally in the sex industry in *(a)* Brent, *(b)* London and *(c)* England; and what proportion of these women he estimates to have been illegally trafficked into the UK; [27200]

(2) what recent estimate he has made of the number of women illegally trafficked into the UK each year; what assessment he has made of what happens to them thereafter; and if he will make a statement. [27201]

Paul Goggins: The nature of illegal immigration and human trafficking means that these are often hidden crimes which makes it extremely difficult to measure the scale of the problem or the numbers involved. We do not hold any statistics on the number of women who are working illegally in the sex industry and the nature of both on and off-street prostitution makes the collecting of reliable information difficult and any data must be viewed with a degree of caution.

There is a clear indication that brothels in London and other cities in the UK have an influx of foreign women. The Metropolitan police believes that 70 per cent. of the women involved in off street prostitution in London are now foreign nationals but it is not known how many of these are in the UK illegally. Taking effective action against people traffickers remains a high priority for this Government.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Anthrax Sales (Iraq)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to lodge a complaint with the UN Security Council following the breach of the biological and toxic weapons convention caused by the sale of anthrax to Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [27649]

Dr. Howells: We remain of the opinion that there is no case for reporting the United States to the UN Security Council as having been in breach of its obligations under the biological and toxin weapons convention.

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 643W.

Azerbaijan

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* transparency and *(b)* legitimacy of the recent elections in Azerbaijan. [28410]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government accept the assessment of the International Election Observation Mission led by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Their preliminary findings were released on 7 November. These found that the Azerbaijan parliamentary elections did not meet a number of OSCE and Council of Europe standards and commitments for democratic elections, suggesting that the elections were not free or fair. The UK, holding the Presidency of the European Union (EU), issued a statement on 7 November in response to the preliminary findings. A further EU statement was issued in the OSCE Permanent Council on 10 November. Both statements can be found on the Presidency website at www.eu2005.gov.uk.

Burundi

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether the recent government elections in Burundi were free and fair; and if he will make a statement. [28147]

Ian Pearson: As Presidency of the European Union (EU), the UK issued statements on 8 July and 23 August on the conduct of parliamentary and presidential elections in Burundi. We stated that we shared the assessment of the EU's Election Observation Mission that, despite some minor irregularities and allegations of fraud, the elections were generally in accordance with international standards.

We further congratulated the Burundian people for their commitment to a stable and democratic future for their country and urged all parties to accept the results of these elections and to work together towards building a peaceful and prosperous Burundi.

China

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met non-governmental organisations working on human rights in *(a)* China and *(b)* Tibet. [27070]

Ian Pearson: Ministers regularly hold meetings with non- governmental organisations interested in human rights in China, including Tibet. Recent such meetings have included one in May 2004 between my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and Ms Joanna Lumley and Ms Kate Saunders about human rights in Tibet. I have met the Free Tibet Campaign twice, once in June 2005 and once this month.

Ethiopia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether the recent elections in Ethiopia were free and fair. [26769]

Ian Pearson: In the period running up to the elections all parties were able to campaign relatively freely and were allowed some access to the state controlled media. The elections were generally well prepared and effectively conducted. The overall conduct of polling by the National Electoral Board was more transparent and efficient than ever before. However, the European Union Observer Mission (EUOM) and the Carter Centre have expressed concerns about the post election processes. We await the final report of the EUOM. Moreover, the United Kingdom, the European Union and others have protested about the violence and fatalities that occurred in the post-election period before all the results were confirmed.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Ethiopia regarding the recent political unrest there. [26979]

Ian Pearson: We are gravely concerned about the outbreak of violence in Ethiopia since 1 November which has resulted in a number of deaths and injuries and a large number of detentions, including of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy leadership and civil society and media leaders.

On 6 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) spoke to Prime Minister Meles. This followed action by my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), who summoned the Ethiopian Chargé d'Affaires on 1 November to register our concerns. Our ambassador in Ethiopia has also raised our concerns with both Prime Minister Meles and with the Ethiopian Foreign Minister.

In our capacity as presidency of the European Union, our ambassador to Ethiopia held a press conference in Addis Ababa with the United States ambassador on 6 November, where we called for the Government to restore peace and confidence in the democracy building process by ensuring due process of law and respect for human rights.

EU Enlargement (Illegal Trafficking)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the prerequisites for countries to qualify for EU membership with respect to combating illegal trafficking routes. [27822]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The criteria for membership of the EU were set out at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993.

There is no specific requirement relating to combating illegal trafficking routes. But candidates need to transpose and implement European Community legislation including in the field of justice and home affairs into their national legislation.

This, and increased co-operation between the relevant agencies in member states, makes a significant contribution to the EU's ability to combat illegal trafficking.

European Union (Opt-outs)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many opt-outs the Government have given up at EU level since May 1997; and if he will list them. [27817]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since May 1997, the Government have only removed the UK "opt-out" to the agreement on social policy. This was annexed by the treaty of Maastricht to the treaty establishing the European Community as part of the Protocol on Social Policy. The agreement was fully incorporated into the treaty establishing the European Community by the treaty of Amsterdam which came into force on 1 May 1999. The provisions on social policy as they stand today can be found in part 3, title XI of the treaty establishing the European Community.

Indonesia

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the treatment of Christians in Indonesia, with particular reference to the case of three Christian women who have each been jailed for three years for giving Christian teaching to Muslim children with their parents' consent. [28813]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of the conviction of Dr. Rebekka Zakaria, Eti Pangesti and Ratna Bangun and the closure of some churches in Indonesia.

In September this year, President Yudhoyono stressed that the state guaranteed every citizen religious freedom and called on the police and members of the public to act to prevent violence against any faith. We co-sponsored with the Indonesian Government in Bali in July, an international conference to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony. We will continue to co-operate with them on this important objective. Immediately after the recent beheadings of three Christian school girls in Central Sulawesi, President Yudhoyono condemned what he described as a "sadistic crime", and sent extra police to the area to ensure that violence did not flare up. The British ambassador in Jakarta has discussed the issue with senior Indonesian officials and expressed the UK's shock at the incident.

Ivory Coast

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that the Ivory Coast is recruiting child soldiers from Liberia; and what representations he has made to the government of the Ivory Coast. [26972]

Ian Pearson: We are concerned by recent reports, in particular from Human Rights Watch, indicating that child soldiers from Liberia are again being recruited to Cote d'Ivoire. The UK, as EU Presidency, made representations to the National Transitional Government of Liberia in July concerning children in armed conflict. In addition, Belgium, as local EU presidency, expressed concerns on behalf of all member states about child soldiers to the Government of Cote d'Ivoire also in July. We continue to monitor the situation closely with EU colleagues and the wider international community.

Kurdistan

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* nature and *(b)* policy underlying UK involvement in ECJ case C0229/05, on certain Kurdistan political groups. [27821]

Dr. Howells: European Court of Justice (ECJ) case C0229/05 involves a freeze on assets imposed by the European Community pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1373 (2001). Effective implementation of UNSCR 1373 (2001) is apriority for the UK as a central component of the international community's efforts against terrorism. The UK fully supported the decision by the European Council to impose an asset freeze on certain Kurdish political groups and intervened in support of the European Council before the Court of First Instance. The action against the European Council was dismissed by that court. Although the UK has not intervened again in the appeal of the case to the ECJ, it continues to support fully the case put forward by the European Council.

Ministerial Travel

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the additional cost of *(a)* his and *(b)* his officials' early return from Moscow to permit him to vote in the proceedings in the Terrorism Bill. [28110]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 14 November 2005]*: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited Moscow on 8 and 9 November for the EU-Russia Foreign Ministers' Troika. He attended this meeting as planned. The talks were constructive, continuing the positive dialogue from October's EU-Russia Summit.

The Chinese President's State Visit took place on 8–9 November. Immediately before leaving for Moscow, the Foreign Secretary met Li Zhaoxing, the Chinese Foreign Minister, in London. The Foreign Secretary had planned to travel directly to Iraq from Moscow, and then to Bahrain for the annual G8 and Broader Middle East and North Africa "Forum for the Future" meetings on 11 and 12 November.

It would not have been possible to complete this schedule using commercial flights. We therefore chartered an aircraft. The total cost of the charter was £98,400, which included an additional £30,200 for diverting through the UK on 9 November. This also covered the travel costs of the staff accompanying the Foreign Secretary to Moscow, comprising six officials, plus one Special Adviser and one Special Branch Protection Officer.

Paragraph 10.11 of the Ministerial Code states:

"if a Minister is abroad with permission and is called home for Ministerial Parliamentary reasons, including to vote, the cost of the extra journey back and forth may be met by public funds".

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how much it cost *(a)* him and *(b)* officials from his Department to fly to and from Russia for his recent visit; [28243]

(2) what the flight arrangements were for his recent visit to Russia; [28244]

(3) how many Government officials accompanied him on his recent visit to Russia. [28245]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Peter Luff) today (UIN 28110).

Piracy

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many reports of British citizens being victims of criminal incidents on the high seas *(a)* off the coast of Africa and *(b)* elsewhere have been received by his Department in each of the last five years. [27556]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not collect this information. Consular cases are recorded by type e.g. death, hospitalisation, theft and so on, and by country. Cases are not recorded by circumstances such as occurring at sea.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many incidents of piracy involving British citizens have been reported to his Department in each of the last five years. [27557]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave today (UIN 27556).

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice his Department has issued on the risk of *(a)* piracy and *(b)* other crime at sea. [27558]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office issues 217 regularly updated country travel advice notices on its website. These are aimed at members of the public and include information on the risk of falling victim to crime in each country. Advice on the risk of piracy, including kidnapping, within a country's territorial waters is included where appropriate, as in the cases of Somalia, Malaysia and Singapore. Other types of crime (eg illegal fishing) which do not pose a risk to individual travellers are not included in the advice.

The departmental lead on piracy on the high seas lies with the Department for Transport's Transport Security Division, which issues advice to commercial shipping on matters such as the risk of piracy.

Romania/Bulgaria (EU Membership)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria *(a)* Romania and *(b)* Bulgaria need to meet to join the EU; what is his assessment of whether (i) Romania and (ii) Bulgaria are on track to meet these criteria; and if he will make a statement. [28413]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As agreed at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, candidate countries need to meet the so-called 'Copenhagen criteria' before they can join the European Union. This means that they must have:

stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;

the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

The European Commission is closely monitoring both countries' preparations. It published a Comprehensive Monitoring Report on 25 October this year in which it confirmed that both countries fulfil the political criteria for membership and are functioning market economies. But it emphasised that both countries need to urgently step up the implementation of reforms in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs, agriculture, the environment and administrative capacity. The Commission will continue to closely monitor their progress and will produce a follow-up report in spring next year. If it deems that either country is manifestly unprepared for membership, it can recommend to the Council that accession be delayed by one year to 2008.

Russia

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has held with the Russian Government regarding Russia's possible entry to the EU. [27755]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has had no discussions with the Russian Federation regarding Russian entry into the European Union (EU). The Russian Federation currently has no plans to seek membership of the EU.

Senegal

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Senegal *(a)* bilaterally and *(b)* representing the EU under the UK presidency on the requests by Belgium for the extradition of Hissene Habre on charges of crimes against humanity; and if he will make a statement. [26901]

Ian Pearson: The UK Government would carefully consider any formal request for support on this issue from the Belgian Government, but to date we have received none.

Somalia

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Somalia. [27225]

Ian Pearson: We continue to work closely with the UN and other members of the international community to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement and a return to good governance in Somalia. We fully support the special representative of the UN Secretary General, Francois Fall, in his efforts to facilitate the peace process and encourage Somali-owned reconciliation initiatives.

We remain deeply concerned by recent reports of military activities, violations of the UN arms embargo and hostile rhetoric between the rival factions. We totally condemn the assassination attempt on 6 November against the Transitional Federal Prime Minister, Ali Mohammed Gedi, and extend our condolences to the families of the victims. We believe that any use of force to settle the current differences within the Transitional Federal Institutions is unacceptable and counterproductive.

We urge all the Somali factions to refrain from military activities and to take concrete steps to reach consensus through dialogue and quickly create the conditions in which humanitarian access can alleviate the suffering of large numbers of southern Somalis.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had about political developments in Somalia. [27226]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) met the Transitional Federal President of Somalia, Abullahi Yusuf, on 20 May, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, Francois Fall, on 6 September and the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hasan, on 2 October. Officials in London and Nairobi have also actively been urging representatives of the Somali factions to resolve their differences over the location of the Transitional Federal Government and the details of a security stabilisation plan for Somalia. We also discuss Somalia regularly in the UN Security Council and with our EU partners.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of a split in the ranks of the Sudan Liberation Army on the potential for peace in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [28034]

Ian Pearson: We are concerned about continued divisions within the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A). These divisions are fuelling insecurity on the ground and threaten to hinder the peace negotiations in Abuja. We and our international partners are pressing all factions within the SLM/A to unite and negotiate with one voice at the Darfur peace talks in Abuja, which are due to resume on 21 November.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on recent attacks on World Food Programme convoys near Nyala, Darfur; [28035]

(2) what assessment he has made of how much of Darfur is no longer accessible to non-governmental agencies; and if he will make a statement. [28036]

Ian Pearson: We are greatly concerned by attacks on humanitarian workers in Darfur. In recent weeks there have been a number of attacks on World Food Programme convoys in Southern Darfur. These attacks appear to have been carried out by bandits. Humanitarian operations are critical in supporting the civilians in Darfur, and any attacks on United Nations (UN) and non-governmental humanitarian agencies put their work in jeopardy and limits access to those who need assistance. At present, the UN reports that it is confident that all areas of Darfur are accessible by helicopter, and at least intermittently by road. They report that despite these serious incidents, humanitarian services to all areas are continuing.

We make regular representations to all parties in the Darfur conflict and have made clear that the harassment, abduction and attacks on humanitarian workers in Darfur is unacceptable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. During his visit to Sudan on 5–8 October my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), met representatives from non-governmental organisations and UN agencies in Darfur to hear their views on the security situation which is hampering the humanitarian relief effort. He raised these issues strongly with the Sudanese Government, pressing the importance of improving the security situation and allowing aid workers to operate freely. The African Union Mission in Sudan, to which we are providing almost £32 million, is having a positive effect on security where it is deployed.

Tanzania

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Tanzania regarding the recent political unrest in Zanzibar. [26977]

Ian Pearson: We and the international community worked hard with President Mkapa, presidential candidate Kikwete, President Karume and all concerned, to encourage them to put their personal authority behind a process that would result in a free and fair election in Zanzibar on 30 October.

My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) wrote to President Mkapa on 24 October setting out his concerns regarding reports of violence and intimidation on Zanzibar in the run-up to the elections. As presidency of the EU, the UK made representations to the Tanzanian Government, regarding the importance of peaceful, transparent and credible elections, on 17 and 26 October.

My hon. Friend the former Minister for Africa (Mr. Mullin), went to Zanzibar to observe the election as a special envoy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He met presidential candidate Kikwete on 1 November and discussed the importance of addressing the deeply polarised nature of Zanzibari politics.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Tanzania regarding its support for President Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe. [26978]

Ian Pearson: In the wake of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe, our high commissioner in Dar es Salaam raised Zimbabwe with ambassador Mulamula at the Tanzanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26 July 2005. My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), also discussed Zimbabwe with Jakaya Kikwete, the Tanzanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 30 June. More recently, the United Kingdom's permanent representative to the United Nations discussed the situation in Zimbabwe with other United Nations Security Council members, including Tanzania, on 4 October. We intend to continue these discussions until the Government of Zimbabwe addresses the United Nations Secretary General's concerns.

Ministers and Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials take every opportunity to discuss with African Governments, including Tanzania, the political situation in Zimbabwe and other issues that affect the region. On 1 November, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear to the House that we would continue to urge Southern African nations to put strong pressure on the Mugabe regime (*Official Report*, columns 718–19).

Thailand

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent political unrest in the Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces of Thailand. [28417]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned by the continuing violence in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat and remain in close contact with the Royal Thai Government.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister discussed the situation in the south of Thailand with the Prime Minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra, in London last month.

UK Expatriates (Spain)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Spain about the costs of providing healthcare to UK expatriates; and if he will make a statement. [27534]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not had any discussions with his Spanish counterpart on this subject.

The Spanish Government have not raised it with us at ministerial level, or in the European Union.

United States (Prince of Wales's Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 636W, on HRH Prince of Wales (US visit), what the *(a)* job title and *(b)* grade was of each of the (i) junior staff from the embassy in Washington who accompanied HRH the Prince of Wales and HRH the Duchess of Cornwall throughout their recent visit to the US and (ii) staff based in *(A)* New York and *(B)* San Francisco who accompanied their Royal Highnesses. [26863]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 14 November 2005]*: In addition to the ambassador, the following members of staff from the British embassy in Washington accompanied the Royal party during their visit to the US:

1st Secretary Political, Grade D6, who accompanied in New York, Washington DC, New Orleans and San Francisco.

1st Secretary/ Press Secretary, Grade D6, who accompanied in New York, Washington DC, and New Orleans.

Locally Engaged Press Adviser, Grade US 9, who accompanied in New York, Washington DC, New Orleans and San Francisco.

Locally Engaged Publications Officer, Grade US 5, who accompanied in Washington DC and San Francisco.

In New York, the Consul General, Grade SMS 3, Deputy Consul General, Grade SMS 1, and the Visits Officer, Grade US 6 accompanied the Royal Party. In San Francisco, they were accompanied by the Consul General, Grade SMS 1 and the Visits Officer, Grade US 5.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

House Building (Barnet)

8. **Mrs. Villiers:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on house-building and development in the London borough of Barnet. [28532]

Yvette Cooper: Barnet aims to provide a minimum of 890 new homes per year, which was exceeded in 2004–05. Barnet is an opportunity borough with great potential to deliver more. There are proposals in the London plan housing alteration to increase this to 1,960 homes per year. This will help meet housing need and deliver sustainable communities in London. Between 2000 and 2003 92 percent. of new homes in Barnet were built on brown field land.

10. **Mr. Jeremy Browne:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the additional infrastructure that will be required to support extra house-building in Taunton Deane. [28535]

Yvette Cooper: The need for future housing and infrastructure in Taunton Deane is currently being considered as part of the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) being undertaken by the South West Regional Assembly. The draft RSS will be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2006.

The Government are strongly committed to the principle that infrastructure (including public services) must be sufficient to support growth.

11. **Nick Herbert:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the infrastructure improvements required to meet his house-building targets in the South East. [28536]

Yvette Cooper: Government recognises the critical links between infrastructure and growth and is committed to exploring the infrastructure needs of the region as the South East Regional Planning process progresses.

13. **Tim Loughton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will link new house-building targets to improvements in infrastructure. [28538]

Yvette Cooper: The Government are strongly committed to the principle that infrastructure must be sufficient to support growth—that is an essential element in achieving sustainable communities. Our approach is to ensure that infrastructure, including public services, is provided in step with growth, as plans for individual growth locations are developed.

Housing Corporation Funding

9. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which private developers can bid for Housing Corporation funding previously reserved for social landlords. [28534]

Mr. Woolas: Persons other than registered social landlords are now eligible to bid for social housing grant from the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 2004. Housing associations and private companies are competing in the 2006–08 bidding round on as equal a basis as possible to provide the same products.

The aim is to widen the whole competition for grant, bring forward more schemes and encourage more efficiency in provision and new partnerships, with no reduction in the quality of homes. That should mean better value for money for the taxpayer and more affordable homes to meet the serious shortage for those in housing need.

Regional Spatial Strategies

12. **Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the level of consultation being undertaken in connection with regional spatial strategies. [28537]

Yvette Cooper: There is a statutory requirement for the Regional Planning Body to consult a wide range of stakeholders both while the draft revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy is being prepared and after publication. An independent examination in public of the draft, at which people will be invited to speak, is required in all but exceptional circumstances. The Secretary of State's proposed changes are then published with a further minimum eight week consultation period.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his office in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27740]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect the information requested centrally and could provide it only at disproportionate cost.

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much land changing to residential use was within *(a)* the designated green belt and *(b)* greenfield land, in each year since 1997, broken down by region; [4312]

(2) how much land within the 1997 designated green belt changed to developed use in each year since 1997, broken down by region; [4313]

(3) how many new dwellings have been built within the 1997 designated green belt in each year since 1997, broken down by region. [4314]

Yvette Cooper: The available estimates are from Land Use Change Statistics, shown in the following tables. The estimates for 2003 are provisional and are subject to revision. Figures are not shown for 1999 as the data received for that year were incomplete. Figures for 1997 to 2000 reflect planning policies and decisions made before 1997.

Land changing to residential use within 1997 designated green belt (PQ 0484 05/06)

Hectares

	(a) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	3	3	1	2	7	1	0	2	3
North West	51	46	39	60	59	64	43	49	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	27	21	40	42	28	41	50	46
East Midlands	9	10	13	10	7	20	17	6	9
West Midlands	24	27	29	33	31	38	31	56	35
East of England	40	50	41	37	49	58	68	36	46
London	4	5	6	9	17	16	10	23	15
South East	62	52	49	67	54	75	64	52	55
South West	9	14	8	10	16	14	13	9	9
England	226	234	207	267	281	313	288	283	272
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.016	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.017	0.016

Hectares

	(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	2	2	1	2	7	1	0	1	2
North West	26	17	27	36	29	23	17	20	25
Yorkshire and the Humber	18	17	15	24	25	21	20	25	22
East Midlands	6	6	4	4	4	6	12	3	6
West Midlands	15	15	19	14	17	22	17	24	14
East of England	11	14	12	10	10	22	13	13	20
London	1	2	0	0	7	6	3	8	4
South East	18	10	12	28	19	28	14	17	13
South West	3	9	4	6	10	7	4	5	2
England	101	93	94	123	127	135	99	115	109
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.006	0.007	0.007

New dwellings within 1997 designated green belt (PQ 0486 05/06)

Hectares

	(c) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	52	23	22	50	140	19	11	27	70
North West	879	771	730	1,284	1,049	1,350	799	1,019	1,565
Yorkshire and the Humber	373	423	316	630	673	508	891	939	815
East Midlands	143	125	181	194	143	297	289	117	120
West Midlands	390	533	474	610	507	731	817	879	653
East of England	552	580	499	479	846	956	1,181	485	795
London	89	153	171	182	441	384	218	405	287
South East	653	733	553	868	802	1,175	950	734	1,053
South West	124	211	109	159	309	271	243	199	163

New dwellings within 1997 designated green belt (PQ 0486 05/06)

Hectares

	(c) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England	3,255	3,552	3,055	4,456	4,910	5,691	5,399	4,804	5,521
Proportion of all new dwellings (percentage)	2	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	3

Hectares

	(d) On greenfield land (not previously developed)								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	46	20	19	34	128	17	2	19	45
North West	472	285	486	746	486	355	296	329	682
Yorkshire and the Humber	289	269	173	336	361	373	462	361	405
East Midlands	93	77	67	93	77	39	148	39	65
West Midlands	220	313	288	276	225	372	462	333	250
East of England	119	134	132	107	135	331	198	145	286
London	56	67	6	3	238	131	72	127	79
South East	172	117	147	301	218	278	134	194	322
South West	53	135	46	93	195	90	32	76	34
England	1,520	1,417	1,364	1,989	2,063	1,986	1,806	1,623	2,168
Proportion of all new dwellings (percentage)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

Land changing to developed use within 1997 designated green belt (PQ 0485 and 1296)

Hectares

	(a) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	43	20	11	143	18	47	13	21	18
North West	331	329	367	488	401	223	367	142	222
Yorkshire and the Humber	253	283	182	481	437	164	131	286	285
East Midlands	65	132	197	97	93	92	102	28	128
West Midlands	173	210	286	130	125	328	155	129	335
East of England	172	183	159	196	238	273	319	169	339
London	19	28	44	95	64	37	125	36	64
South East	228	244	482	395	218	554	309	143	151
South West	48	145	207	58	85	132	75	35	29
England	1,332	1,573	1,935	2,084	1,678	1,850	1,596	988	1,570
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.13	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.10

Hectares

	(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	14	15	7	109	8	45	6	16	10
North West	197	150	243	315	262	101	237	53	59
Yorkshire and the Humber	152	102	75	274	282	60	52	124	133
East Midlands	46	60	160	61	74	70	58	13	60
West Midlands	101	76	143	69	62	67	35	52	266
East of England	83	84	87	150	71	65	90	100	120
London	12	14	19	48	25	14	42	10	31
South East	112	103	104	204	69	389	90	40	57
South West	28	92	160	42	53	91	45	14	8
England	746	696	999	1,273	904	902	656	421	744
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.05

Local Government Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the time scale is for the announcement of the local authority rate support grant settlement for 2006–07; and if he will make a statement. [26880]

Mr. Woolas: The Government expect to announce their proposals for the 2006–07 local government finance settlement at around the end of November or beginning of December—in line with the usual settlement timetable.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place copies of *(a)* international comparative research by the London School of Economics and Cardiff University on local government finance, *(b)* public knowledge and attitudes research on local government finance by NOP World and *(c)* the wider

literature review by the National Economic Research Association on local government finance commissioned by his Department in the Library. [26919]

Mr. Woolas: The research to which the hon. Member refers has been undertaken for the Lyons inquiry into local government funding. We understand that the inquiry will publish results of this research later this autumn.

Initial research by NOP World on public knowledge and attitudes in relation to local government finance was undertaken for the Balance of Funding Review and is available on the Department's website at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/balance/rsg.htm.

London Development Agency

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total borrowing limit is for the London Development Agency. [23706]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

The London Development Agency—as a functional body of the Mayor of London—is treated as a local authority for financial purposes, so any borrowing by the agency must be in accordance with the local authority prudential borrowing framework set out in the Local Government Act 2003. Under this legislation, the agency's maximum borrowing limit is set by the Mayor. If the agency wishes to borrow against its grant from the Government, it must also seek Government approval.

Markets

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations his Department has received about the proposed redevelopment of the old Smithfield Market. [27999]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has received a number of representations of which nine have requested he call in applications for planning permission and conservation area consent which were submitted to the Corporation of London in May 2004.

If in due course the corporation are minded to grant planning permission the planning application will have to be formally referred to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister as a departure from the corporation's unitary development plan and under the 1993 shopping direction.

Public Service Agreements

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* benchmarks and *(b)* indicators the Government will use to assess their public service agreement target to improve (i) the effectiveness and efficiency of local government in delivery services by 2008 and (ii) the balance between housing availability and demand. [26927]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has published technical notes setting out the performance measures being used to assess progress against the ODPM's public service agreement targets adopted following the spending review in 2004. These can be found at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1122982.

The technical note for local government effectiveness and efficiency will be updated shortly to reflect the new comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) framework published by the Audit Commission on 14 October.

Regional Transport

Tom Brake: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the process by which regional transport funding is allocated by regional Government offices. [27568]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

No regional transport funding is currently allocated by regional Government offices. However, in July we published details of regional funding allocations for transport, together with those for housing and economic development. The English regions outside London have been asked to submit advice to central Government by 31 January 2006 as to which schemes should be given priority for funding in their region. Government offices have been asked to facilitate this process.

Sex Offenders

Joan Walley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 340W on sex offenders, if he will issue guidance to local authorities on councillors' duties in relation to children's services where councillors are on the sex offenders register. [24172]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to introduce such guidance.

An individual is disqualified from being a local councillor if he receives a conviction carrying a prison sentence of over three months (suspended or not) if convicted of an offence within five years before election. A fine, or conviction with a sentence of less than three months, is not sufficient to trigger a disqualification.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learning Inspectorate

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost of the adult learning inspectorate in 2005–06 is. [28637]

Bill Rammell: The 2005–06 grant in aid budget for the adult learning inspectorate is £22.5 million from the Department for Education and Skills and £5.8 million from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Basic Skills Agency

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools have been awarded a quality mark by the Basic Skills Agency. [28303]

Bill Rammell: The latest figures as of 11 November are as follows:

The number of primary schools in England with the Basic Skills Agency's quality mark was 3361. This means the proportion of primary schools with the quality mark is 18 percent., based on 18970 primary schools (including early years and special schools as they are eligible for the primary quality mark).

The number of secondary schools in England with the BSA's quality mark is 245. This means the proportion of secondary schools with the quality mark is 6 percent., based on 3992 secondary schools.

The number of primary schools in Wales with the Basic Skills Agency's quality mark as 1452. This means the proportion of primary schools with the quality mark is 88 percent., based on 1659 primary schools (including early years and special schools as they are eligible for the primary quality mark).

The number of secondary schools in Wales with the BSA's quality mark is 213. This means the proportion of secondary schools with the quality mark is 80 per cent., based on 267 secondary schools.

All schools in Wales are required to reach the quality mark standard by 31 March 2006 as part of the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales.

CAFCASS

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many *(a)* private and *(b)* public law cases remained unallocated in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service on 13 July, or the nearest date for which figures are available. [24517]

(2) how many unallocated cases there were in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service at the end of each of the last four financial years. [24518]

(3) how many *(a)* public and *(b)* private law vacancies there are in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service; and what the recruitment strategy is for the 2005–06 financial year. [24519]

Maria Eagle: These are matters for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). Anthony Douglas, the CAFCASS chief executive, has written to the hon. Member with this information and copies of his replies have been placed in the House Library.

Children (Parental Access)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what research her Department has undertaken of *(a)* contact between absent parents and their children and *(b)* the impact on children of supervised contact with absent parents; [27087]

(2) what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the work of contact centres in providing supervised contact between absent parents and their children. [27088]

Maria Eagle: The Government, through the research programmes of the Department of Constitutional Affairs, has commissioned a series of research projects on child contact. They are:

1. Safety and Child Contact: an analysis of the role of child contact centres in the context of domestic violence and child welfare concerns by Aris, Harrison and Humphries, DCA 2002.

2. Safety Contact Disputes in Court Volume 1 DCA 2003, Volume 2 DCA 2005 by Smart, Wade, May and Furniss.

3. A profile of applicants and respondents in contact cases in Essex, by Trinder and colleagues, DCA 2005.

Copies are available free of charge from the Research Unit, DCA, Selborne House, Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QW.

Citizenship

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of initial teacher training of teachers of citizenship; and if she will make a statement. [28181]

Jacqui Smith: Citizenship is a relatively new subject. Ofsted has been inspecting citizenship since 2003–04. Their inspections found that four of the seven courses prepare trainees very well to teach citizenship; the others are satisfactory and improving rapidly. The Ofsted reports, ITT for Teachers of citizenship 2003/04 and ITT for Teachers of Citizenship 2004/05, are both available in e-version on the Ofsted website.

Connexions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the annual budget of Connexions has been in each year that it has been running; and what the budget of the pre-Connexions career service was in each year between 1992 and its replacement. [28584]

Maria Eagle: The budgets for Connexions and the careers service for each year since 1994–95 are as follows:

£ million

	Careers service budget	*Connexions budget*
1994–95	176	—
1995–96	194	—
1996–97	201	—
1997–98	206	—
1998–99	214	—
1999–2000	227	—
2000–01	236	—
2001–02	173	151
2002–03	52	378
2003–04	—	455
2004–05	—	470
2005–06	—	475

Connexions was introduced from April 2001 and replaced the careers service in April 2003. We do not hold information for the years prior to 1994–95.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Pupils

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research she has commissioned on academic achievements of deaf and hard of hearing pupils in *(a)* mainstream schools and *(b)* special schools and units in Hertfordshire. [26241]

Maria Eagle: It is for schools and local authorities to monitor the progress and attainment of children with special educational needs (SEN) for whom they have responsibility.

We have not commissioned any research at local authority level into the attainment of children with different types of SEN in different educational settings. However, Ofsted is currently carrying out a study looking at how provision has changed over the past five years and how different types of provision affect outcomes for children with SEN. This report is scheduled to be published in summer 2006.

Education (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* full-time equivalent teaching posts there were in schools in Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. [27489]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the full-time equivalent number of teachers in maintained schools in Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching posts in Tamworth is not collected centrally.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1], special schools[2], and pupil referral units: Tamworth parliamentary constituency

Position as at January each year	*Full-time equivalent number of teaching staff*
1997	760
1998	750
1999	750
2000	750
2001	760
2002	780
2003	780
2004	780
2005	770

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual School Census

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places were available in each of the past 10 years in Tamworth constituency. [27491]

Beverley Hughes: Statistics have been collected by local authority area only since 1999 following the introduction of the National Childcare Strategy for England. We are unable to provide details of places by parliamentary constituency.

The table details the stock of child care places in Staffordshire, each year since 1999.

As at March each year	*Stock of child care places*
1999	14,649
2000	16,346
2001	17,531
2002	17,304
2003	18,482
2004	21,322
2005	22,463

Failing Schools

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the schools which *(a)* are failing and *(b)* have been judged to be failing for more than three years; on what date each was first identified as failing; in which local education authority area each school is located; how many pupils attend each school; and what the pupil capacity is of each school. [29146]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Family Resolutions Project

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many parents have taken part in the Family Resolutions pilot project to date; and how many have accepted mediation services as part of the project; [26638]

(2) what estimate she has made of the costs of running the Family Resolutions project in the next five years; [26639]

(3) how much the Government have spent on the Family Resolutions Pilot scheme; how many couples have entered the scheme; how many couples have completed full courses on the scheme; and if she will make a statement on the future of the scheme. [26640]

Maria Eagle: In total, there were 62 couples or 124 individual parents who participated in the pilot project, which ran for one year from September 2004 to September 2005, of whom 31 couples completed all elements of the project. It focussed on parents using facilitated group discussions, learning conflict management skills and developing their own solutions through the use of the parenting plans. The pilot project's components did not include mediation services, though a number of the participating couples might have received such services either prior to entering the project or subsequently.

The Government have invested a total of £300,000 over two financial years (£170,000 in 2004–05 and £130,000 in 2005–06) in the Family Resolutions Pilot Project. There is no ongoing financial commitment in respect of this, now-concluded, pilot project. The project is currently being evaluated. We expect to receive the evaluation report early next year, which will be published. We expect this report to inform the decision about whether to roll out the pilot project on a wider basis.

Graduation

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students who gained university places through clearing went on to graduate between 2001 and 2005. [22966]

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of those who accepted university places through clearing dropped out in the last period for which figures are available; and what assessment she has made of the reasons for doing so. [23216]

Bill Rammell: The Department does not systematically collect information on the reasons for non-completion. The Department has, however, commissioned the Institute of Employment Research to investigate a sample of early leavers from between 1996/97 and 1998/99. It found that those entering through Clearing had a higher-than-average non-completion rate, and that the most commonly-cited reason was "a mistaken choice of course".

Source:

Davies, R. and Elias, P. (2003) "Dropping out: a study of early levers from higher education," DfES Research Report 386.

Learners (Accidents)

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many accidents have been recorded as occurring to Learning and Skills Council funded learners in each year since 2001 broken down by *(a)* fatal, *(b)* major and *(c)* those requiring over three days' absence; and how many of those learners were (i) under and (ii) over 16 years of age at the time of the accident. [28901]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is accountable for ensuring that organisations with whom it contracts have effective arrangements in place for ensuring the health and safety of learners. Learner health and safety is a fundamental value of the LSC. The information requested is included in the following table. An age split under and over 16 is not available. The figures in the final row are for six months only, rather than for the whole year.

Accidents recorded to LSC funded learners from 2001–05

	Number of accidents			
	(a) Fatal	*(b) Major*	*(c) Over three days*	*Total*
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	2	217	873	1092
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	5	198	858	1061
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	5	262	615	882
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005[1]	3	187	627	817
1 April 2005 to 30 September 2005[1]	1	95	210	306

[1] These two rows refer to all learners. In previous years only work based learning accidents were recorded.

Departmental Staff (Literacy/Numeracy)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department has spent on literacy and numeracy teaching for departmental staff in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [27364]

Maria Eagle: Within my Department, the prime responsibility for developing and coaching staff lies with line managers who are best placed to assess individual needs. Most learning takes place on the job and is supplemented by centrally provided basic skills development through the Department's internal learning and development unit.

The Department has spent no money on literacy and numeracy teaching for departmental staff in the last five years as adult basic skills tuition is delivered at no charge to learners who are eligible for Learning and Skills Council funding.

Since 2002, £7000 has been spent supporting the development of adult basic skills in the Department:

2005: £5,500 on tailoring a basic skills programme to reflect the work of facilities management staff and evaluating the programme.

2003–05: £500 on material to promote basic skills within the Department.

2002–03: £1000 to train department staff to support learners with basic skills.

We have no record of expenditure before 2002.

In addition activities take place across the Department which incorporate elements of basic skills within them. It is not possible to separate these out or quantify costs.

Medical Students

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the average debt of a medical student upon qualification in each year since 1997–98. [27538]

Bill Rammell: Statistics on average student debt are available from the Department's periodic Student Income and Expenditure Surveys but these are not conducted annually and have to date not given medical student debt figures separately. However the forthcoming SIES, to be published early in the new year, will have figures for borrowings, savings and estimated debt for final year medical students for academic year 2004/05.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether graduate medical students will be permitted to pay their tuition fees following qualification. [27539]

Bill Rammell: Graduates with an honours degree undertaking a second undergraduate degree in medicine, or other subjects, will not be entitled to fee loans or deferred fees when introduced in 2006/07. However, graduate medical students on four year fast track courses, who now comprise the majority of graduate medical students, do not pay tuition fee contributions except in their first year because the Department of Health pays the fees in years two to four. The Department of Health also pays the fees of undergraduate medical students, including those with a previous graduate qualification, in years five and six. Graduate medical students are in addition eligible for subsidised maintenance loans and Department of Health bursaries.

Missing Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have gone missing in each of the last five years. [28226]

Beverley Hughes: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 146W, to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow).

Public Service Agreements

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to ensure the public service agreement target to reduce the under-18 conception rate by 2010 is met. [26788]

Maria Eagle: The Government's 10-year Teenage Pregnancy Strategy continues to make progress in meeting its target of a 50 per cent. reduction in under-18 conception rates by 2010. There has been a 9.8 per cent. decline in under-18 conceptions between 1998 (the baseline year for the strategy) and 2003 (the latest year for which data are available). There has been a 9.9 per cent. reduction in under-16 conceptions over the same period.

The strategy includes a range of actions designed to reduce teenage conceptions and support teenage parents so that they achieve better health and education outcomes for them and their child(ren), including:

Encouragement to delay sexual activity, including support to resist pressure to become sexually active;

Improving access to and usage of condoms among sexually active young people, to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancies and STIs; and

Support to help teenage mothers to: access pre- and post-natal services; engage in education, employment and training; and avoid social exclusion.

In order to accelerate the current rate of reduction to meet the 50 per cent. reduction target by 2010, we have asked all areas to intensify delivery of their strategies to reach high rate neighbourhoods and young people at greatest risk of early pregnancy.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will assess progress on the public service agreement target to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by two percentage points by 2010. [26795]

Maria Eagle: The statistics used to measure the target to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) are published annually by the Department for Education and Skills. Provisional data for the end of 2004 was published in June 2005 when it was estimated that 194,000 16 to 18-year-olds were NEET, 10 per cent. of the 16 to 18-year-old population. The first opportunity to assess the progress made since then will be when statistics for the end of 2005 are available. These are due to be published in June 2006.

School Work (Marking)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research has been conducted by her Department into possible links between the marking of school work and child self-esteem. [28298]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has not commissioned any research on the link between the marking of school work and child self-esteem.

Strategic Subjects

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) for what reason she has decided not to allocate the funding of £22 million for protecting strategic subjects to centres of excellence; [28588]

(2) for what reason she has decided to allocate the funding of £22 million for protecting strategic subjects to collaborative projects. [28589]

Bill Rammell: The legal responsibility for the distribution of grant between institutions rests with the relevant Funding Councils. The joint guidance they have issued in relation to the £22 million to be allocated to support vulnerable area and language studies of strategic importance indicates that they expect one or two centres to be supported in each area of study. Therefore only those institutions which can demonstrate excellence in meeting the criteria for the scheme are likely to receive support.

Sure Start

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been allocated for the evaluation of Sure Start; and when she expects to publish the results. [28801]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* A comprehensive national level evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) is examining the implementation, cost-effectiveness and impact of Sure Start for children, families and communities. It also provides support to SSLPs on their local evaluations. The National Evaluation runs from 2001 to 2008 and will cost £20.3 million in total.

To date, 10 reports from the national evaluation have been published and a further five will be published before the end of the year. The final report drawing together all the information from the evaluation will be published at the end of 2008.

Teachers

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department has taken to persuade teachers who have left the profession to return. [28574]

Jacqui Smith: The Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) commissions returners' courses to refresh and update returners' knowledge and skills. The TDA has funded over 300 courses between 2002 and 2005, with more than 6,000 places offered. Courses cover all aspects of the curriculum, assessment, classroom management, inclusion etc. as well a school placement to give participants a refresher of school life and to boost confidence. Every participant on a TDA-funded returners course is eligible for a training bursary of up to £150 per week (to a maximum of £1,500 for the duration of the course) and child care support.

The advice and guidance service Returning to Teach holds details of almost 17,000 former teachers. When a person registers, they are sent a pack with information about courses, useful contact details and termly copies of "return to teaching" magazines.

We have introduced a number of reforms to reduce teachers' work loads and to tackle the issues that concern them in the classroom, such as pupil behaviour. Teachers returning to the classroom will also benefit from improved pay.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the introduction of the 50 per cent. university admission target upon the educational performance of children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26057]

Bill Rammell: It would be difficult to show a direct causal relationship between the target of making progress towards 50 per cent. of 18 to 30-year-olds having had experience of HE, and school age performance. But there is evidence that our strategy of transforming the aspirations of children in order to widen participation in HE is boosting performance. For example, participation in summer schools (and other university and school-based holiday programmes), visits to higher education institutions and discussion about life at university with higher education staff and student have all been found in independent evaluation to be associated with higher attainment at key stage 4.

Union Learning Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes in funding to the Union Learning Fund are proposed as a result of Priorities for Success. [28575]

Phil Hope: There are no changes in funding to the Union Learning Fund proposed as result of Priorities for Success. This document published by the Learning and Skills Council sets out a two-year strategy for the planning and funding of the further education sector that that will allow thousands more young people and adults to gain qualifications and skills for the workplace.

University Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent *(a)* discussions and *(b)* correspondence she has had with universities on ensuring that the increased funding for teaching provided by the Government is not allocated elsewhere; and if she will make a statement. [28285]

Bill Rammell: Government funding for teaching in higher education is allocated via the Higher Education Funding Council for England on a formula basis. Institutions receive this and their funding for research as block grant. The funding institutions will receive from HEFCE and student fees in the current spending review period to 2007–08 is sufficient to maintain the unit of student per funding in real terms, after many years of decline. It is for institutions to decide how best to spend this money, and we have no intention of micromanaging their budgets. It is more effective and less bureaucratic to judge institutions by the outcomes they achieve.

Youth Work Projects

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure accountability of voluntary and community sector (VCS) run youth work projects under the new youth service inspection arrangements, with particular reference to *(a)* the registration of VCS units with the local authority, *(b)* training and qualification of personnel and *(c)* inspection. [26681]

Beverley Hughes: Voluntary and community organisations are important partners in delivering the outcomes we want to see for children and young people. We expect that local authorities will engage with their local voluntary and community sectors in line with guidance relating to the Children Act 2004. Whether or not a local authority chooses to operate a system of registration for voluntary sector organisations they are funding and the nature of any registration system, including how this covers the training and qualification of personnel, is a matter for local decision.

Organisations in the voluntary and private sectors that work with children and young people need to work effectively with Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) which will come into force from April 2006.

LSCBs will be responsible for establishing effective policies and procedures, based on national guidance, for checking the suitability of people applying for work with children and young people and ensuring that the children and young people's workforce is properly supervised, with any concerns acted on appropriately.

On inspection, joint area reviews of children's services, by several inspectorates, assess how services contribute to outcomes for children and young people. They include assessing the contribution of local authority funded youth services, whether provided by public or voluntary and community sectors. A joint area review will take place in each local authority area between September 2005 and December 2008.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Arms Embargoes

John Bercow: To ask the Solicitor-General what considerations are taken into account by the Crown Prosecution Service when assessing whether sufficient evidence has been assembled in order to prosecute British citizens who breach arms embargoes and restrictions. [29004]

The Solicitor-General: Alleged breaches of arms embargoes are normally investigated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and referred to the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO) for consideration for prosecution. RCPO was established as an independent Department on 18 April 2005.

In determining whether an offence has been committed the RCPO prosecutor is governed by the Code for Crown Prosecutors issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions in accordance with s.10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. The prosecutor has to determine whether the evidence is sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction and whether a prosecution would be in the public interest.

Body Identification

Jon Trickett: To ask the Solicitor-General what recent discussions he has had with pathologists, forensic scientists and the National Missing Persons Helpline on liaison they undertake in connection with identifying bodies of unknown people. [27600]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

None. Pathologists, forensic scientists and others assist the coroner in identifying bodies of unknown people and how that is done is a matter for the judgment of the individuals concerned.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a Level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23770]

The Solicitor-General: I am answering this question on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Treasury Solicitor's Department (TSol) the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO), and HM CPS Inspectorate (HMCPSI).

The CPS undertakes a generally competence based approach to recruitment except where a qualification is a requirement of the post holder. Information on recruits who have a Level 2 qualification in English and Maths is not recorded centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Treasury Solicitor's Department has only 26 posts which do not require Level 2 numeracy and literacy as a condition of entry. There is no central record of whether the incumbents of these 26 posts are qualified to Level 2 in English and mathematics.

The Serious Fraud Office does not have a standard requirement for entry level qualifications beneath the SCS and has adopted a competence; based approach to selection. Candidates are required to provide evidence of core competencies. The level to which candidates need to demonstrate their competence varies according to the seniority of the post. For specialist posts there may be a requirement for a recognised financial or legal qualification.

HMCPSI has no mandatory requirement for new recruits to have particular qualifications except in the case of legal inspectors where a legal qualification is required.

RCPO requires applicants to meet a minimum standard of GCSE grade C in English and mathematics (or equivalent). Where applicants do not meet this requirement it is possible for them to sit a literacy and numeracy test in order to assess their competence.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23771]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not recruit staff directly.

The Scottish Executive does not collect this information centrally. Where job applicants do not meet the Executive's current entry criteria, tests may sometimes be used to give candidates the opportunity to display an equivalent level of numeracy and literacy; this will be made clear in the memorandum to the job advert. Applicants who attain the required score in the test will then be assessed against the competencies required for the post.

The DCA does not collect statistical data on the number of new recruits with level 2 qualifications. General recruitment asks for administration experience or the relevant qualifications (that is, five GCSEs, or equivalent, at grade C or above, including English) for administrative grades or 2 A levels (and English) for executive grades. Recruits can therefore be appointed on the basis of their experience or qualifications and no distinction is made between the two.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23795]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not employ staff directly.

The methods of assessment used by the Executive vary and are dependent on the type and level of skills required for the post. Numerical ability and verbal reasoning cognitive tests can be used to test numeracy and literacy skills respectively. Administrative selection tests, written in-tray and written policy exercises can be used to test both literacy and numeracy skills.

The DCA carries out no formal assessment of literacy and numerical skills for new recruits. Certain posts at Executive grade, and above, involve written or IT tests for posts in a policy area, communications or IT. General recruitment seeks administration experience or the relevant qualifications (that is, five GCSEs, or equivalent, at grade C, or above, including English) for administrative grades; or 2 A levels (and English) for Executive grades.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head, in each year since 2002. [23435]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not employ staff directly.

Staff have access to the full range of training available from their parent Departments but it is not possible to separately identify any costs incurred by staff on loan to the Office. The Scotland Office has not sent any staff on specific literacy or numeracy training courses, and thus has incurred no direct costs.

However, the Office does encourage staff to attend training courses and on-the-job training relevant to their posts and identified in their performance development plans. Such training can include elements of literacy and numeracy training; central records of such training elements are not held.

Scottish Consolidated Fund

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on what dates in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 payments have been made by the UK Government (i) into the Scottish consolidated fund and (ii) to the Scottish Executive; how much was paid on each occasion; and what the (A) basis and (B) authorisation was for each payment. [29605]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office transfers funds from the UK Consolidated Fund to the Scottish Consolidated Fund (SCF) at regular intervals based on a monthly assessment of need. Such transfers by the Office are under the general authority of the Secretary of State set out in the Scotland Act 1998.

These funds are then distributed from the SCF to the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body, Crown Office etc. The Scotland Office does not make payments directly to the Scottish Executive.

Transfers into the SCF were as follows:

Payment date	*Amount (£)*
2004–05	
1 April 2005	1,796,600,000
4 May 2004	1,564,100,000
1 June 2004	1,382,500,000
29 June 2004	350,000,000
1 July 2004	1,275,400,000
2 August 2004	1,657,900,000
1 September 2004	1,643,250,000
1 October 2004	1,397,700,000
1 November 2004	852,400,000
1 December 2004	1,607,000,000
16 December 2005	300,000,000
4 January 2005	1,673,500,000
1 February 2005	1,415,000,000
1 March 2005	2,152,600,000
Total	19,067,950,000
2005–06	
1 April 2005	1,956,300,000
3 May 2005	1,770,250,000
16 May 2005	50,000
1 June 2005	1,674,900,000
1 July 2005	1,534,700,000
1 August 2005	1,882,700,000
1 September 2005	1,499,800,000
3 October 2005	1,876,600,000
1 November 2005	829,400,000
Total	13,024,700,000

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much and what percentage of the Scottish block of the Scottish Consolidated Fund has been transferred to the Scottish Executive in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [29618]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office transfers funds to the Scottish Consolidated Fund (SCF) on a monthly basis, from where it is distributed to various centrally funded bodies. The overall grant to the SCF is determined by the UK Parliament and Annexes 2, 3 and 4 of the Annual Report of the Scotland Office and the Office of the Advocate General for Scotland (Cm 6544) set out the grant payable to the SCF in 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 respectively. The allocation of the grant to the centrally funded bodies is a matter for the Scottish Parliament.

Labour Statistics

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people in Scotland have been economically inactive in each year since 1997. [29025]

David Cairns: Since 1997, the number of people in Scotland classed as economically inactive has fallen by some 85,000 to 635,000. The following table shows the number of people in Scotland who have been economically inactive in each year since 1997.

Labour force survey (four quarter averages)—Scotland

	Economic inactivity among the working-age population	
Date (June to May)	*Level*	*Rate*
1996–97	720,000	23.0
1997–98	708,000	22.7
1998–99	707,000	22.7
1999–2000	702,000	22.5
2000–01	672,000	21.5
2002–03	657,000	21.0
2003–04	657,000	21.0
2004–05	635,000	20.3

Source:
ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 15 November 2005]

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23415]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not employ staff directly.

The Scottish Executive does not hold details of requests for training in literacy and numeracy. The Executive's Learning Strategy recognises the importance of continuous support to staff through training to improve their skills and qualifications reflecting the commitment set out in the Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland.

The DCA provides free training to staff in improving their literacy and numeracy. Staff are able, anonymously, to check their level of literacy and numeracy; where necessary, this process points individuals towards local training to meet their needs. A central record of those who avail themselves of the opportunity is not maintained.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy amongst employees of his Department. [23439]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not employ staff directly.

The Scottish Executive Learning Strategy recognises the importance of continuous support to staff through training to improve their skills and qualifications reflecting the commitment set out in the Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has promoted the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy via presentations at regional and area boards; at annual Learning At Work Week events; in the workplace via their local training co-ordinators; in their regional training centres; and on their departmental intranet. They will be re-launching these tests to the newly-created Her Majesty's Court Service and the rest of the DCA shortly.

Scottish Parliament (Election)

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he plans to bring forward proposals to change the rules for the election to the Scottish Parliament that will take place in 2007; and if he will make a statement. [29044]

David Cairns: The Secretary of State for Scotland has no current plans to change the system for elections to the Scottish Parliament.

He has, however, charged the Commission on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems, under the chairmanship of Sir John Arbuthnott, as part of its remit to examine the method of election to the Scottish Parliament. The Commission is due to report to the Secretary of State at the turn of the year.

UK Ambassador to the Holy See

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Foreign Office about the advertisement and recruiting procedure in relation to Scotland for the post of UK ambassador to the Holy See. [28152]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has had no discussions on this matter.

HEALTH

"Health Outside Hospitals"

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the tender for the contract to run the consultation on the "Health Outside Hospitals" White Paper was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. [25107]

Mr. Byrne: No tender notice was placed in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) regarding the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" listening exercise because it was not required. The contract was awarded on behalf of the Department by the Central Office of Information (COI) to a company with whom they hold a framework agreement. COI framework agreements are awarded in compliance with the EU directive, including the requirement to place a notice in the OJEU inviting applicants. Contracts can then be awarded to the holders of such framework agreements without the need to advertise them separately in the OJEU.

In this instance, the contract was awarded following a competitive tender among a number of agencies with whom COI holds framework agreements.

Accident and Emergency Services

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general hospitals offer 24 hour a day, seven days a week acute services in England; how many are planned to offer these services in 2010–11; and if she will make a statement. [24723]

Mr. Byrne: There were 207 multi-specialty, consultant-led, 24-hour accident and emergency (A&E) departments in England at the end of September 2005. Future location and provision of A&E departments is a matter for local not central decision and there are no forecast of numbers for 2010–11 available. In planning local provision of A&E services, health communities are expected to observe the general principle that all emergency and urgent care should be delivered where possible as close to home as is compatible with clinical safety.

Acute Hospitals

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute hospitals have provided consultant-led maternity facilities in each year since 1990. [25282]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally.

The maternity records collected through the hospital episodes statistics system are usually identified only to trust level, rather than to any specific unit within the trust. Some trusts provide information regarding the

staff group with lead responsibility for care for example, midwife-led or consultant-led, but this does not allow the identification of consultant-led units.

Alcohol-related Admissions

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many alcohol-related admissions there were to Hemel Hempstead hospital in each year since 1997; [25558]

(2) what percentage of attendances at accident and emergency departments run by West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust were alcohol-related in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [25560]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data for alcohol related admissions in Hemel Hempstead general hospital is not available centrally. Data are not collected at an individual hospital level. However, this data is available at trust level, we have therefore provided the relevant data for the West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust who provide services from several organisations, including Hemel Hempstead general hospital.

This data is shown in the tables.

Counts of finished admission episodes for selected providers where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected[1] alcohol related diseases
NHS Hospitals England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Provider of Treatment		
	RPW St. Albans and Hemel Hempstead NHS Trust	*RQL Mount Vernon and Watford Hospital*	*RWG West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust*
1997–98	76	93	—
1998–99	72	72	—
1999–2000	74	58	—
2000–01	—	—	90
2001–02	—	—	113
2002–03	—	—	142
2003–04	—	—	157

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:

F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol,

K70: Alcoholic liver disease,

T51: Toxic effect of alcohol

NHS Hospitals England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

Notes:

1. Finished admission episodes.

A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

2. Diagnosis (Primary Diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient

was in hospital.

Ungrossed Data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre

Counts of finished admission episodes for selected providers of treatment[1] where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol related diseases[2] and counts of finished admission episodes for all diagnoses for selected methods of admission[3]

	Finished admission episodes (alcohol related, selected methods of emergency admissions)	*Finished admission episodes (selected methods of emergency admissions)*	*Alcohol related finished admission episodes (percentage)*
1999–2000	86	16,233	0.5%
2000–01	65	15,270	0.4%
2001–02	101	17,460	0.6%
2002–03	120	17,512	0.7%
2003–04	118	18,255	0.6%

[1] Selected providers of treatment:

1999–2000 counts include RPW St. Albans and Hemel Hempstead NHS Trust and RQL Mount Vernon and Watford hospital 2000–01 to 2003–04 counts include RWG West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

[2] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:

F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol;

K70: Alcoholic liver disease

T51: Toxic effect of alcohol

[3] Selected methods of admission:

Emergency (via A & E services including the casualty department of the provider).

Emergency (other means, including patients who arrive via A & E department of another health care provider).

NHS Hospitals, England 1999–2000 to 2003–04

Notes:

Finished admission episodes

A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the

number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Ungrossed Data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre.

BCG Vaccination

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 165W, on BCG vaccinations, what guidance she has issued to primary care trusts to make information available to parents of children who will no longer receive routine BCG vaccinations on what action they should take should they *(a)* move from a low risk area to a high risk area and *(b)* undertake an activity which increases the risk of being exposed to TB. [25480]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Further to the Chief Medical Officer's letter of 6 July announcing changes to the Bacille Calmette Guerin programme, operational guidance was sent to primary care immunisation co-ordinators on 18 August. A copy is on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/Tuberculosis/fs/en

Cancer

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy to develop wards specifically for young cancer patients. [25118]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In October 2004, we published the national service framework for children, young people which recommended the importance of providing children and young people with access to high quality, age appropriate services whatever the setting.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence published in August 2005 guidance on "Improving Outcomes in Children and Young People with Cancer". This guidance addresses access to age appropriate facilities and places of care. The National Cancer Director has established an advisory group of major stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the guidance, but ultimately it will be for local commissioners, via their cancer networks and local service providers, to ensure that the services they provide meet the recommendations in this guidance.

Carbon Monoxide

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, *(b)* Ofgem, *(c)* the Health and Safety Commission and *(d)* CORGI with regards to the proposal from the Health and Safety Commission for a levy on the gas industry to fund a watchdog to promote carbon monoxide awareness; and if she will make a statement. [25278]

Caroline Flint: Officials in the Department are in regular contact with officials in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). These contacts ensure that there is a shared understanding of the effects of carbon monoxide on health. Strategies for reducing cases of accidental poisoning are discussed regularly. The Chief Medical Officer often draws attention to the dangers of exposure to carbon monoxide in his CMO update letter to doctors. A leaflet, for distribution to all General Practices will be distributed in November. The leaflet has been endorsed by HSE, The Solid Fuel Association, CORGI, CO-Gas Safety and the Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister assisted in the drafting of the leaflet. The leaflet is entitled "Carbon Monoxide: Risks to health and how to avoid them".

The combined emphasis on prevention of poisoning and recognition of poisoning reflects the cross-department approach to this important problem. The Department has not discussed the proposal for a levy on the gas industry to fund a watchdog to promote carbon monoxide awareness; this is a matter for the HSE.

Cochlear Implants

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many *(a)* children and *(b)* adults are awaiting cochlear implants in each region of England; what projections have been made for the number of cochlear implant treatments over the next five years; what resources have been allocated to this; and if she will make a statement; [25719]

(2) what guidance has been given to primary care trusts in relation to the allocation of resources for cochlear implantation treatment; [25720]

(3) how many *(a)* children and *(b)* adults were provided with cochlear implants in each region of England in the last five years. [25744]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the numbers of people waiting for cochlear implants and the projected demand is not held centrally. It is for primary care trusts to determine the allocation of resources for their local population based on local need.

The number of children and adults who were provided with cochlear implants in each region of England is shown in the table.

All Operations Count of Episodes (OPCS4 D24.1, D24.2) Implantation of intra/extra cochlear prosthesis NHS Hospitals, England 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	1999–2000		2000–01		2001–02		2002–03		2003–04	
Region of Treatment	*Children (Aged up to 17)*	*Adults (Aged 18 and over)*	*Children (Aged up to 17)*	*Adults (Aged 18 and over)*	*Children (Aged up to 17)*	*Adults (Aged 18 and over)*	*Children (Aged up to 17)*	*Adults (Aged 18 and over)*	*Children (Aged up to 17)*	*Adults (Aged 18 and over)*
Northern and Yorkshire Regional	29	17	31	22	22	33	20	39	35	21
Trent Regional Office	39	9	41	10	42	10	41	13	43	11
West Midlands Regional Office	21	24	17	20	19	28	18	27	23	25
North West Regional Office	24	18	24	24	31	33	44	26	45	18
Eastern Regional Office	9	14	18	22	18	11	15	14	20	35
London Regional Office	39	33	42	42	36	41	44	47	54	60
South East Regional Office	16	11	18	21	26	17	22	11	24	19
South West Regional Office	6	16	8	10	10	13	10	11	8	20

Notes:

All Operations count of Episodes.

These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the procedure was mentioned in any of the 12 (4 prior to 2002–03) operation fields in a HES record.

A record is only included once in each count, even if an operation is mentioned in more than one operation field of the record.

Finished Consultant Episode (FCE).

An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year

Main Operation

The main operation is the first recorded operation in the HES data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode.

It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, eg. time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.

Secondary Procedure
As well as the main operative procedure, there are up to 11 (3 prior to 2002–03) secondary operation fields in Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) that show secondary or additional procedures performed on the patient during the episode of care
Ungrossed Data
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed)
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre

Equal Pay Claims

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost has been of equal pay claims in each year since 1997, broken down by NHS trust. [25725]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Information about the cost of equal pay claims and associated legal costs is not available centrally.

Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria she used to assess the suitability of the candidates before she appointed *(a)* the chairman and *(b)* the non-executive directors of the West Gloucestershire primary care trust. [25371]

Caroline Flint: The Secretary of State has delegated the responsibility for the appointment of chairs and members of primary care trusts to the NHS Appointments Commission, of which the Chair is Sir William Wells.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to monitor the number of intermediate care bed places in the community hospitals sector. [26001]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the number of intermediate care beds, the number of places in non-residential intermediate care schemes and the number of people using intermediate care are collected. There are no plans to expand the collection.

Contraception

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on free contraception for women in each year since 1997. [25906]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

The amount spent by the NHS on free contraception for women since 1997

£ million

Financial years	Cost of condoms[1] distributed by the NHS	Cost of items[2] prescribed by GPs	Cost of items[3] distributed by family planning clinics	Total estimate
1997–98	—	42	—	—
1998–99	—	43	—	—
1999–2000	—	45	—	—
2000–01	—	48	—	—
2001–02	—	50	—	—
2002–03	4	54	—	—
2003–04	4	59	—	—
2004–05	4	64	20	88

[1] This is based on figures from the NHS Logistics Authority and an estimate of further spend by the NHS (for men and women).
[2] Data from the Prescription Pricing Authority for prescriptions dispensed in the community based on net ingredient costs.
[3] This is estimated using the 2004–05 NHS contraceptive services data and costs from the Monthly Index of Medical Specialities (MIMS) October 2005

Dacorum Primary Care Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what her latest estimate is of the outturn against planned expenditure in 2005–06 of Dacorum Primary Care Trust; [25571]

(2) if she will make a statement on the financial position of the Dacorum Primary Care Trust. [25584]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The latest financial year for which the audited financial information of all national health service organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) is available is 2004–05. A copy of this information is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

The final position for Dacorum Primary Care Trust for 2004–05 is an overspend against their revenue resource limit of £4.8 million.

Fibromyalgia

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England in each year since 1997; [26568]

(2) how much the Government spent on treatment for fibromyalgia in 2004–05; and what the estimate is for 2005–06. [26562]

Mr. Byrne [holding answer 7 November 2005]: Data on the incidence of, and expenditure on treatment for, fibromyalgia is not available.

Fluoride

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether there is a link between fluoride and bone cancer; and if she will make a statement. [25542]

Caroline Flint: The systematic review of water fluoridation published by the University of York in year 2000 found no evidence of an association between water fluoridation and bone cancer. We are however aware that, on 6 June 2005, a research organisation in the United States of America, the environmental working group, published a press release asking the national toxicology program of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to list fluoride in tap water in its report on carcinogens. The request was based on the findings of a doctoral thesis completed in 2001 by a student at Harvard School of Dental Medicine. We have been informed by the oral health division of the Centers for Disease Control that the author of the thesis has invited them to review her findings as part of the peer review process conducted before a research study is published. We have asked to be kept informed.

Food Standards Agency

Mr. Borns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she intends to accept the advice to Ministers agreed by the Board of the Food Standards Agency at their board meeting on 15 September in relation to their objectives for the setting of maximum permitted levels for vitamin and mineral supplements under the provisions of the food supplements directive; what her strategy is for achieving her objectives in relation to this legislation; and if she will make a statement. [17916]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The Chair of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has written to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health setting out the FSA's advice. Ministers will consider this advice, and a strategy will be developed following any decisions.

Healthcare

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Government has to *(a)* upgrade Clacton Hospital and *(b)* improve local health care provision in Clacton and Holland-on-Sea. [25447]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This Government have no plans to upgrade Clacton hospital, as the responsibility for configuration and delivery of local services is a matter for the local national health service, working in partnership with its local community.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the merits of contestability in the provision of healthcare in Hertfordshire. [23023]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The introduction of greater contestability across the national health service is all about giving patients faster access, increased choice, improved services, or better value for money for the taxpayer by raising productivity and innovation.

Decisions about the levels of independent sector involvement in the Hertfordshire area have been made on the basis of local capacity planning and the need to increase patient choice.

Herceptin

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will take steps to make additional funding available to primary care trusts to enable them to fund the prescription of Herceptin for early stage breast cancer patients who have been diagnosed as likely to benefit from the drug before it officially receives a licence for early stage use; [16949]

(2) if she will review the funding available to primary care trusts for the prescription of herceptin for the treatment of *(a)* susceptible early stage breast cancer patients whose consultants are willing to take responsibility for the treatment and *(b)* susceptible advanced stage breast cancer patients. [16950]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 12 October 2005]:* The cost of herceptin will need to be met from the existing settlement agreed with the national health service. We understood that some trusts are already under financial pressures and may have to make difficult decisions in achieving this. However, we have greatly increased NHS funding and trusts with deficits have financial recovery plans in place.

The re-negotiation of the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme in January resulted in a seven per cent. reduction in the prices of medicines. This will deliver savings of around £2 billion in the NHS over the next five years. The price of herceptin remains unchanged but savings are being delivered by reductions in other products.

The Secretary of State has asked Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director, to work with the NHS to ensure HER2 testing arrangements are put in place as soon as possible, so that patients who may benefit from herceptin can be identified.

Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire NHS Ambulance Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to re-structure the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire NHS Ambulance Trust. [25815]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department published the outcome of a strategic review of national health service ambulance services on 30 June 2005, 'Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services'. The review, led by the National Ambulance Adviser, supported by a group of stakeholders, sets out how ambulance services can be transformed from a service focusing primarily on resuscitation, trauma and acute care towards becoming a mobile health resource for the whole NHS—taking healthcare to the patient in the community.

In order to realise the vision and the benefits of 'Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services', ambulance trusts need to be of a size that enables appropriate investment in people and resources to underpin current and future services and enable the vision set out in the ambulance review to be delivered. We are therefore proposing that there should be fewer, bigger ambulance trusts and will be undertaking public consultation on these proposals this winter. These proposals, if implemented, would ensure

resources are targeted to where they are most needed—improving patient care and supporting front-line services.

Hospital Care

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to improve the level of care in hospitals on *(a)* geriatric and *(b)* accident and emergency wards. [25870]

Mr. Byrne: The older people's national service framework (NSF) sets out the steps the Department is taking to improve the level of care in and outside hospital for older people. The next steps programme of the NSF is looking specifically at improving the dignity and privacy of older patients.

Care in accident and emergency (A and E) has been transformed over the last three years. In 2002–03 almost one in four patients spent over four hours in A and E from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Well over 19 out of 20 are now in and out within four hours and the majority within two hours of arrival.

Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are eligible for a free influenza vaccination. [24937]

Caroline Flint: There are an estimated 11 million people in the clinical target groups eligible to receive free flu vaccination. These groups are given in the Chief Medical Officer's letter to general practitioners dated 25 July.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances persons under the age of 65 years are given influenza vaccinations; whether they are available to anyone under the age of 65 years who requests them; what obligations general practitioners' surgeries are under to administer such vaccinations; and what information and guidance has been disseminated by her Department to surgeries in this respect. [24956]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Influenza vaccine is available for anyone aged over six months in one of the following risk categories:

Chronic respiratory disease, including asthma

Chronic heart disease

Chronic renal disease

Chronic liver disease

Diabetes

Immunosuppression

Details of this year's influenza immunisation programme were issued to general practitioners on 25 July.

The final decision as to who should be offered flu immunisation is a matter for the patients general practitioner but should take into account the risk of influenza infection exacerbating the underlying disease as well as the risk of serious illness from influenza.

Under the new general practitioner (GP) contract introduced in 2004, influenza vaccination became a directed enhanced service (DES). Primary care trusts commission GPs to carry out flu immunisations under the DES.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doses of influenza vaccine are available in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* England. [26158]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not centrally purchase flu vaccine. General practitioners purchase their own supply of vaccine from one of the six United Kingdom suppliers, based on the number of eligible patients on their practice register.

13.4 million doses of flu vaccine are available to order this year.

Meals on Wheels (Leeds)

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many meals on wheels were distributed in Leeds North West in each year since 1997; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Fair Access to Social Care Initiative. [25767]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* This information is not centrally available. Views on the fair access to social care initiative were sought specifically as part of the Green Paper, "Independence, Well-being and Choice". These views are being considered as we take this forward as part of the development of the White Paper.

Mental Health

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged five to 16 years in Hemel Hempstead have a clinically diagnosed mental disorder. [25561]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of patients with a primary psychiatric diagnosis (ICD-10 codes F00 to F99)[1] by gender and age, Dacorum Primary Care Trust, 2003–04[2]

Aged 5 to 16 years	*Number*
Male	0
Female	10
All patients	10

[1] Diagnoses are taken from chapter V (Mental and Behavioural Disorders) of the 10th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10).

[2] Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, ie the data are ungrossed.

Note:

Disclosure rules apply due to the sensitive nature of the data; therefore, figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated to *(a)* preventive and *(b)* early intervention services for children's mental health disorders in Hemel Hempstead constituency in 2005–06. [25562]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2005–06, £1.207 million was allocated to Hertfordshire county council for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) to commission child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for their resident population in line with their CAMHS development strategy prepared jointly with their partners in the local authority. PCTs are obliged to be working towards the delivery of the public service agreement standard of a comprehensive CAMHS by the end of 2006.

We expect both PCTs and local authorities to fund CAMHS. In 2005–06, both PCTs and local authorities have been given additional funds for CAMHS over and above what they may have already earmarked from their own resources.

Mixed Sex Wards

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps are being taken by her Department to phase out mixed sex wards in hospitals; [25846]

(2) when she expects the phasing out of mixed sex wards in hospitals to be completed. [25847]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has given a clear commitment to improving patient privacy and dignity and to the phasing out of mixed-sex accommodation.

Current guidelines state that male and female patients should have access to separate bathroom and toilet facilities, and should be cared for in separate sleeping areas. Separate sleeping areas for men and women can be achieved using a variety of different layouts, including combinations of single rooms and single-sex bays within wards.

The national health service met our target to provide single-sex accommodation in 95 per cent. of NHS trusts by December 2002. Progress has continued, with 97 per cent. of NHS trusts achieving these objectives by January 2005.

No further targets have been set. We are using the framework of national standards to build on what has been achieved. Under this framework, the NHS is required to provide single-sex accommodation but is also required to ensure that each individual patients privacy and dignity is protected. The Healthcare Commission will monitor compliance to these standards.

Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many managers are employed by Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust. [26333]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: senior managers and managers employed by Morecambe Bay Hospitals Trust as at 30 September 2004

	headcount
Total specified staff	127
Senior manager	73
Manager	54

Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

Neurological Conditions

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what representations she has received regarding the treatment of neurological conditions; [25834]

(2) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the provision of *(a)* treatment and *(b)* rehabilitation services for people with neurological conditions; [25835]

(3) what steps are being taken by her Department to improve the provision of high quality appropriate local respite care for people with neurological conditions.[25836]

Mr. Byrne: The national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions focuses on improving services for people with neurological conditions across England. People with these conditions will get faster diagnosis, more rapid treatment and a comprehensive package of care under the NSF.

Services in the NSF include:

comprehensive assessment and regular review of people's problems;

joint health and social care plans that change over time (especially for people with rapidly progressing conditions) and take other needs into account such as housing, transport, benefits, education, careers advice, employment and leisure;

everyone having a single point of access to services via a named contact;

self-referral, allowing people to refer themselves quickly back to services as their care needs change;

access to a broad range of services including rehabilitation, equipment, accommodation, and personal care to help people live as independently as possible at home, and palliative care;

and support to help people to work or take up other vocational opportunities.

We have taken an inclusive approach to developing this NSF, involving a wide range of stakeholders either directly through the external reference group and its sub-groups or through open consultation. The NSF is therefore comprehensive in its coverage of all aspects of care and support for people with long-term conditions and closely mirrors the aspirations of all those who have contributed to its development.

Quality requirement eight of the NSF specifically addresses the provision of respite care to enable people to achieve maximum choice about living independently at home.

NHS Professionals

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with Guildford and Waverley primary care trust about the implementation of NHS Professionals. [25822]

Caroline Flint: A letter dated 5 April 2004 was sent from the Department informing all chief executives of national health service trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities (SHA) about the inception of NHS Professionals.

NHS Professionals was established as a SHA in April 2004 to play a significant part in securing appropriate and effective use of temporary staff and reducing NHS expenditure on private agency staff.

The implementation of NHS Professionals is a matter for agreement between NHS Professionals and NHS trusts wanting to engage with their services. The actual implementation process of NHS Professionals takes place in four stages; initial contact, consultation, pre-implementation and implementation. This spans a 12–16 week period when NHS Professionals works in partnership with the trust, combining their resources and working to pre-agreed deadlines ensuring the seamless transition of temporary staffing services.

NHS Staff (Assaults)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many assaults have been committed against NHS workers while on duty in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25557]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of assaults on staff is shown in the table for the period 2000 to 2003 which is the latest data available.

Number of reported violent incidents in the specified organisations in each specified year

		2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Total specified organisations		53	161	117
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Ambulance and Paramedic Service NHS Trust	RFU	45	48	75
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	Q02	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—
Dacorum PCT	5GW	[1]—	3	0
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust	RWG	8	110	42

[1] Not applicable.
[2] indicates missing or invalid data.
Source:
Survey of Violence, Accidents, Harassments, in the NHS

Nursing Homes

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what encouragement is given to nursing homes to provide residents with activities to help stimulate the mind; and if she will make a statement. [24780]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* Regulation 16 of the Care Homes Regulations 2001, requires nursing and care home providers to consult service users about their social interests, to make arrangements to enable them to engage in local, social and community activities and to visit, or maintain contact or communicate with their families and friends.

Care homes must also consult with service users about the programme of activities arranged by or on behalf of the home, and provide facilities for recreation including, having regard to the needs of service users, activities in relation to recreation, fitness and training.

The national minimum standards set out in more detail what care homes are expected to do to meet residents expectations, preferences and capacity for social contacts and activities.

Opthalmic Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the progress made by the General Ophthalmic Services in England towards providing patients with choice as described in The Nation's Health and Social Change pamphlet. [22133]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* National health service sight tests are available to certain priority groups, mainly people aged 60 and over, children under 16, those aged under 19 in full-time education, defined categories of people at particular risk of developing eye disease and people on low incomes who might otherwise be deterred by the cost of a private sight test. These individuals may choose which contractor listed with their primary care trust provides their sight test under NHS arrangements.

Financial help towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses, via an optical voucher, is available to children under 16, those aged under 19 in full-time education and those on a low income. These individuals may take their optical voucher to an outlet of their choice and use their voucher as full or part payment towards a pair of glasses or contact lenses of their choice. They are not obliged to buy glasses or contact lenses from the practice where they had their sight tested.

PCT Deficits

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether repayments of deficits of primary care trusts brought forward from 2004–05 will affect the level of the 2005–06 settlement; and if she will make a statement. [24719]

Mr. Byrne: The repayment of 2004–05 deficits by individual primary care trusts will not affect the Department's settlement in 2005–06 because they were offset by surpluses elsewhere.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision her Department has made for veterans suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder. [24842]

Ms Rosie Winterton: National health service trusts have a responsibility to provide services to meet the mental health needs of all those who are eligible for treatment including veterans. To provide health care professionals with recommendations for good practice, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence published treatment guidelines for the management of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in primary, secondary and community care in March 2005. The Department has been actively promoting awareness of such good practice in its work with other Government Departments and Agencies, as well as liaising with relevant professional bodies to try to ensure that more staff are trained in effective approaches to the management of PTSD.

Psychiatric Hospitals

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the security of psychiatric hospitals in England; and what steps she is taking to improve the security of such hospitals. [25106]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department commissioned a security review at the three high security hospitals (Broadmoor, Ashworth and Rampton) in 2000, which recommended improved security measures to the perimeter and internal security of the hospitals. The Government accepted that all of the review report's recommendations should be implemented.

These hospitals must also comply with safety and security directions given to the hospitals by the Department, which encompass various security requirements and cover issues such as the searching of patients and their rooms, the circumstances in which patients should be permitted access to computers and the arrangements that should be made for the testing of patients for illicit substances.

The high security hospitals are also subjected to annual prison service security audits. The prison service security audit team report that the audits show that security standards at the hospitals are essentially satisfactory and continue to improve.

Guidance on the design of medium secure units is provided in the "Design Guide for Medium Secure Psychiatric Units" published by NHS Estates. This document is being reviewed and revised and will be re-issued by spring next year.

Security of all units combines physical, operational and relational aspects, which consider building and engineering design, operational policies and staffing levels. Other measures to improve relational security included the joint interim guidance from the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) and the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) in February 2004 to support mental health service providers and enable them to review their current policies and procedures relating to education, training and practice in the safe and therapeutic management of aggression and violence.

The NPSA is also engaged in the 'Safer Wards for Acute Psychiatry' initiative, a two-year evidence based project which aims to understand and address system issues that impact on patient safety on acute psychiatric in-patient settings. The project will be completed in March 2006.

The NIMHE/NPSA joint guidance was followed in February 2005 by guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) for the national health service on the management of disturbed or violent behaviour in psychiatric in-patient settings and emergency departments.

Renal Services

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken by her Department to improve access to local renal services, with particular reference to dialysis. [25844]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has provided £60 million additional funding between 2000–01 and 2005–06 for capital investment to expand dialysis services. Survey data show the number of haemodialysis stations in England increased by more than a third between 1998 and 2002, from 1,890 to 2,582, with a further 378 planned at that point, the most recent for which complete data are available. Many of these are in satellite units, which can be sited to provide access to dialysis closer to home for renal patients with routine conditions: the number of satellite units rose from 73 in 1998 to 101 in 2002, with a further 34 planned.

This supports "The National Service Framework for Renal Services, Part One", which the Department published in 2004, which set standards for dialysis services and identified their continued expansion as an early action for commissioners. The national surveys commissioned by the Department provide data to support the planning and commissioning of dialysis services.

Many patients rely on hospital transport services to access the dialysis unit. The Department has funded two action learning sets to develop and test improvements to non-emergency patient transport services for dialysis patients, in urban and rural areas. These are due to report in January 2006.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (Car Park)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to enable the Royal Shrewsbury hospital to stop charging patients for using the car park. [26068]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is a matter for individual national health service trusts to decide whether or not to charge for car parking, and the level of charges in the light of local circumstances. We have no plans to change this, either generally or in relation to particular NHS trusts.

Skin Cancer

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she will take to increase awareness of the risks of skin cancer. [25899]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the other United Kingdom health departments have commissioned Cancer Research UK to run SunSmart, which was launched in 2003, as the national skin cancer prevention and sun protection campaign. The SunSmart campaign includes raising both public and professional awareness of skin cancer through providing information about it and guidance on preventative measures to reduce the risks associated with skin cancer. The campaign raises awareness through support for health promotion events, the provision of printed resources, media briefings and through the SunSmart website. SunSmart also supports schools in developing their own sun protection policies through school guidelines and curriculum resources.

Smoking

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to help adults stop smoking. [26471]

Caroline Flint: Since 1998, the Government have put in place a comprehensive strategy to tackle smoking to reduce the deaths caused by smoking. The strategy focuses on action to discourage people from ever starting, and help for all smokers. We are aiming to create a climate where non-smoking is the norm.

We have banned almost all tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion. Our highly effective national anti-smoking education campaign is reaching smokers and helping motivate them to quit. People who wish to give up smoking can get help from the national health service stop smoking services. We set out proposals to bring in new measures to improve the way the NHS helps smokers to give up in our White Paper "Choosing Health". We will reduce exposure to secondhand smoke through; the Health Biil introduced to Parliament on 27 October includes a ban on smoking in enclosed workplaces and public places that will cover 99 per cent. of the workforce. We will consult on introducing picture warnings onto tobacco packs. Together this strategy has helped reduce adult smoking rates in England from 28 per cent. in 1998 to 25 per cent. in 2003, around 1.2 million smokers.

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the Government plans to publish the responses received during the consultation on the smokefree elements of the Health Bill; [27342]

(2) whether the Government plans to publish an analysis of the responses to the consultation on the smokefree elements of the Health Bill. [27345]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* We intend to publish a summary of the responses to the consultation on the smokefree elements of the Health Bill shortly.

A copy will be placed in the Library.

Vacuum-assisted Closure Machines

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what representations she has received regarding the use of vacuum-assisted closure machines in the treatment of pressure ulcers; [25855]

(2) what assessment she has made of the long-term cost-effectiveness of using vacuum-assisted closure machines in the treatment of pressure ulcers in place of more traditional methods; [25856]

(3) what plans her Department has to expand the use of vacuum-assisted closure machines across the NHS. [25857]

Mr. Byrne: I am unaware of receiving any representations regarding the use of vacuum assisted closure machines for the treatment of pressure ulcers.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence published new clinical guidance on pressure ulcer management in September 2005. This comprehensive guidance includes appraisals on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of a wide range of options for the prevention and treatment of pressure ulcers, including vacuum-assisted closure methods.

Reducing the incidence of pressure sores in hospitals is tackled locally through the development and implementation of individualised plans for prevention and treatment agreed and delivered by a multidisciplinary team working with patients and their carers.

Volunteers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance the Department has given to *(a)* directly managed hospitals and *(b)* foundation trusts on the replacement of staff with volunteers; and what advice it offers to (i) patient and public involvement teams and (ii) voluntary service managers on brokering such arrangements. [24715]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Guidance on volunteering within social care and the national health service was published in the Health Service Circulars (HSC), Promoting volunteering and relations with the voluntary sector in the NHS and Social Care (HSC 1999/023). As independent healthcare organisations, national health service foundation trusts determine their own human resource policies and practices, and follow best practice guidelines in the provision of healthcare where they feel it is appropriate to do so.

Working Time Directive

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the application of the EU Working Time Directive to the medical work force has increased the minimum catchments for acute services; and if she will make a statement. [24722]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect the information requested centrally. The Working Time Directive provides challenges and opportunities to modernise services looking at new ways of working, work force planning, skill mix and service redesign.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Assaults

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been convicted of physical or sexual abuse of children in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [20608]

Mr. Hanson: Full statistics relating to persons convicted of physical or sexual abuse of children are currently not available.

The information included as follows is limited in coverage to persons convicted of offences which from their title allow identification of child victims, for example, 'cruelty to person under 16'. Prosecutions and sentencing data with linked victim information will become available with the rollout of the next phase of Causeway, anticipated by the end of 2006,

	Convictions for physical abuse against children[1]	*Convictions for sexual abuse against children*[2]
1994	12	27
1995	20	27
1996	8	19
1997	11	13

	Convictions for physical abuse against children[1]	Convictions for sexual abuse against children[2]
1998	6	24
1999	5	13
2000	9	47
2001	8	17
2002	9	9
2003	14	16

[1] Includes child abandonment and child cruelty offences.
[2] Includes sexual offences where the offence title specifies the victim as age 16 years or under.

Assets Recovery Agency

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the cases investigated by the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland relate to persons believed to be *(a)* republican and *(b)* loyalist; and how many of the cases successfully concluded fall into each of these two categories. [21179]

Mr. Woodward: Cases are not routinely judged on individual affiliations but on the assets derived from identified criminal activity.

The breakdown of cases according to community background is based on the best estimate of what the agency believes to be the likely affiliation.

Of the cases investigated by the Assets Recovery Agency in the current year to date, six relate to individuals believed to have links to loyalist groups and two cases relate to individuals believed to have links to republican groups.

Of the cases concluded in the current year to date, two have been identified as being from the loyalist community.

Ballot Papers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many spoiled ballot papers there were in each district council electoral area in Northern Ireland in *(a)* the most recent 2005 local government elections and *(b)* 2001. [18060]

Mr. Hanson: The number of invalid ballot papers for the local government elections in 2005 and 2001 were as follows:

Local government election

District	5 May 2005	7 June 2001
01 Derry	1,144	1,390
02 Limavady	232	239
03 Coleraine	376	491
04 Ballymoney	237	268
05 Moyle	136	187
06 Larne	233	342
07 Ballymena	415	510
08 Magherafelt	323	429
09 Cookstown	131	360
10 Strabane	328	457
11 Omagh	537	599
12 Fermanagh	549	650
13 Dungannon	341	487
14 Craigavon	810	988
15 Armagh	454	552
16 Newry and Mourne	874	1,263
17 Banbridge	313	329
18 Down	536	677
19 Lisburn	888	1,085
20 Antrim	337	501
21 Newtownabbey	709	938
22 Carrickfergus	315	376
23 North Down	610	782
24 Ards	581	652
25 Castlereagh	578	809
26 Belfast	2,771	4,106
Total	14,758	19,477

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many spoiled ballot papers there were in each constituency in Northern Ireland at the *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 2001 general elections in Northern Ireland. [18061]

Mr. Hanson: The number of invalid ballot papers for the Westminster general elections in 2005 and 2001 were as follows:

General election

Constituency	5 May 2005	7 June 2001
Belfast East	188	202
Belfast North	250	377
Belfast South	211	233
Belfast West	383	716
East Antrim	207	327
East Londonderry	308	399
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	558	693
Foyle	463	495
Lagan Valley	277	281
Mid Ulster	468	452
Newry and Armagh	630	587
North Antrim	300	328
North Down	171	188
South Antrim	223	196
South Down	489	574
Strangford	190	217
Upper Bann	327	339
West Tyrone	523	434
Total	6,166	7,038

C8

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the types of contract of employment applicable to those working in the policing unit designated C8; and what the nature is of the review scheduled to take place on or around 4 November. [24014]

Mr. Woodward: The staff employed on the Historical Enquiry Team (C8) are a mixture of serving police officers and civilian staff. The police officers are currently all seconded staff from England and Scotland, but a number of PSNI staff will join the unit in the new year. Civilian staff are a mixture of direct employees of the PSNI, persons on short-term contract and agency staff. These numbers 'ebb and flow' in response to demand (e.g. the search process) but will stabilise in 2006 once the team becomes operational.

I am advised by the police that no 'review' was held on or around 4 November.

Crime and Disorder Act

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [28996]

Mr. Hanson: Some of the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 already directly extend to Northern Ireland. Further extensions were not proposed at that time as a contemporaneous review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland was planned and it would have been inappropriate to do so in advance of the review's conclusions. A series of other important measures, provided in the Act, have subsequently been introduced, in recent years, through separate Northern Ireland legislation. These have included provisions dealing with hate crime, antisocial behaviour, reparation orders in youth justice and the creation of additional bail powers. There are no plans to extend the remaining provisions to Northern Ireland at the current time but this will be kept under review in response to operational needs.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the criteria used in formulating the answers of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 641W, on the Child Support Agency management board and 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1028W, on the Social Security Agency, were the same as those used in formulating the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 108W, on public bodies (appointments). [27403]

Angela E. Smith: When answering any request for information on community background the rules that are to be applied for the release of such information fall under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (subjected to specified exceptions).

In respect of the answer given of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 641W, on the child support agency management board, it was not possible to give the information requested as to do so may have revealed (or allowed someone to deduce) the community background of individual staff because of the small number of staff involved. However in the case of the answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1028W, the legislation was incorrectly interpreted and the following requested information should have been provided.

	Competition	
	Permanent	*Temporary*
Protestant	133	100
Roman Catholic	202	132
Non-determined	3	9
Total	338	241

Departmental Refurbishment

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the refurbishment projects in his Department that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months. [18384]

Mr. Hain: The NIO currently is refurbishing a minor wing of Hillsborough Castle and replacing the water piping throughout the building.

Three refurbishment projects are due to start within the next six months in Castle Buildings blocks 1 to 3, Massey House and Stormont House.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved Administration.

Departmental Staff Training

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on staff training and development in each of the last three years. [19524]

Mr. Hanson: The total amount spent on learning and development in the NIO excluding its agencies is provided in the following table.

	Resource spend (£)
2004–05	1,124,307.00
2003–04	943,942.00
2002–03	971,270.64

Departmental Stationery

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether his Department has joined the Watermark project. [18414]

Mr. Hain: The Watermark project does not apply in Northern Ireland.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved administration.

Departmental Vehicles

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reduction there has been in *(a)* road transport vehicle carbon dioxide emissions and *(b)* single occupancy car commuting in the Department since (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [17741]

Mr. Hain: The NIO is currently collecting baseline information for its transport fleet to enable it to monitor reduction in vehicle carbon dioxide emissions.

The Department is also currently carrying out a green transport survey for the purposes of identifying what opportunities exist to reduce single car occupancy commuting.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved Administration.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17989]

Mr. Hain: For information on the use of retread tyres on vehicles provided to the Department by the Government Car and Despatch Agency, I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he received from the chief executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library.

There are no retreaded tyres on other vehicles owned or leased directly by the NIO.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved Administration.

Domestic Violence

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of domestic violence were reported in each of the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies in the last year for which figures are available. [21638]

Mr. Hanson: The PSNI are the sole source of reliable information about domestic violence as they capture recorded crimes with a domestic motivation. The information is therefore only available across PSNI District Command Units and is set out in the table for the year 2004–05.

It is however believed these figures do not reflect the true level of domestic violence in Northern Ireland, In the Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2003–04 19 per cent. of female respondents claimed they had been the victims of domestic violence at some time in their lives, while 11 per cent. of male respondents made a similar claim.

Area	*Total offences recorded*
Antrim	235
Ards	345
Armagh	166
Ballymena	311
Ballymoney	122
Banbridge	200
East Belfast	397
North Belfast	630
South Belfast	325
West Belfast	522
Carrickfergus	152
Castlereagh	187
Coleraine	309
Cookstown	196
Craigavon	556
Down	147
Dungannon/South Tyrone	122
Fermanagh	151
Foyle	651
Larne	111
Limivady	204
Lisburn	819
Magherafelt	99
Moyle	52
Newry and Mourne	268
Newtownabbey	395
North Down	294
Omagh	219
Strabane	323
Total	8,508

Election Fraud

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps can be taken against a candidate who has been elected in a local government election or general election but has handed in fraudulent election returns. [18236]

Mr. Hanson: A return of expenses after an election must contain a declaration of the amount incurred. If the person making the return makes a false declaration they are guilty of an offence, as is any person who aids or abets, counsels or procures the false declaration.

All returns and declarations for local government elections are open for inspection by anyone at council offices for two years. If the return is discovered to be fraudulent, criminal proceedings can follow.

For parliamentary general elections, the Electoral Commission has responsibility for monitoring compliance with the law on election expenses. If they discover that a return is fraudulent, criminal proceedings can follow.

Electronic Human Resources Contract

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the status of Fujitsu Services Ltd. is in relation to the bidding process for the Northern Ireland civil service electronic human resources contract; and what criteria were used in determining the *(a)* timing and *(b)* content of the statement issued on 19 October regarding the contract. [26686]

Angela E. Smith: Following the evaluation process, the authority has entered into further discussions with Fujitsu Services Ltd. with a view to them being selected as preferred bidder. Progression to preferred bidder status depends upon the satisfactory resolution of a number of points. These issues must be resolved within a four-week period from 19 October.

At this stage:

(i) No preferred bidder has been selected.

(ii) The contract has not been awarded.

The timing was determined by the completion of the evaluation process and ratification of the outcome by the programme board. The criteria used in determining the content of the statement issued on 19 October were the evaluation criteria published as part of the instructions to bidders. A copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when gateway reviews were carried out on the procurement process used for the civil service electronic human resources contract; by whom they were carried out; and on what terms. [26753]

Angela E. Smith: The eHR project has been subject to five reviews under the peer review process allied to the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway process. These reviews ensure compliance with process before moving to the next stage.

	Reviews	*Date*
Gate 0	Strategic Assessment	November 2002
Gate 1	Business Justification	February 2003
Gate 2	Procurement Strategy	May 2003
Gate 2a	Health Check Review	December 2003
Gate 2b	Health Check Review	June 2004

The peer review process has been conducted in accordance with OGC Gateway guidance, led by an OGC member of staff and supported by public sector panel members independent of the her project and who are trained in carrying out Gateway Reviews.

The terms for carrying out the reviews were as follows:

Gate 0—Strategic Assessment

Ensure that the project or programme is supported by users and stakeholders and contributes to the organisation's business strategy.

Review the arrangements for leading and managing the project or programme (and its individual projects).

Review the arrangements for identifying and managing the main project or programme risks (and in the case of a programme the individual project risks), including external risks such as changing business priorities.

Check that financial provision has been made for the project or programme and that plans for the work to be done through to business case justification (Gateway Review 1) for each procurement project are realistic, properly resourced and authorised. This should include the individual projects within a programme.

Gate 1—Business Justification

Confirm that the business case is robust—that is, in principle it meets business need, is affordable, achievable, with appropriate options explored and likely to achieve value for money.

Establish that the feasibility study has been completed satisfactorily and that there is a preferred way forward.

Ensure that there is internal and external authority, if required, and support for the project.

Ensure that the major risks have been identified and outline risk management plans have been developed.

Establish that the project is likely to deliver its business goals and that it supports wider business change, where applicable.

Confirm that the scope and requirements specifications are realistic, clear and unambiguous.

Ensure that the full scale, intended outcomes, timescales and impact of relevant external issues have been considered.

Ensure that there are plans for the next stage.

Confirm planning assumptions and that the project team can deliver the next stage.

Confirm that overarching and internal business and technical strategies have been taken into account.

Establish that quality plans for the project and its products are in place.

Gate 2—Procurement Strategy

Confirm the outline business case now the project is fully defined.

Ensure that the procurement strategy is robust and appropriate.

Ensure that the project's plan through to completion is appropriately detailed and realistic.

Ensure that the project controls and organisation are defined, financial controls are in place and the resources are available.

Confirm funding availability for the whole project.

Confirm that the development and delivery approach and mechanisms are still appropriate and manageable.

Check that the supplier market capability and track record is fully understood (or existing supplier's capability and performance).

Confirm that the procurement (or acquisition approach) will facilitate good client/supplier relationships in accordance with government initiatives such as Achieving Excellence in Construction Procurement.

Confirm that appropriate project performance measures and tools are being used.

Confirm that quality procedures have been applied consistently since the previous review.

Gate 2a—Health Check Review

Ensure that there is internal and external authority, if required, and stakeholder support for the project.

Check that the business case is still robust in the light of further work on the project.

Check that financial provision has been made for the project or programme and that plans for the work to be done through to Investment Decision (Gateway Review 3) for each procurement project are realistic, properly resourced and authorised. This should include the individual projects within a programme.

Ensure that the project controls and organisation are defined, financial controls are in place and the resources are available.

Ensure that the major risks have been identified and outline risk management plans have been developed.

Confirm that quality procedures have been applied consistently since the previous review.

Confirm that plans for benefits realisation are being developed.

Ensure that the procurement strategy is still robust and appropriate.

Confirm that the scope and requirements specifications are realistic, clear and unambiguous.

Confirm that the development and delivery approach and mechanisms are still appropriate and manageable.

Gate 2b—Health Check Review

Ensure that there is internal and external authority, if required, and stakeholder support for the project.

Check that the business case is still robust in the light of further work on the project.

Check that financial provision has been made for the project or programme.

Ensure that the project controls and organisation are defined, financial controls are in place and the resources are available.

Ensure that the project's plan through to completion is appropriately detailed and realistic, including contract management strategy.

Ensure that the major risks have been identified and outline risk management plans have been developed.

Confirm that quality procedures have been applied consistently since the previous review.

Confirm that plans for benefits realisation are being developed.

Ensure that the procurement strategy is still robust and appropriate.

Confirm that the scope and requirements specifications are realistic, clear and unambiguous.

Confirm that the development and delivery approach and mechanisms are still appropriate and manageable.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will commission an independent peer review of the procurement process in respect of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Electronic Human Resources contract. [26822]

Angela E. Smith: A peer review additional to the process detailed will not be commissioned.

The procurement process has been undertaken in accordance with European Union procurement law and the Department of Finance and Personnel has been guided by best procurement practice as recommended by the Office of Government Commerce and Central Procurement Directorate (Department of Finance and Personnel).

The eHR project has been subject to five reviews under the peer review process allied to the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway process:

		Review date
Gate 0	Strategic Assessment	November 2002
Gate 1	Business Justification	February 2003
Gate 2	Procurement Strategy	May 2003
Gate 2a	Health Check Review	December 2003
Gate 2b	Health Check Review	June 2004

The peer review process has been conducted in accordance with OGC Gateway guidance, led by an OGC member of staff and supported by public sector panel members independent of the eHR project and who are trained in carrying out Gateway Reviews.

A further three reviews will be carried out, these are:

December 2005	
Gate 3	Investment Decision
Gate 4	Readiness for Service
Gate 5	Benefits evaluation

Energy Efficiency

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what targets he has for improving energy efficiency; and how he intends to achieve these targets. [17737]

Mr. Hain: The Department proposes to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings by 15 per cent. by 2010–11 relative to 1999–2000 consumption.

For the purposes of securing this reduction, the Department's energy consumption in its key buildings is monitored and managed by a Building Energy Management System. In addition the Department carries out minor projects to improve energy efficiency across its estate.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved Administration.

Equality Commission

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Equality Commission has offered advice to local councils in Northern Ireland that *(a)* have undertaken and *(b)* are undertaking article 55 reviews of their work force. [28459]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The Equality Commission offers advice to all employers to ensure they are facilitated to comply with their duties under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998. This includes ensuring local councils are provided with relevant advice to conduct their Article 55 Reviews."

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland uses in ascertaining whether employers have a work force whose religious make-up may require the use of the phrase 'we particularly welcome applications from ... ' in recruitment advertising. [28460]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The Commission recommends that employers consider the use of equality statements in job advertisements particularly welcoming applications from the Protestant or Roman Catholic community where that group is under-represented in the workforce and also among applicants for employment."

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for assistance with complaints of discrimination in employment and non-employment have been received by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in each year since its inception. [28982]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland considered the following applications for assistance with complaints of discrimination in employment and non employment in each year since its inception:

1999–2000—548

2000–01—651

2001–02—861

2002–03—623

2003–04—121

2004–05—417"

Farm Accidents

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children aged under 16 years have *(a)* died and *(b)* suffered serious injury in farm accidents in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [28371]

Angela E. Smith: A total of 17 individuals aged less than 16 years have died as the result of farm accidents in Northern Ireland during the last 10 years.

The breakdown by parliamentary constituency is as follows:

Parliamentary constituency	Number of individuals
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	4
West Tyrone	3
Newry and Armagh	2
East Londonderry	2
South Down	2
Mid Ulster	2
Upper Bann	1
North Antrim	1

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland does not hold statistically reliable data for individual serious injury accidents in this age category, However the Social Survey of Farmers and Farm Families conducted in 2001–02 found that 44 people, aged less than 16 years, on farms sustained injury that required professional medical attention. The study was conducted throughout Northern Ireland and results in this category are not sub-divided by parliamentary constituency.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals aged 65 years and over have *(a)* died and *(b)* suffered serious injury in farm accidents in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [28372]

Angela E. Smith: A total of 22 individuals aged 65 years and over have died as the result of farm accidents in Northern Ireland during the last 10 years.

The breakdown by parliamentary constituency is as follows:

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of individuals*
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	8
Newry and Armagh	5
East Londonderry	2
Lagan Valley	2
Upper Bann	2
Mid Ulster	2
North Antrim	1

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland does not hold statistically reliable data for individual serious injury accidents in this age category. However the Social Survey of Farmers and Farm Families conducted in 2001–02 found that 71 people, aged 65 years and over, on farms sustained injury that required professional medical attention.

The study was conducted throughout Northern Ireland and the results are not analysed by parliamentary constituency.

Health and Safety

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance is being given by the Government to small and medium-sized enterprises *(a)* to ensure that they are aware of their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Northern Ireland Order 1978 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2002 and *(b)* to help them carry out appropriate health and safety risk assessments in the workplace. [28408]

Angela E. Smith: The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland established a small business advisory service, Health and Safety Works Northern Ireland (HSWNI), on 1 April 2004. This was in direct response to a need expressed by the small business community in Northern Ireland. The service, which is available at no cost to business, provides advice, guidance and support to small businesses to help them meet their health and safety obligations, including those relating to risk assessment.

Healthy Eating

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated in the Province for education and advising parents on the benefits of a healthy diet for their children in 2005–06. [22638]

Angela E. Smith: It is not possible to specifically identify the level of funding allocated for education and advising parents on the benefits of a healthy diet for their children, as this involves a range of nutrition education initiatives and health promotion services.

In 2005–06, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety provided £550,000 to support nutrition and healthy eating, the Food Standards Agency allocated £75,000 to non-school based nutrition education and the Department of Education has allocated up to £10,000 to inform parents about the new nutritional standards for school meals and also provide them with general healthy eating advice for their children. This advice outlines the new standards and explains why they are needed in schools. It also outlines how parents can be involved by, for example, encouraging their children to eat healthier options at home and elsewhere. In addition, nutrition education forms part of the plans of Investing for Health Partnerships, Health Action Zones and a number of the Healthy Living Centres. The Big Lottery's Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke and Cancer programme has also supported a number of nutrition education initiatives in recent years.

A range of primary care professionals offer advice on healthy eating as part of their health promotion role. In particular, advising parents on the benefits of a healthy diet for young children is part of the universal core programme for child health screening and surveillance, which is delivered by midwives, health visitors and school nurses, but also includes a wider range of professionals such as community dentists.

Home Accidents

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will assess the merits of developing guidance for the teaching of home accident prevention to school-aged children in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [28398]

Angela E. Smith: As part of the support programme for the introduction of the revised curriculum, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) is currently piloting primary and post-primary Personal Development guidance materials for teachers, which includes guidance on teaching home accident prevention. Within the present curriculum, pupils are taught about the subject through the Health Education Cross-Curricular Theme. In addition, my Department provides funding annually to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents towards the cost of delivering accident prevention programmes in schools.

Live Cattle Exports

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the costs were of checking the welfare during transport of live cattle being exported to the Republic of Ireland from Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [28316]

Angela E. Smith: The export of live cattle from the UK was banned by the EU in March 1996 due to fears about the risk to human health from BSE in cattle.

Data on pre-1996 checks was held by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland on a computer based record system, which was replaced by the Animal and Public Health Information System in 1998. Data

from the old system was retained for a 5 year period but was then deleted. There is therefore no data available on welfare checks prior to March 1996.

Londonderry Inquiry

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the public inquiry led by Lord Saville into the events in Londonderry in January 1972 to announce its findings. [27392]

Mr. Hanson: The independent Bloody Sunday inquiry has informed me that they are now engaged in compiling their final report. Due to the vast amount of evidence that must be considered this is a very time consuming process and it is difficult at this stage to be precise about when the report will be presented to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost to date has been of the Saville Inquiry; and if he will list legal firms which have received payments from his Department in connection with it. [27973]

Mr. Hanson: On the figures available at the end of October 2005 the total cash spend of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry was £163 million.

On the basis of the records currently available the following legal firms and counsel have received payment from the Northern Ireland Office in respect of their involvement with the Bloody Sunday Inquiry.

Counsel for the Inquiry

Christopher Clarke
Jacob Grierson
Alan Roxburgh
Cathryn McGahey
Bilal Rawat

Solicitors employed for the taking of witness statements

Eversheds

Senior Counsel representing Interested Parties

Lord Gifford
Arthur Harvey
Michael Lavery
Barry J McDonald
P T MacDonald
Michael Mansfield
Eilish McDerrnott
Seamus Treacy
Eoin McGonigal
Kevin Finegan
Reginald Weir
James Gallagher
Declan Morgan
Richard Ferguson[1]
Sir Louis Blom Cooper

Junior Counsel representing Interested Parties

John Coyle
Fiona Doherty
Ciaran Harvey
Richard Harvey
Brian Kennedy
Philip Magee
Kieran Mallon
Brian McCartney
Karen Quinlivan
Patricia Smyth
Michael Topolski
Mary McHugh
Tom McCreanor
Gareth Purvis[1]
Kevin O'Donovan[1]
Paddy O'Hanlon

Solicitors representing Interested Parties

Barr and Co
Brendan Kearney and Co
Desmond Doherty and Co
MacDermott and McGurk
Madden and Finucane
McCann and McCann
McCartney and Casey
P J McGrory[1]
Jones and Co[1]

Solicitor representing NICRA

Francis Keenan

Senior Counsel representing the NIQ

Bernard McCloskey
Jeremy Morgan

Solicitor representing the NIQ

The Treasury Solicitor

Legal representatives for other witnesses:

Senior Counsel representing Witnesses

Andrew Nichol
David Waters
Robin de Wilde
Anthony Jennings
Ben Emmerson
Andrew Caldecott
Brian Fee
Richard Weir
Henry Blaxland
Patrick Moloney
Geoffrey Shaw
Liain McCollum
Gerald Simpson
David Lloyd Jones

Junior Counsel representing witnesses

Andrew J Moriarty
Michael McCrea
Martin O'Rourke
James Laddie
David Humphries
Joel Bennathan
Des Fahey
Conor Campbell
Robin Steer
Gavyn N Cairns
Ivor McAteer
David Sherborne

Solicitors representing Witnesses

Allen and Overy
Finers Stephens Innocent

Oliver J Kelly
Corker Binning
Colin Rayner and Co
Penleys
Noel Wilson
Bindman and Partners
BBC Litigation Dept
Mills Selig
Charles Russell
Charles Russell (Guildford)
Smith Dornan and Shea PC
John Ross and Son
Taylor Nichol
Wynne Baxter
Hopkins and Co
Stelfox and Co
Russell Jones and Walker
Edwards and Co
J. M. Hughes and Co
Kendall Freeman
T.G. Jones and Associates
William J Hasson
Babington and Croasdaile
Dermot Walker and Co
Francis Cyrilly
Green and Green
Hegarty and McFeely
Hooper and Wollen
Kenneth Beavis and Co
Mark Moroney
McElhinney and McDaid
McGuinness, solicitors
Pinsent Curtis Biddle
Stunt Palmer and Robinson
Brodies
Jones and Ferriday
J. A. Hughes
McBurney and Co
Hasson and Company
Glanvilles
H20, solicitors
Wilkin Chapman Epton Blades
Bonallack and Bishop
Michael Lanigan and Co
Worthington-Edridge Hulme and Co
Giles Hunter Power
Denhams
Michael E Hanahoe
Burgess Salmon
Imran Khan
Richard Monteith
Davey Son and Jones
McGuinness and Canavan
Doherty and Quigley
Harte Coyle Collins
Denis Mullan
Johnsons
Addleshaw Goddard
Murtagh Breen and Co
Sheridan and Co
A D McClay and Co
Blount Petre Kramer
Irwin Mitchell
Steele and Co, solicitors
Steele Ford Newton, solicitors
Biddle
Caldwell and Robinson
D. J. Freeman, solicitors
Edward Geldard, solicitors
Garrett Sheehan and Co
Gillian Fazan
Heckford Norton
Liberty
Lowless and Lowless
Marcus Barnett, solicitors
Meehan Murphy and Co
Morgans, solicitors
Steele and Co
Thompsons McClure
Tonner Johns and Co
Yanakas Votsis
Campbell Fitzpatrick
McCollum and Company
Patterson, Taylor and Co, solicitors
Peters and Peters
Russell and Russell
Wickwar and Chitiyo
YVA, solicitors
Con way, Todd and Co
Deery and Conway, solicitors
Goodmans, solicitors
Patrick Fahy and Co
S. C. Connolly and Co, solicitors

[1] Limited party status.

Maze Prison

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to appoint a panel to monitor the progress of the development of the former Maze Prison site. [28984]

Angela E. Smith: Nominations have been invited from each of the four main political parties to serve on a group to monitor the potential for development at the Maze/Long Kesh regeneration site. A number of nominations are awaited.

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Neighbourhood Watch schemes are in operation in Northern Ireland. [21168]

Mr. Hanson: There are currently 84 accredited Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in Northern Ireland. A number of schemes are also progressing through the accreditation process.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding is available for Neighbourhood Watch in Northern Ireland. [21169]

Mr. Hanson: During the current financial year, the Community Safety Unit, the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Policing Board has collectively made available up to £100,000 to support Neighbourhood Watch in Northern Ireland.

Omagh Bomb (Compensation Claims)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many compensation claims have been settled following the Omagh bomb; and what is the total amount of compensation paid. [19548]

Mr. Hain: The Compensation Agency has fully resolved 826 of the 852 criminal injury claims it received following the Omagh bomb. To date approximately £20.4 million has been paid in relation to these claims.

In relation to criminal damage claims, 214 of the 220 claims received have been resolved, with approximately £7.5 million having been paid in compensation.

Police Service

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what survey methods are used to establish the level of community confidence in the Police Service of Northern Ireland in Northern Ireland; and how often these surveys are undertaken. [19939]

Mr. Hain: A range of quantitative surveys are commissioned by both the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Policing Board with a view to measuring community confidence in various aspects of the service provided by the police in Northern Ireland,

Three main quantitative surveys are used, each of which is conducted by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency:

(a) The Northern Ireland Crime Survey, a personal interview survey of experiences and perceptions of crime, being conducted on a continuous basis since January 2005,

(b) The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, a 'snapshot' personal interview survey covering a range of topics, run several times each year.

(c) The District Policing Partnership (DPPs) Public Consultation Survey, a postal survey covering local policing priorities, satisfaction with the police and awareness of DPPs, conducted every two years.

The most recent in-year figures covering the period January to June 2005, from the NI Crime Survey, show that 60 per cent. of those interviewed think that the police do a good job in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase of 3 per cent. on the previous year.

Religious Profiles

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the religious breakdown of staff employed in the Province within *(a)* the BBC, including Radio Ulster, *(b)* Citizens Advice Bureaux and *(c)* Ulster Television; and if he will make a statement. [28158]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Lady in the following terms:

"The following information is taken from the Commission's Monitoring Report No. 14 A Profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce, Summary of Monitoring returns 2003, published by the Commission in November 2004. The composition of the Citizen's Advice Bureaux is not published in this report as it employs fewer than 26 employees."

	British Broadcasting Corporation	*Ulster Television plc*
P	409	127
RC	335	79
ND	122	16
Total	866	222
Percentage P	55	61.7
Percentage RC	45	38.3

Road Accidents

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage of road traffic accidents in Northern Ireland which were attributed to mechanical failure since the introduction of electronic MOT vehicle test procedures. [24848]

Mr. Woodward: The electronic MOT system was introduced in September 2003, The Police Service of Northern Ireland only records injury road traffic collisions. The total number of injury road traffic collisions recorded between 1 September 2003 and 31 March 2005 was 8,946. Of these 26 (0.29 per cent.) were attributed to vehicle defects[1].

[1] Vehicle defects include: Defective brakes; Defective steering/ suspension; Defective front lights, Defective rear lights and Defective tyres.

Sentencing Framework

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the public consultation on minimum terms and life sentence cases. [27761]

Mr. Hanson: I am currently considering how to take forward the issue of the life sentence system in Northern Ireland in the context of the wider review of sentencing. I will issue a report on the outcome of the consultation shortly.

Sports Council

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was given to the Sports Council for Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [28857]

Mr. Hanson: The Sports Council for Northern Ireland has received exchequer and lottery funding in the last 10 years for the amounts shown in the following table:

£ million

	Exchequer	Lottery
1995–96	3.366	8.569
1996–97	2.669	10.021
1997–98	2.918	8.204
1998–99	2.506	7.218
1999–2000	2.406	7.585
2000–01	4 423	7.585
2001–02	3,536	8.254
2002–03	5 276	7.300
2003–04	7 096	5.858
2004–05	5.937	7.514

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the action on sustainable development *(a)* required and *(b)* undertaken by his Department's (i) executive agencies, (ii) advisory non-departmental bodies, (iii) executive non-departmental bodies, (iv) tribunals, (v) public corporations and (vi) other bodies. [17726]

Mr. Hain: The Government's framework and associated targets for sustainable development applies to Departments and their Executive Agencies. The framework does not cover the non-departmental public bodies and associated bodies. It is however anticipated that Departments will promote the framework to these groups and encourage the development of strategies for target setting, performance improvement and reporting. Compliant with these arrangements:

NIPS is committed to a strategy which encompasses the national strategy with specific targets to reduce energy consumption, the application of the environmentally sound principals and practices and promoting the message of reduce, re-use and recycle and to secure reductions in vehicle exhaust emissions. Other detailed successes are as follows:

A 35 per cent. reduction in electricity consumption since 1999;

Use of CHP plant to generate 7 per cent. of total electricity;

Replacement of water mains to reduce water usage;

Use of a Building Energy Management System to control and monitor energy usage.

Compensation Agency and the Youth Justice Agency are taking their lead from the NIO's central strategy and members of their staff attend the Green Champions meetings.

The Public Prosecution Service is taking their lead from the NIO central strategy and is represented at the Green Champions meetings. PPS intend establishing a Sustainable Development Committee which will develop:

The operation and management of its buildings;

Energy efficiency, giving consideration to sourcing a percentage of electricity from renewable sources and combined heat and power;

Water management/reduce consumption;

Recycling and waste management;

Review working patterns of staff in consideration with the new 'Regional Offices';

Encourage use of alternative travel arrangements bus, train, cycle, walk;

Promote car sharing;

Develop training and awareness seminars for staff.

Forensic Science Northern Ireland currently occupies temporary accommodation within the PSNI site at Seapark and has a well established working group that advises the chief executive on green housekeeping and energy saving initiatives. The working group have promoted policies on a number of issues covered under recycling and waste management, energy saving awareness and green procurement of consumables.

The agency is currently engaged in a major project sponsored by the Department to provide new purpose-built laboratory accommodation. The project will apply the principles of the OGC 'Achieving Excellence in Construction' initiative and the complementary initiative 'Achieving Sustainability in Construction Procurement'.

The Department is developing a roadshow and website which will be used to promote sustainable development to NDPD's and associated bodies.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved Administration.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on his Department's Sustainable Development Strategy. [18443]

Mr. Hain: The NIO Departmental Board is committed to the Governments strategy on sustainable development and aims continually to improve the management and use of resources. It supports and actively contributes to the UK Strategy for Sustainable Development, which has four main aims:

Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;

Effective protection of the environment;

Prudent use of natural resources;

Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

The Department will seek to promote these objectives by:

Ensuring that its public sector agreement targets contribute to sustainable development;

Assessing the environmental and social impact of any new or revised policy at an early stage;

Integrating sustainable development policies into its procurement policies;

Establishing appropriate targets in respect of energy and water use, travel activity, estate management and biodiversity and for the reduction, reuse and recycle of all materials and consumables;

Educating and motivating staff and contractors to operate in an environmentally appropriate manner;

Creating the opportunity for staff to become personally and actively involved in securing environmental improvements;

Monitoring our performance and reporting on our achievements.

Specific Objectives

To:

conserve energy, water, paper and other resources whilst maintaining comfort and operational effectiveness;

reduce CO2 emissions by 12.5 per cent. by 2010–11 relative to 1999–2000;

increase energy efficiency by 15 per cent. by 2010–11 relative to 1999–2000;

source 10 per cent. of electricity from renewable sources by 2008;

assess the environmental impact of our significant buildings by 2006;

measure by 2006 the volume of waste currently generated and to identify options to reduce, reuse and recycle;

promote Green Housekeeping policies with staff and appoint local managers for each site to champion environmental initiatives;

establish the volume of water consumed within each site and where appropriate reduce consumption to 7.7 m^3 per person;

establish a biodiversity policy for the grounds at Hillsborough Castle;

comply with appropriate guidance on the conservation of historic buildings and grounds;

reduce road transport carbon dioxide emissions by at least 10 per cent.;

reduce single occupancy car commuting.

Delivery

The Department has appointed Central Services Division as the lead division to drive forward the various strands and objectives. Green Champions have been appointed in every division to promote the message of reduce, reuse, recycle. A green transport survey is under way to measure single occupancy car commuting and to identity opportunities for reductions. Key buildings in the NIO's office estate have all been converted from either oil fire or electric heating to natural gas and now acquire some 25 per cent. of all electricity from renewable sources. A waste stream audit for key sites is currently under way. Steps have taken to ensure that the maximum volume of waste paper is recycled. Arrangements have also been introduced at significant sites to recycle plastic, tin, cardboard and glass. All paper for printing and photocopying is from a recycled source.

This answer applies only to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved Administration.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pensioners *(a)* were eligible, *(b)* applied for and *(c)* have received winter fuel payments in each year since payments started, broken down by constituency in Northern Ireland. [28847]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is shown in the following table. Information on winter fuel payment applications is unavailable.

Winter fuel payments (WFP) by parliamentary constituency 2000–01 to 2004–05—Awards made and eligible population

1992 parliamentary constituency	*Eligible population (MYE 2000–01)*	*2000–01 Number of WFP received*	*Eligible population (MYE 2001–02)*	*2001–02 Number of WFP received*
Belfast East	19,343	17,570	19,086	17,555
Belfast North	18,912	16,980	18,709	16,753
Belfast South	17,288	15,628	16,994	15,466
Belfast West	13,786	12,232	13,738	12,244
East Antrim	15,162	13,970	15,375	14,285
East Londonderry	14,914	13,195	15,289	13,611
Fermanagh and S Tyrone	16,321	13,124	16,456	13,499
Foyle	14,060	12,301	14,319	12,530
Lagan Valley	17,649	16,220	17,941	16,670
Mid Ulster	12,941	11,442	13,131	11,687
Newry and Armagh	16,176	14,302	16,353	14,594
North Antrim	19,061	17,289	19,378	17,757
North Down	18,331	16,669	18,547	16,959
South Antrim	15,822	14,368	16,241	14,881
South Down	17,097	15,205	17,360	15,555
Strangford	17,442	16,012	17,854	16,458
Upper Bann	17,091	15,506	17,416	15,839
West Tyrone	13,317	11,565	13,498	11,838
Total	294,713	263,578	297,685	268,181

1992 parliamentary constituency	*Eligible population (MYE 2002–03)*	*2002–03 Number of WFP received*	*Eligible population (MYE 2003–04)*	*2003–04 Number of WFP received*
Belfast East	19,011	17,555	18,964	17,593
Belfast North	18,654	16,648	18,528	16,725
Belfast South	16,929	15,478	16,911	15,540
Belfast West	13,820	12,387	13,920	12,601
East Antrim	15,713	14,728	16,097	15,234
East Londonderry	15,677	14,003	16,146	14,460
Fermanagh and S Tyrone	16,773	13,815	17,102	14,391
Foyle	14,623	12,858	14,966	13,313
Lagan Valley	18,218	17,138	18,636	17,737
Mid Ulster	13,449	11,989	13,808	12,423
Newry and Armagh	16,729	14,967	17,136	15,472
North Antrim	19,831	18,301	20,423	19,058
North Down	18,891	17,397	19,269	18,027
South Antrim	16,764	15,418	17,266	16,053
South Down	17,577	15,982	18,029	16,516
Strangford	18,301	16,964	18,861	17,701
Upper Bann	17,766	16,242	18,222	16,771
West Tyrone	13,778	12,156	14,084	12,478
Total	302,504	274,026	308,368	282,093

1992 parliamentary constituency	Eligible population (MYE 2004–05)	2004–05 Number of WFP received
Belfast East	18,908	17,334
Belfast North	18,408	16,212
Belfast South	16,842	15,276
Belfast West	13,978	12,424
East Antrim	16,518	15,344
East Londonderry	16,588	14,566
Fermanagh and S Tyrone	17,459	14,464
Foyle	15,390	13,409
Lagan Valley	19,126	17,952
Mid Ulster	14,178	12,527
Newry and Armagh	17,576	15,623
North Antrim	21,030	19,257
North Down	19,833	18,288
South Antrim	17,799	16,347
South Down	18,509	16,758
Strangford	19,409	17,910
Upper Bann	18,639	16,833
West Tyrone	14,417	12,643
Total	314,607	283,167

Source:
Eligible population figures are taken from Mid year estimates (MYE) published on www.nisra.gov.uk. All individuals aged 60 and over

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

1911 Census

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Freedom of Information Act 2000 applications to see sections of the 1911 decennial census for England and Wales have been *(a)* received and *(b)* rejected by the National Archives since 1 January. [28026]

Ms Harman: From January 1 2005 to date The National Archives has recorded 143 requests, under the Freedom of Information Act, to see sections of the 1911 decennial census. In accordance with the Act and with Government policy, the National Archives considers each request for access to the 1911 returns on a case by case basis, in consultation with the Office for National Statistics as the transferring department. So far it has not been possible to grant any of these requests because they are covered by S.41 exemption of the Act relating to breach of confidence.

Coroners

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance her Department has issued to coroners on the means of establishing the identification of dead persons. [27602]

Ms Harman: The means of identification are a matter for the coroner's judgment and will depend on the individual circumstances. We have not issued specific guidance to coroners.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance the Department has issued to coroners on making their reports available to doctors who request them; and if she will take steps to encourage coroners to make reports available when they are requested. [28725]

Ms Harman: Guidance was issued by the Home Office in the form of a circular, No 62/1994. This commended the recommendation of the Clothier Report into the Beverley Allitt murders that, in every case, coroners should send copies of post-mortem reports to any consultant who has been involved in the patient's care prior to death, whether or not demanded, under the coroners rules. Any decision in an individual case is a matter for the coroner concerned. My officials will, however, discuss this matter at the next of their regular meetings with coroners.

Courts Employee Pension Scheme

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what inquiries her Department has made into the collapse of the courts employee pension scheme; [27306]

(2)what representations have been made to her about the collapse of the courts employee pension scheme; [27307]

(3) what assessment she has made of the effects of the merger of the courts employee pension scheme with the courts directors pension scheme. [27308]

Ms Harman: The pension schemes for staff in this Department or in Her Majesty's Courts Service has not collapsed. Accordingly there have been no representations made.

There is a single pension scheme (the principal civil service pension scheme) in operation within this Department and its agencies including Her Majesty's Courts Service.

Electoral Administration Bill

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether Labour party officials had sight of the draft or final copy of the Electoral Administration Bill before it was placed in the public domain. [26172]

Ms Harman: I can confirm that no Labour party officials had sight of the draft or final copy of the Bill before it was introduced before Parliament.

Electoral Register

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of individual registration on registration levels in Northern Ireland. [20146]

Mr. Hanson: I have been asked to reply.

Individual registration in Northern Ireland was introduced as part of the Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and has substantially enhanced the accuracy and integrity of the Electoral Register in Northern Ireland.

Since then, however, there has been an annual downward drift in numbers registering mainly due to the requirement to hold an annual canvass with individuals having to provide information afresh each year. To combat this, the Government, after consulting the political parties and the Electoral Commission, is introducing legislation that will further reform and modernise the electoral registration arrangements. These measures will lift the burden on electors and refocus resources on more effectively targeting those not registered.

Her Majesty's Courts Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the average remuneration is for a lawyer employed in a non-management post in Her Majesty's Courts Service; [27474]

Government Legal Services

(2) what the average renumeration is for a non-management lawyer employed in the Government Legal Services [27508]

Ms Harman: The information requested is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Government Legal Services lawyers are employed in more than 30 different Government Departments. It is up to each department to determine what salary to offer and it is unlikely that a lawyer's management responsibilities will be recorded.

Jury Service

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people summoned for jury service sought *(a)* deferment and *(b)* exemption in each of the last five years. [27533]

Ms Harman: The information is as follows.

People summoned for jury service who sought deferral or excusal: 2001–05

	Number of people who sought deferral	*Number of people who sought excusal*
Between 2 April 2001 and 29 March 2002	64,023	175,773
Between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003	63,767	160,522
Between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004	65,529	135,900
Between 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	66,577	109,933
Between 1 April 2005 to the end of October 2005	42,266	60,831

Litigation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the development of a common EU mechanism for litigation. [27744]

Ms Harman: The EU is not developing a common mechanism for litigation. Certain measures have, however, been adopted or are under negotiation to facilitate cross-border litigation between EU member states. They include the European enforcement order, which came into force on 21 October 2005 which facilitates recognition and enforcement of uncontested judgments, a proposal for a European small claims procedure, and a European order for payment procedure to provide a simplified method of obtaining judgment on uncontested debts. These measures will benefit the citizens of the UK and the rest of Europe by providing a simplified and accelerated procedures for more straightforward cross-border litigation.

Ministerial Meetings

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Lord Chancellor last met the Archbishop of York to discuss constitutional issues of mutual interest to the Government and the church; and if she will make a statement. [28151]

Ms Harman: The Lord Chancellor has held no meeting with the Archbishop of York to discuss constitutional issues.

Post Mortems

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many post mortems have been undertaken in the last five years on unidentified dead persons where more than 12 months has elapsed since death and no inquest has been held. [27606]

Ms Harman: This information is not kept centrally.

Privy Council

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the members of the Privy Council. [28861]

Ms Harman: There are 535 Privy Counsellors. A list can be found on the Privy Council Office website—www.privycouncil.gov.uk

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs, on how many occasions the Privy Council met in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [28862]

Ms Harman: There were 12 Privy Council meetings in 2004, and there have been 12 so far in 2005.

Privy Council Meetings

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs on how many occasions in the past two years meetings of the Privy Council involving attendance of Ministers have been

held *(a)* outside London and *(b)* in Scotland; how many Ministers were involved; and which of these meetings lasted in excess of 15 minutes. [28150]

Ms Harman: In the past two years there have been four Privy Council meetings outside London, 3 at Windsor Castle and 1 at Balmoral Castle. Seven Ministers were involved in total. No record is kept of the length of Privy Council meetings.

Probate Costs

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of why the costs of probate in Northern Ireland are higher than those elsewhere in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [28462]

Bridget Prentice: The fee structure for grant of probate in Northern Ireland is calculated on a different basis from England and Wales. Probate fees in Northern Ireland are charged on a sliding scale with reference to the value of the estate.

Saville Inquiry

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, on the Saville inquiry, what the previous highest amount of public expenditure incurred in holding a public inquiry in the United Kingdom was; and what the total amount incurred for legal fees on that occasion was. [28461]

Bridget Prentice: To accurately gauge expenditure on public inquires prior to 1990 would be likely to incur unreasonable costs. However, since 1990 the highest expenditure for a public inquiry has been approximately £30 million for the inquiry into Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. This figure includes the cost of the inquiry itself, together with the costs of liaison units and legal support for witnesses from all the main Departments involved. Further detailed work would be needed to separate the legal costs from that figure.

Telephone Preference Service (Exemptions)

Bob Russell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what representations she has received from the charity sector on exempting charities from the list of organisations that are barred from calling people that have registered with the Telephone Preference Service; and if she will make a statement; [28734]

(2) what her Department's policy is on the inclusion of charities among the organisations that are barred from calling people that have registered with the Telephone Preference Service. [28751]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have received no representations from the charity sector suggesting that there is any need to exempt charities from the list of organisations which are prohibited from making unsolicited calls to consumers registered with the Telephone Preference Service scheme. Charitable organisations are still able to make calls to such registered consumers if they have received prior consent, which overrides the consumer's TPS registration.

Bob Russell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what opportunities there are for people who register with the Telephone Preference Service to exclude charities from the list of organisations barred from calling them. [28752]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

Charitable organisations are still able to make calls to Telephone Preference Service registered consumers if the consumer has given prior consent, as that consent overrides the registration.

Bob Russell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the merits of exempting charities from the list of organisations that are barred from calling people that have registered with the Telephone Preference Service. [28753]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

None. We have received no representations from charities on this matter.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Amateur Radio

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with Ofcom about the Amateur Radio Licensing consultation; and if he will make a statement. [27722]

Alun Michael: I have had no discussions with the Office of Communications (Ofcom) on this matter. Consultation on amateur radio licensing is the responsibility of Ofcom, which is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right.

Bankruptcies

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many bankruptcies have been declared in each year since 2003. [27146]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In England and Wales there were:

28,021 bankruptcy orders in 2003

35,898 bankruptcy orders in 2004

For 2005, figures are only available for the first three quarters to end September, there were:

34,782 bankruptcy orders for the first three quarters of 2005 (not seasonally adjusted).

More detailed insolvency statistics for Great Britain from 1997 onwards are available on the DTI website at http://www.dtistats.net/sd/insolv. Figures for 2005 as a whole will be available on 3 February 2006.

British Nuclear Group

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has had on the potential sale of British Nuclear Group over the last six months; and if he will make a statement. [28512]

Malcolm Wicks: Ministers and officials have met with BNFL and key stakeholders to discuss a range of strategic options for British Nuclear Group, including the possibility of a sale, to give it the best chance of success in the future and place it in the strongest possible position to win the upcoming NDA site competitions.

Business Support

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small businesses have obtained contracts from Government bodies to conduct research on their behalf under the Small Business Research Initiative in the last two years, broken down by *(a)* number of different companies, *(b)* number of companies who have obtained more than one contract and *(c)* size of the contracts obtained. [28922]

Alun Michael: Not all Government Departments maintained detailed records in respect of their contracts during the voluntary phase of SBRI and so their breakdown requested is not available.

In the Budget on 16 March this year, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, mandated Departments to participate in the Small Business Research Initiative and the DTFs Small Business Service will shortly publish the overall performance figures. Where possible the report will give contract values and set out what these represent as a percentage of baseline R and D budgets for 2003–04 and 2004–05.

The Government is taking steps to improve disclosure of Small Business Research Initiative performance by Departments. A new system of record keeping will be in place from April 2006 and we intend that contract details such as have been requested will be available at the end of 2006–07.

Carbon Sequestration Technology

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to improve the use of carbon sequestration technology in the UK. [28486]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy which I announced in June this year includes a number of activities to encourage the development and deployment of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) also known as Carbon Sequestration technologies. Copies of the Strategy are available in the Libraries of the House.

These activities include support for R and D with some £4 million announced for R and D as part of the latest call for proposals under the Department's Technology Programme. Additionally I announced some £25 million from 2006–07 over 4 years for the demonstration of Carbon Abatement Technologies which includes Carbon Capture and Storage.

In his Budget Statement this year my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that we would look into the possibility of measures to encourage the deployment of CCS as part of the Climate Change Programme Review. We expect to announce the results of this when the Review is Published in the next few weeks.

A number of other activities identified in the Strategy are also being taken forward.

Clear Skies Programme

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many schools have applied for grants under the community stream of his Department's Clear Skies grant programme. [28657]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* 137 applications were made to Clear Skies from schools of which 71 were offered funding.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support from his Department will be available to school solar hot water and wind installations after the final funding round for Clear Skies community grants ends on 4 November. [28658]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* Further funding for schools will be available through a low carbon buildings programme, which will allow developers to chose the most appropriate technology for each project, including all those mentioned. We recently announced a budget of £30 million over three years for the new programme which will begin in April 2006, subject to EU State Aids approval. The Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the deadline was for community grant applications to the Clear Skies grant programme. [28672]

Malcolm Wicks: The final deadline for community applications to Clear Skies was 4 November

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grant support is available to community groups for *(a)* solar water heating, *(b)* wind, *(c)* hydro and *(d)* ground source heat pumps projects following the final deadline for community applications to his Department's Clear Skies programme. [28832]

Malcolm Wicks: Further funding for community groups will be available through the Low Carbon Buildings Programme for which we recently announced a budget of £30 million over three years. The new programme will allow developers to choose the most appropriate technology for each project, including all those mentioned above. The new programme will begin in April 2006, subject to EU State Aids approval. The Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the take-up to date has been by *(a)* home-owners and *(b)* community groups of funding for technologies supported under the Clear Skies Initiative for (i) solar water heating, (ii) wind, (iii) hydro, (iv) ground source heat pumps, (v) automated wood pellet stoves and (vi) wood fuel boilers. [28965]

Malcolm Wicks: Household applications under Clear Skies are as follows:

Technology	*Number applications*	*Number accepted*
Solar Thermal	6,393	5,342
Wind Turbines	184	159
Small Scale Hydro Turbines	15	13
Ground Source Heat Pumps	574	489
Biomass–Wood Fuelled Boilers	65	52
Biomass–Pellet Stoves	60	46
Total	7,291	6,101

Community grants supported by technology

	Number of installations/ technologies	*Proportion percentage*
Solar	187	35.66
Wind	65	19.00
Hydro	8	4.93
Heat Pumps	60	16.99
Biomass	65	23.42
	385	100.00
Total number of projects	333	
More than one technology	43	

Coal Health Schemes

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many legal firms his Department appointed to process compensation claims under the coal health schemes; and if he will make a statement. [27987]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not appoint solicitors, claimants choose their solicitor. To date there are 758 firms handling claims under the coal health schemes.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria his Department used in appointing legal firms to process compensation claims under the coal health schemes; and if he will make a statement. [27988]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not appoint solicitors, claimants choose their solicitor.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how his Department monitors the legal firms who have been appointed to process compensation claims under the coal health schemes; and if he will make a statement. [27989]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not appoint solicitors, claimants choose their solicitor. The Law Society is responsible for solicitors' conduct and has a Helpline (0845 608 6565) which claimants may contact with any complaints about individual firms of solicitors.

Competition Act

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether *(a)* the Office of Fair Trading and *(b)* other Government Departments consulted the Charity Commission on the impact of the Competition Act 1998 on charities; and what advice the Charity Commission has given on the information-sharing provisions in the Act. [27252]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Prior to the entry into force of the Competition Act 1998 in March 2000, the OFT issued detailed guidelines on the Act and its impact. These guidelines were the subject of extensive public consultation. There is no record of a response to the consultation from the Charity Commission.

Consumer Direct

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry approximately how many hits a week the website Consumer Direct gets; approximately how many consumer complaints are submitted to the website each week; and which five items consumers have most frequently made complaints about in the last three months. [28917]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Consumer Direct has a telephone helpline as well as an online service, which is operational in Scotland, Wales, and six English regions. The service will be available throughout Great Britain in March 2006. On a weekly basis the website receives approximately 8,722 hits a week, and on average 163 complaint forms are submitted. Approximately 20,000 calls a week and 13,000 new cases are received on the telephone helpline. In the last three months the most frequently complained about consumer goods were:

	Complaints
Home maintenance and improvements	11,909
Second hand cars	9,874
Furniture	8,454
Telecommunications	8,155
Audio visual	6,065

Draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations on the provision of flexible retirement ages by private businesses; [28474]

(2) what advice his Department has provided to businesses about the operation of flexible retirement ages in relation to the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations. [28475]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations introduce a new statutory right for employees to request working beyond their employers' compulsory retirement age, if there is one. Employers will have a duty to consider such requests seriously. The "Coming of Age" consultation document that we published on 14 July explained that:

"The statutory request by the employee is to continue working under the same terms and conditions as had applied up to the retirement date. However, there is nothing to prevent the

employee proposing, or the employer suggesting, a different working pattern that might suit them both better. Neither side will be obliged to accept proposals for change."

We have asked ACAS to produce good practice guidance on the regulations, which will be published when the regulations have been approved by Parliament.

We believe that the new "duty to consider" procedure will help ensure a constructive discussion about options for retirement that will help accelerate the necessary culture change.

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under what circumstances an individual forced to retire over the age of 65 will be able to appeal on grounds of age discrimination under the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations. [28476]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The dismissal of an employee at or over the age of 65 will not contravene the regulations if the reason for the dismissal is retirement.

Employees will be able to appeal if they believe that the employer has not carried out the new "duty to consider" procedure correctly in connection with requests to work beyond a compulsory retirement age. Employees can also challenge a compulsory retirement they believe to be dismissal for some other reason. The consultation on the draft regulations closed on 17 October. We are considering what changes we need to make to the regulations in the light of those responses.

Economic Cycles

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the relative responsiveness to the natural economic cycle of distribution and manufacturing. [27291]

Alun Michael: Analysis of data over the last twenty years shows that the output of the manufacturing sector has tended to behave more cyclically than the economy as a whole, and that the distributive sectors have experienced a similar strength of cycle to that in the economy as a whole. One reason for manufacturing having a stronger cycle is that it is very dependent on world demand, and thus affected by external shocks.

These findings should be seen against the substantial improvement in macroeconomic stability in the economy as a whole in recent years. In the period since 1997 UK GDP growth has been more stable than any other G7 country. By contrast, in the period 1979–1996 growth in the UK was the most volatile in the G7, with the exception of Canada.

Electricity

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment has been made of the costs associated with being able to provide for future maximum winter electricity demand as a consequence of *(a)* providing for a strengthened and expanded national grid and *(b)* decentralising energy supplies; [27850]

(2) what assessment he has made of the relative costs of meeting peak winter demand for electricity through *(a)* the provision of extra capacity within the national grid and *(b)* the decentralisation of energy supply. [27852]

Malcolm Wicks: Assessments of this nature are for market participants to make. National grid publish information on their electricity demand forecasts in their seven year statement to assist such assessments.

Emissions Targets

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the merits of a waiver of fines for breaching limits on carbon dioxide emissions in the event of a cold winter; and what assessment he has made of *(a)* the potential for a breach of carbon dioxide emissions targets, in the event of a cold winter a shortfall of gas supplies and *(b)* options to ensure security of supply. [28508]

Malcolm Wicks: There are no regulatory limits on carbon dioxide emissions. The EU Emissions Trading Scheme requires participants to produce carbon allowances equal to their emissions on an annual basis. Under the rules of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme Directive, the Government allocates a number of allowances to installations free of charge. If an installation emits a high level of carbon at one time, it can either purchase additional allowances to cover that or reduce its carbon emissions at other times so as to remain within its existing free allocation for the year or to sell allowances. The scheme therefore does not place any constraint on fuel switching in the event of temporary tightness in the gas supply market, whether due to a cold winter or other cause. The Government has no intention of waiving the requirements of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

National Grid's Winter Outlook Report, published by Ofgem on 5 October and available at http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/12493_214_05.pdf sets out their assessment of gas supply and demand for the coming winter.

The Government believe that security of supply is best achieved through a liberalised, competitive market in which market participants have every commercial incentive to ensure that supply meets demand and price signals provide the most effective and efficient means of enabling them to do so. The Government and Ofgem work continually with National Grid and with Ofgem to find ways of improving the operation of the market, for example through the provision of better and more timely information and through tackling potential regulatory barriers.

Employment Regulations

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely effect of the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations on the pay of under 21-year-olds. [28454]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are satisfied that the national minimum wage age bands are entirely consistent with the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations.

Energy Costs

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the impact of increased energy costs on British manufacturing companies. [28480]

Malcolm Wicks: The impact of increased energy costs on British manufacturing companies will depend on a variety of factors, including how much gas and/or electricity a particular company uses, the degree of their exposure to spot and/or forward prices, and the duration of the high prices. The impact on their competitiveness will also be affected by the energy prices paid by their competitors, both in the UK and internationally.

Several representative trade associations, such as the Engineering Employers Federation and the British Plastics Federation have made assessments of the impact of increased energy costs on their members. The Department is working with the Energy Intensive Users Group and Ofgem through the Gas Prices Working Group to develop ideas for improving the operation of the forward market and ways to mitigate the effects of high forward gas prices. The group has agreed an Action List of short to medium term measures, such as maximising UK gas supplies, encouraging demand side response and pursuing energy market liberalisation in the EU.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with *(a)* Cabinet colleagues and *(b)* major UK oil and gas producers concerning the mitigation of the impact of rising energy prices on low-income households. [28492]

Malcolm Wicks: I discuss aspects of energy policy, including tackling fuel poverty, with ministerial colleagues as appropriate. Businesses benefit from corporate social responsibility programmes, and I have encouraged companies in the energy sector to consider low-income households in developing such programmes. It is for individual companies to devise their own corporate social responsibility measures.

European Institute of Technology

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether the UK Government will support European Commission proposals for the establishment of a European Institute of Technology; [26198]

(2) what discussions he has had with the European Commission on establishing a European Institute of Technology; [26199]

(3) whether the UK Government would support a bid from Scottish universities to host all or part of the European Institute of Technology. [26200]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* The European Commission is currently conducting a consultation on the idea of setting up an European Institute of Technology. I have not had any discussions with the Commission on this issue, but I am clear that any further proposals must result in adding value to European universities—boosting excellence and ensuring Europe is prepared to respond to the challenge of globalisation. We do not however believe that establishing a bricks and mortar institution would be appropriate, but clearly we will want to ensure that universities throughout the UK are well placed to take advantage of whatever eventually emerges from the Commission. The UK response to the Commission's consultation will be submitted shortly and a copy will be placed in the House Libraries.

Export and Investment Guarantees Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the operation of the Export and Investment Guarantees Act 1991. [28274]

Ian Pearson: The Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) is the UK's export credit agency. It is a Department of State whose existence and powers are governed by the Export and Investment Guarantees Act 1991. Its core statutory powers are to facilitate the export of goods and services from the United Kingdom and to insure specified risks on overseas investments made by United Kingdom entities.

Details of the Department's operations are published in its annual review and resource accounts, which are laid before Parliament every year and can be found on ECGD's website at www.ecgd.gov.uk/index/pr_home/pi_ar.htm.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library the response made by the Export Credits Guarantee Agency to the Berne Union Survey on Agent's Commissions, published in April. [28660]

Ian Pearson: I have placed copies of the Export Credits Guarantee Department's response to the Berne Union Survey on Agent's Commissions in the Libraries of the House.

Fireworks

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many injuries resulting from fireworks there have been in *(a)* Norfolk, *(b)* the East of England, *(c)* England and *(d)* the United Kingdom in each of the last five years. [28039]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The fireworks injury statistics for these years are as follows:

	Firework injuries
(a) Norfolk	not available
(b) East of England	
2004	112
2003	77
2002	71
2001	not available
2000	not available
(c) England	
2004	1,021
2003	974
2002	833
2001	1,208
2000	849

	Firework injuries
(d) United Kingdom	
2004	1,160
2003	1,136
2002	1,017
2001	1,362
2000	972

Statistics for the United Kingdom are for England, Scotland and Wales only. Northern Ireland is not included.

Gas Supplies

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government continue to regard Iran as a potential supplier of gas to the United Kingdom. [28397]

Malcolm Wicks: With a share of over 15 per cent. of the world's proven reserves of natural gas, Iran has the potential to become an increasingly important gas producer. Whether Iranian gas might at some point in the future supply the UK market would depend on Iranian production and export policies, and be a matter for commercial operators who have every incentive to make their own assessment of the merits of supplies from different countries.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to identify *(a)* which businesses are likely to be most affected by a shortfall in gas supplies and *(b)* the impact of any shortfall on such businesses; what measures his Department is considering to address such concerns; and if he will make a statement. [28677]

Malcolm Wicks: In the event of a shortfall in gas supplies the Government expect gas demand to reduce itself in response to rising prices. Which companies choose to reduce their gas consumption in this way is a matter for themselves and will depend on such matters as the terms of their gas supply contracts and their own individual cost structures. In previous years, the electricity supply industry has routinely responded in this way to seasonally higher gas prices, switching electricity production to coal-fired and other generating stations instead, and this sector would be expected to respond in the same way this year. This is described in detail in National Grid's Winter Outlook Report, published by Ofgem on 5 October and available at www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/12493_214_05.pdf.

In addition, the Government commissioned a report from Global Insight earlier this year to consider the likely response from other industrial sectors. This is available at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/publications/policy/industrial_demand_responde.pdf. Work is currently under way jointly with industry to update the conclusions of that work in the light of developments over the summer.

The Government and Ofgem have worked with large industrial users of gas through a Demand Side Working Group and through a Gas Prices Working Group to consider ways of facilitating the operation of the market, particularly on the demand side, and mitigating the impact of higher gas prices. Outputs of that work include the launch of a new website providing near real-time information about supply and demand in the gas market and the introduction of a Gas Balancing Alert notifying market participants when the supply-demand balance is likely to be tight. The Government are also aware of innovative work by market participants themselves to develop instruments to encourage demand side response on a commercial basis.

MG Rover

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date his Department's inspectors' report on MG Rover will be published. [28013]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The inspectors have not completed their enquiries and so have not yet submitted their report to my right hon. Fiend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Whilst the investigation is making good progress I am unable to say when the report will be submitted. The Secretary of State will then consider publication.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public funding has been allocated to tackle issues related to the collapse of MG Rover to date, broken down by main cost area; and what estimate he has made of the cost of administration of MG Rover by PricewaterhouseCoopers to date. [28311]

Ian Pearson: The main areas of public funding allocated to tackle issues related to the collapse of MG Rover have been:

1. Support Package

The Government announced a £150 million package of support following the collapse of Rover on 15 April:

up to £50 million for training for workers made redundant at MG Rover and suppliers (£25 million of new money from the DTI, DWP and European Social Fund and priority access to £25 million from the Employer Training Pilots for companies affected by MG Rover in the West Midlands and nationally; and support for people wanting to start businesses);

over £40 million to cover redundancy payments and protective awards for Longbridge workers;

£24 million for the MG Rover Task Force, including £15 million to establish a loan fund to help otherwise viable businesses affected by MG Rover's collapse and £9 million for other purposes; and

£41.6 million already made available for MG Rover suppliers.

2. RDA Investment

In addition, Advantage West Midlands is making an investment of £42 million for the redevelopment of the Longbridge site and the establishment of a technology park there together with a grant of £19.3 million to Warwick Manufacturing Group's International Automotive Research Centre.

3. Loan to Administrators

The Government made a £6.5 million loan to the administrators to sustain the company (i.e. to allow wages and other expenses to be paid) for a week in order to provide a short breathing space to assist the administrators to look quickly at any prospect of selling part or all of the companies as a going concern and to enable the position of the workforce to be resolved in an orderly manner.

4. Company Inspection

In addition, on 31 May 2005 the Secretary of State appointed inspectors to investigate issues raised by the Financial Reporting Review Panel in their report and developments after 2003. The total costs of both inspectors as at the end of September are £1.6 million. The accountant inspector has a team of junior staff working for him, retrieving, copying, logging and analysing documents. The costs are inherently front loaded because of the need to obtain the records and financial information at the outset. Whilst it is always difficult to predict the length of inspections both the Secretary of State and the inspectors are intent on completing this inspection as quickly as possible, with due regard to the fairness procedures, and to the thoroughness of the task.

5. PWC costs

PWC report to the company creditors on the joint administrators remuneration costs. The latest (six month) report showed PWC's costs as £5.6 million for MG Rover Group Ltd and £1 million for Powertrain Ltd. There will be additional costs for some of the other companies in administration.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total estimated costs are of the investigation commissioned by his Department into the collapse of MG Rover; and what the expected timetable is for completing this work. [28683]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The total costs of both inspectors as at the end of September are £1.6 million. The accountant inspector has a team of junior staff working for him, retrieving, copying, logging and analysing documents. The costs of the inspection are inherently front loaded because of the need to obtain the records and financial information at the outset. While it is always difficult to predict the length of inspections both the Secretary of State and the inspectors are intent on completing this inspection as quickly as possible, with due regard to the fairness procedures, and to the thoroughness of the task.

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what studies he has commissioned into the impact of *(a)* contractualisation and *(b)* privatisation on the British nuclear industry; and if he will make a statement. [28027]

Malcolm Wicks: None.

Office of Fair Trading

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff hours the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has devoted to its inquiry into fees at independent schools; how the schools being investigated were selected for inclusion in the inquiry; and what proportion of the OFT's staff has been involved in the inquiry. [26993]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The information is as follows:

(i) The OFT informs me that it does not have figures that differentiate costs between cases pre-dating the launch of its dedicated time recording systems on 1 April 2004. The investigation into independent school fees commenced in June 2003. The figures available show that the hours worked by staff in the OFT's Competition Enforcement Division on the investigation since 1 April 2004 are approximately 5354. These figures are the direct costs recorded by staff in the OFT's Competition Enforcement Division and do not include time spent by specialists in the OFT's Legal Division or the OFT's economic advice team in its Markets and Policy Initiatives Division.

(ii) The OFT's investigation concerns the exchange of confidential information amongst fee paying independent schools relating to their intended fee increases and fee levels. The OFT has focused its investigation on those schools involved in the survey known as the "Sevenoaks survey". Further information is contained in a press notice that was issued by the OFT on 9 November 2005 which is available on the OFT website:

www.oft.gov.uk/News/Press = = releases/2005/214

(iii) Save at the very outset, when the investigation was led by a single Principal Investigation Officer, the investigation has at any one time been led by two Principal Case Officers with support, as required, from other staff within the OFT's Competition Directorate Enforcement Division and from the OFT's Legal Division and the economic advice team in its Markets and Policy Initiatives Division. The case has also had up to three paralegal temporary staff employed at any one time to assist with the organisation of the 13,000 plus documents on the OFT's file, to which the parties have a right of access and from which confidential information must be redacted.

The level of resources dedicated to the case is in proportion to the staff resources the OFT's Competition Enforcement Division dedicates to dealing with cases of this size under the Competition Act 1998. The Division has 156 dedicated staff, including 66 Principal Case Officers.

Packaging

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from the packaging industry requesting a *(a)* review of and *(b)* changes to the Supermarkets Code of Practice with Suppliers; and if he will make a statement. [28489]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* I have received a number of representations concerning the supermarkets code form a range of stakeholders. The Department currently handles around 50,000 letters a year and approximately 200,000 emails, but that a further breakdown in the form requested is not available.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received calling for *(a)* taxes and *(b)* bans on specific packaging material and products; and if he will make a statement. [28490]

Malcolm Wicks: None. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not received representations calling for either of these things in relation to packaging material and products.

Pakistan

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will use their EU presidency to press for Pakistan following the earthquake to be given at least the same trade concessions that were given to the tsunami-affected countries. [27471]

Ian Pearson: To help the tsunami-affected countries, there was an attempt to bring forward the commencement date of the new Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) to 1 April 2005 from 1 January 2006. Unfortunately agreement could not be reached at the EU General Affairs External Relations Council on 16 March 2005 to do this (because of differences between member states over the graduation threshold for textiles and clothing). However despite this effort to bring forward the new scheme, the tsunami-affected countries were always set to benefit from the new GSP scheme which will come into force from 1 January 2006.

Sri Lanka, however, has benefited from the introduction of a new GSP Plus scheme which has been in place since 1 July 2005. It was the only tsunami-affected country to meet the criteria for this scheme.

Pension Reform

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he was first informed that he would be responsible for public sector pensions reform. [25163]

Alan Johnson: I was first informed of this responsibility in mid-March 2005.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry from which Departments officials who accompanied him to meetings with trade union representatives to discuss public sector pensions reform came. [25198]

Alan Johnson: I was accompanied to those meetings by officials representing employer Departments (DfES, DH, Cabinet Office and ODPM), policy officials from HMT and Cabinet Office and a DTI Private Secretary and Special Adviser.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list *(a)* the dates of and *(b)* those present at meetings attended by him to discuss public sector pensions reform with trade union representatives. [25199]

Alan Johnson: *(a)* I attended meetings on 31 March, 22 June, 11 and 26 July and 17 and 18 October.

(b) Representatives of the TUC, UNISON, PCS/CCSU, Amicus, SCP, NATFHE, GMB, T and G, ATL and TGWU were present at these meetings. My right hon. Friend, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office and my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth also attended, together with officials representing employer Departments (DfES, DH, Cabinet Office and ODPM), policy officials from HMT and Cabinet Office and a DTI Private Secretary and DTI Special Adviser. Different combinations of these people were present at the various meetings: not everyone attended every meeting.

Phoenix Development Fund

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many initiatives in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield District and *(c)* Normanton constituency have been awarded funding from the Phoenix Development Fund; and if he will extend funding to encourage the growth of more social enterprises in disadvantaged communities. [28260]

Alun Michael: The Phoenix Development Fund has awarded funding to six projects in West Yorkshire. One of those projects covered the Wakefield district; none covered the Normanton constituency.

Business Support activities and funding for social enterprises, and other disadvantaged communities, is part of the new remit of regional development agencies, who best understand the needs of their communities.

Post Offices

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions his Department and Postcomm have had with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and local authorities regarding supporting the rural Post Office network; and if he will make a statement. [28664]

Barry Gardiner: DTI Ministers and officials meet with colleagues across Government, including those in Defra and the Local Government Association on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of issues relating to the Post Office network, including the future of the rural network.

I have asked the Chief Executive of Postcomm to respond directly to the hon. Member on any discussions it has had with Defra and local authorities.

Power Supply (Dacorum)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the quality of power supply to businesses and homes in Dacorum. [27824]

Malcolm Wicks: Any concerns regarding the quality of power supplies should be directed in the first instance to the appropriate electricity provider. Further concerns should be directed to Energywatch, the independent body for electricity and gas consumers.

Nationally, I am aware that statistics from national grid show that transmission (high voltage) network reliability has improved from 99.9989 per cent. between 1995–2000 to 99.9992 per cent. from 2000–05. The reliability of the distribution networks in Britain has also improved, with power cuts down by 11 per cent. since privatisation.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the difference in the radioactive longevity of *(a)* radioactive waste arising from irradiated thermal oxide pressurised water reactor nuclear fuel and *(b)* mixed plutonium-uranium oxide fuel. [24641]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has made no such assessment but I am advised that recent studies by Nexia Solutions on comparison of this nature showed that the radio toxicity of irradiated MOX starts off higher compared to irradiated uranium oxide fuel. This is because MOX incorporates plutonium removed from a store and the residual mass of plutonium at discharge from the reactor is higher. However, for a meaningful comparison, it is prudent to compare the radio toxicity of irradiated MOX fuel against that of irradiated

uranium oxide fuel combined with stored plutonium. This more meaningful comparison shows that the radio toxicity of irradiated MOX starts off higher than irradiated uranium oxide/stored plutonium until after 1,000 years when the radio toxicity of the irradiated MOX falls below that of the irradiated uranium oxide/ stored plutonium.

REACH Proposals

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations he has received on the application of REACH proposals to the UK minerals industry, broken down by those *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing its application; and if he will make a statement. [28761]

Barry Gardiner: The Government have received a number of representations from different parts of industry, including the minerals sector, as well as from many other stakeholders on the proposed REACH regulation (registration, evaluation and authorisation of chemicals). These included responses to the UK's public consultation last year.

Engagement with all interested stakeholders has been central to the Government's development of policy on the REACH regulation, and the representations made have been taken into account as far as possible in refining successive drafts of the regulation.

There is general support from stakeholders for the regulation's objectives of enhancing protection of human health and the environment, and rationalising the existing fragmented regulatory regime. The detailed scrutiny given to the regulation over the last two years is now close to conclusion, and includes clarification of certain exemptions that have been welcomed by the minerals industry. The Government believe the final outcome will enable the REACH regulation to achieve its objectives in a way that helps maintain industry competitiveness.

Red Diesel

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the price is of red diesel for agricultural use; and what it was in *(a)* 1975, *(b)* 1980, *(c)* 1990 and *(d)* 2000. [29011]

Malcolm Wicks: The price of red diesel for agricultural use in 1975, 1980, 1990 and 2000 is given in the following table.

	Price (pence per litre)
1975	5.7
1980	15.8
1990	17.0
2000	23.9

Regional Development Agencies

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make the spending plans of regional development agencies more accessible and transparent. [28530]

Alun Michael: The spending plans of England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are set out in their corporate plans for the period 2005 to 2008. The RDAs consulted widely with all interested parties about the development of their corporate plans and have published the plans on their websites. The RDAs will also publish on their websites six monthly progress reports on the delivery of their corporate plan commitments.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the regional development agencies have paid to businesses *(a)* in 2005 and *(b)* in the previous three years in respect of research and development grants, broken down into (i) amounts paid to small and medium sized businesses and (ii) amounts paid to large sized businesses. [28639]

Alun Michael: I have asked each Regional Development Agency to provide me with the relevant information about the region's activities. I will write to the hon. Gentleman when I have the necessary information and place a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what formal co-ordination takes place *(a)* between the overseas offices of the regional development agencies and *(b)* between the regional development agencies and UK Trade and Investment to attract inbound investment into the UK; how frequently consultation takes place and at what level; and if he will make a statement. [28921]

Alun Michael: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) overseas offices systematically hold regular in-country meetings, collectively and individually with RDA overseas offices. Frequency varies from country to country. Meetings include an annual peer review and systematic bilateral exchanges of pursuit lists to maximise effectiveness in attracting inward investment.

Renewable Energy

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to ensure continuity of grant support to *(a)* school and *(b)* other community facilities for (i) wind, (ii) solar hot water, (iii) hydro, (iv) biomass and (v) ground source heat pump projects. [28514]

Malcolm Wicks: A new Low Carbon Buildings Programme will continue to offer grant support to school and community projects once the current Clear Skies Programme comes to an end. The new programme, for which we recently announced a budget of £30 million over the years, will begin in April 2006, subject to EU state aids approval. The Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimates he has made of the average Government funding per annum for *(a)* 2002 to 2006 and *(b)* 2006 to 2009 for (i) the micro-renewables sector as a whole, (ii) the solar photovoltaic programme and (iii) the micro-renewable technologies hitherto supported by the Clear Skies initiative. [28834]

Malcolm Wicks: Both the solar photovoltaics (PV) programme and Clear Skies run until March 2006. The PV programme had a budget of £31 million from 2002–06.

The Clear Skies programme had a budget of £12.5 million from 2003–06. The new low carbon buildings programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years. It will start in April 2006 subject to EU State Aids clearance. £1 5 million of the £30 million budget has been brought forward to ensure a smooth transition between the old programmes and the new one to address industry concerns of a potential funding gap.

Research and Development

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the performance of companies which rely heavily on investment in research and development in the last four years; and if he will make a statement. [25432]

Alun Michael: On 24 October the Department of Trade and Industry published the 15th annual R and D Scoreboard. This gives financial information about the top 1,000 global companies by R and D investment and the top 750 UK-based companies by R and D investment.

Despite an overall fall of 0.5 per cent. in the R and D reported by UK-based companies from 2004, the 2005 R and D Scoreboard contains encouraging signs of growth in UK R and D-intensive companies. There were 7 per cent. more ""R and D vigorous" firms (those with R and D spending of at least 4 per cent. of sales and over £l million) than in the previous year, and 32 per cent. more than in 2001. And there was a 77 per cent. increase in middle-sized, very R and D intensive companies with R and D intensity of over 10 per cent. substantial R and D of over £6.4 million and sales of over £26 million.

Details of the Scoreboard are available from http://www.innovation.gov.uk/rd_scoreboard/

Social Enterprises

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much government funding social enterprises in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency (i) have received in the 2005–06 financial year and (ii) received in 2004–05. [28246]

Alun Michael: DTI sees social enterprise as a key element in delivery of the enterprise agenda, and a specific social enterprise day this week as part of Enterprise Week has helped to make this point in Yorkshire and elsewhere.

Yorkshire Forward, as the regional development agency for Yorkshire and the Humber, has provided the following investment to support the Social Enterprise sector's development across West Yorkshire. This is being delivered through W.Y.S.E. Link, (a partnership between Business Link West Yorkshire and the Social Enterprise Support Centre) to deliver tailored support to social enterprises and grow the sector.

2003–04: £1,080,337

2004–05: £1,549,634

Information is not available at district or constituency level.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new jobs have been created through social enterprise in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency since 1997. [28259]

Alun Michael: A total of 421 jobs have been created in West Yorkshire, including 24 in Wakefield, according to figures provided by W.Y.S.E Link which is a partnership between Business Link West Yorkshire and the Social Enterprise Support Centre. It's purpose is to deliver tailored support to social enterprises and grow the sector. It is supported jointly by Yorkshire Forward as the regional development agency to the region and Business Link West Yorkshire.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage the growth of social enterprises in the most deprived areas of Wakefield district, with particular reference to Normanton constituency. [28261]

Alun Michael: The continued development of the social enterprise sector across the region remains a key priority for Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency for Yorkshire and the Humber. Yorkshire Forward recognises the unique potential of social enterprises to stimulate economic regeneration and business growth in some of our more deprived areas.

As a result, providing support for the social enterprise sector is a key priority within the consultation draft of the revised regional economic strategy, and via its corporate plan, Yorkshire Forward has committed to working with partners to mainstream social enterprise support within the Business Link brokerage networks—something that is already well established within West Yorkshire via WYSE Link, a partnership between Business Link West Yorkshire and the Social Enterprise Support Centre to deliver tailored support to social enterprises and grow the sector.

In addition, Yorkshire Forward is one of the key partners in the Social Economy Development Framework for Yorkshire and Humber, and 'Onwards and Outwards—an investment plan for social enterprise for Yorkshire and Humber 2004 to 2014'.

As part of this region-wide commitment, Yorkshire Forward has already invested over £1.5 million in WYSE Link, and has recently made an additional investment of some £5.7 million to further expand WYSE Link's provision up to March 2009. This ongoing support will help to ensure that social enterprises across West Yorkshire continue to receive a comprehensive and expert business support service.

Support is available across West Yorkshire and is not available at constituency or district level.

In addition the Yorkshire and the Humber European Objective 2 programme has also recently developed a specific measure aimed at social enterprises. The total amount of funding available is £6 million ERDF which, with matched funds, should deliver £15 million worth of

assistance by 2008. So far one project has been approved in West Yorkshire, based in Wakefield, which will assist 35 social enterprises.

In 2005, all local authorities in receipt of neighbourhood renewal funding have been invited to apply for funding under the local growth initiative, LEGI, to promote and remove barriers to enterprise in the most deprived areas in England. Those authorities have been given between £80,000 and £120,000 pump priming funds, to help with the development of their proposals. Entry is through a three year rolling programme of annual competitions. Successful applicants will receive anything from £2 million to £10 million, available from five to 10 years.

Solar Photovoltaics Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department has taken to implement the Government's White Paper commitments to a 2002 to 2012 UK solar photovoltaics programme. [28669]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has supported photovoltaics since 2002 through the 31 million Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme. We plan to continue its support for photovoltaics and other building scale renewables through a low carbon buildings programme, which is currently under development. The new programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years. It will start in April 2006 subject to EU State Aids clearance.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department has taken to implement the *(a)* 2001 Opportunities for All and *(b)* 2003 Energy White Paper commitments to a 10 year solar photovoltaics programme. [28833]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has supported Photovoltaics since 2002 through the £31 million Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme. We plan to continue its support for Photovoltaics and other building scale renewables through a low carbon buildings programme, which is currently under development. The new programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years. It will start in April 2006 subject to EU State Aids clearance.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the take-up to date has been by *(a)* home-owners and *(b)* community groups of the funding for photovoltaics under the Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme. [28966]

Malcolm Wicks: Under the Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme the number of projects offered grants under each stream are as follows:

(a) 1,551, of which 29 were rejected

(b) 213

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing a similar system to the German feed-in tariff for solar photovoltaics in the UK. [27404]

Malcolm Wicks: We believe for the UK that it would not be right to set a price for exported electricity. To do so would risk distorting the electricity supply market and would be incompatible with the liberalised arrangements for the UK electricity market and the market for renewable electricity provided by the Renewables Obligation. The framework underpinning our competitive energy markets was established to provide market-based solutions to our energy needs. Intervention by the Government to the extent of setting a price for exported electricity would be an unwarranted intervention that could have adverse effects on the confidence and certainty our liberal framework provides for investors.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on private sector investment in the UK solar photovoltaics industry of his Department's decision to develop a technology-blind low carbon buildings programme. [27405]

Malcolm Wicks: The Renewable Innovation Review, February 2004, recommended a more holistic approach to energy use in buildings incorporating both energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. It recommended taking this forward through a technology blind, capital grant based, low carbon buildings programme and this is what we intend to do. A budget of £30 million over three years for the programme was announced on 2 November. It will be launched in April 2006 subject to EU state aids clearance.

The new programme and the wider micro generation strategy currently under development will aim to introduce further measures to help develop a sustainable market for solar PV as well as all the buildings renewable technologies.

Sunday Trading

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the recently commissioned review of extension of Sunday trading; and if he will make a statement. [28685]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department is in the process of commissioning research into the liberalisation of Sunday Trading. We expect the work to be completed in March, when we will publish the results.

Telephone Preference Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions enforcement action has been taken against companies for acting in breach of telephone preference service rules in each of the last five years. [20955]

Alun Michael: The Information Commissioner, who has responsibility for the enforcement of the Telephone Preference Service scheme, initially warns companies informally that it will initiate formal action unless they cease to make calls to numbers registered with the Telephone Preference Service. The Commissioner tells me that this approach has been effective to date without the need for formal action, but that he will have no

hesitation in using the powers of this office if there is any evidence of a failure to comply with a warning.

Trade Missions (India)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many trade missions to India involving businessmen have been sponsored by his Department in each of the last five years. [25730]

Ian Pearson [holding answer 7 November 2005]: UK Trade and Investment's Support for Seminars and Exhibitions Abroad Scheme (SESA) supported 27 companies on sectoral missions to India in 2004–05. UKTI Forecast that 76 companies will go on SESA supported sectoral missions to India in 2005–06.

The outward Mission Scheme, which ceased on 31 March, supported 52 companies on horizontal missions to India in 2004–05. Horizontal missions are now organised and run independently by the regions. Data for the years prior to, and post 2004–05 is held in a variety of locations and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Tyres

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many tyres were *(a)* purchased, *(b)* reused and *(c)* disposed of to (i) landfill, (ii) incineration, (iii) illegal fly-tipping and (iv) other means in each year since 2001. [27795]

Malcolm Wicks: Statistics on replacement tyre sales are provided by the British Rubber Manufacturers' Association and the Imported Tyre Manufacturers' Association. These sources represent the majority of activity in this sector, but there are other routes to market and the figures should therefore be viewed as indicative. A similar caution applies to the information relating to used tyre disposal and recovery, which DTI compiles on behalf of the used tyre working group.

Replacement tyre sales

	Units	*Tonnes*
2001	24,870,298	234,250
2002	25,485,101	240,000
2003	26,570,720	248,250

A figure for total used tyre arisings also needs to take account of various reuse tyres, not included in the previous figures, including retreads and part-worns, tyres on end of life vehicles and imports of used tyres.

Used tyre arisings	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Units	52,832,000	47,169,500	46,662,000
Tonnes	481,500	447,000	444,000
Tonnes			
Reused	117,650	105,100	113,400
Energy recovery	40,000	48,000	77,500
Other recovery	132,850	147,400	174,500
Total	290,500	300,500	365,400

Information covering 2004 and the first six months of 2005 is expected to be available in early December. Figures already received covering 2004 show that the overall used tyre recovery performance has continued to improve.

Tyres disposed of to landfill arise from two principal channels, retail outlets and end of life vehicles (ELVs). In the former case, figures show a sharp drop from over 87,000 tonnes in 2001 to under 30,000 tonnes in 2003. In the latter ELV a figure of 57,000 tonnes has remained constant for a number of years on the basis that all ELV tyres not reused as part-worns or retreads are disposed to landfill. DTI, together with the Environment Agency, has commissioned a survey of landfill operators to cover 2004 and the first six months of 2005 to establish more accurately the volume of tyres disposed to landfill.

Tyre fly-tipping takes a number of forms, including those dealt with by landowners and local authorities, and those tyres dumped on the forecourts of tyre retail premises. No national data were collected before Defra and the Environment Agency set up the flycapture database in April 2004. English Waste Collection Authorities reported 23,046 incidents of fly-tipped tyres between April 2004 and March 2005. From April 2005 to September 2005 11,440 incidents were reported. The Environment Agency dealt with 280 incidents in 2004–05 and 77 so far in this financial year.

Wind Farms

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date building is expected to commence of the windfarm off Scarweather Sands. [28100]

Malcolm Wicks: The date building will commence at Scarweather Sands is not a matter for the Department but is a matter for the developer.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 17 November 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Offshore Wind Turbines

10. **Helen Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on tackling climate change through increasing the level of electricity generated by offshore wind turbines; and if she will make a statement. [29240]

Margaret Beckett: I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on sustainable energy issues, both as part of the Climate Change Programme review process, and our involvement in the Sustainable Energy Policy Network. This includes the development of renewable generating capacity including offshore wind.

Biodiesel

14. **David Mundell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has commissioned research into the effects of biodiesel power generation. [29245]

Mr. Bradshaw: There has been a lot of research into the benefits of biodiesel. We announced last week that 5 per cent. of all UK road transport fuel will have to come from a renewable source by 2010. The benefits of biodiesel in power generation are less obvious because it is more efficient to use biomass.

Energy Consumption

19. **Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she has taken to reduce energy consumption in her Department. [29251]

Jim Knight: Energy use is closely monitored and site-specific benchmarks are set for all but the smallest sites. Energy audits and remedial action are triggered for sites above benchmark. We are working with the Carbon Trust to identify scope for significant energy and carbon savings over the entire DEFRA and Executive agency estate.

Fish Stocks

20. **Mr. MacDougall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to protect fish stocks in UK waters; and if she will make a statement. [29252]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are working to ensure depleted stocks are not over-exploited, while maximising catching opportunities for our fishing industry where this is justified.

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by her Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24464]

Jim Knight: Of the helplines operated by the core Department only the Pet Travel Scheme Helpline operates a 0870 telephone number (0870 241 1710). This has been available to members of the public since late 1999. No revenue has been received from the use of this number.

Animal Snares

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ban the *(a)* sale, *(b)* manufacture and *(c)* use of animal snares; and if she will make a statement. [27651]

Jim Knight: The Government considers that where there is a need for wildlife management then the proper use of snares is one of a range of control methods. Used according to best practice, snares can be an effective and practical means of wildlife management and are needed where other forms of pest control are ineffective or impractical. In these circumstances snares restrain rather than kill and may prove to be more humane than other methods. If snares were to be banned entirely it may encourage the use of more dangerous and illegal alternatives such as poisons.

The Government is also committed to working to improve the legal use of snares. Following an informal consultation on snares and traps and their use carried out in 2003 Defra convened an independent snares working group chaired by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare. The working group was given a remit of producing a good practice guide and advising Defra on next steps on improving the use of snares. On 18 October we published the working group's report together with the Defra Snares Action Plan and the Defra Code of Good Practice on the use of Snares in Fox and Rabbit Control in England. These documents can be found at: http://www.Defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/snares/index.htm

Bee Hive Inspection

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts about EU proposals to restrict inspection of bee hives to veterinary surgeons. [27093]

Jim Knight: The Department is not aware of any EU proposals to restrict the inspection of bee hives to veterinary surgeons nor has it entered into discussion with other member states on this subject.

Bee Keeping/Research

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent estimate she has made of the annual value of the bee keeping industry to the *(a)* agricultural and *(b)* horticultural industries. [26965]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The most recent assessment of the economic value of beekeeping in England was undertaken by ADAS Consulting Ltd in 2001. The report can be found on the bee health pages of the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/hort/bees/econ-eval.htm. It estimated the value of pollination by bees of commercial crops at around £118 million p.a., with agricultural crops (oilseed rape) accounting for £11 million and horticulture (beans, top and soft fruit) for £107 million of this total respectively. The researchers excluded protected cropping, such as glasshouse-grown tomatoes, as honey bees are rarely used for pollination of these crops.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the planned funding is for the National Bee Unit at the Central Science Laboratories at York; and what funding has been allocated to the unit in 2005–06; [26899]

(2) if she will increase investment in the National Bee Inspectorate. [26966]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Department's expenditure with the National Bee Unit, which includes the field force of the Bee Health Inspectorate, is £1.235 million in 2005–06. Funding will remain at this level until 2007–08. Future funding and investment in the unit and the inspectorate will be considered with other areas of the Department's work as expenditure plans for future years are developed.

Beef

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her planned measures to help the English beef market. [25305]

Jim Knight: My noble Friend, the Minister for Food and Farming (Lord Bach), chaired a meeting of key industry stakeholders on 14 October to consider the issues currently facing the beef industry. A detailed report is contained in Defra Press Release number 450/05 issued on 14 October.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the countries which permit import of UK beef; and how much each imported in each of the last three years. [25516]

Jim Knight: The following table shows a list of countries who currently do not ban the importation on beef from the UK.

Data as recorded by HM Revenue and Customs shown for all of these countries the UK has exported to. This will include re-exports of beef of non-UK origin.

Exports to EU countries is permitted under the Data Based Exports Scheme which mostly covers exports from Northern Ireland into the Republic of Ireland. Otherwise exports are from cattle slaughtered outside the UK.

UK exports of beef to countries who do not ban the importation of UK beef

	2002		2003		2004		January to August 2005	
	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes
Afghanistan	30	7	69	19	110	25	33	11
Anguilla	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Antarctica	—	—	4	1	1	0	—	—
Antigua and Barbuda	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Aruba	—	—	—	—	4	1	—	—
Ascension Island	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Austria	0	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bangladesh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Belgium	14	4	346	158	216	44	359	78
Belize	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Benin	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bermuda	3	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Botswana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
British Virgin Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Burundi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambodia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cape Verde	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Comoros	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Costa Rica	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cyprus	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Czech Republic	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Denmark	25	6	—	—	85	22	4	1
Djibouti	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dominica (Commonwealth of)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eritrea	—	—	3	2	—	—	—	—
Estonia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ethiopia	2	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Falkland Islands	90	31	109	41	186	54	111	39
Faroe Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fiji Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Finland	—	—	168	22	—	—	—	—
France	570	183	148	65	908	551	957	391
French Polynesia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gambia, The	1	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Georgia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

UK exports of beef to countries who do not ban the importation of UK beef

	2002		2003		2004		January to August 2005	
	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes
Germany	2,118	777	1,944	872	2,184	756	699	268
Ghana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gibraltar	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greece	15	7	—	—	3	2	0	0
Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guinea-Bissau	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haiti	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Honduras	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hong Kong	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hungary	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Iceland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Iran	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Iraq	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Israel	—	—	—	—	24	2	1	0
Italy	351	114	1,228	348	687	311	370	92
Ivory Coast	19	11	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jamaica	—	—	6	2	—	—	—	—
Kazakhstan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kiribati	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Laos	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Latvia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lebanon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lesotho	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Liberia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lithuania	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Luxembourg	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Macedonia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malawi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Maldives	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mali	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malta	1	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marshall Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mauritania	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mauritius	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mayotte	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Micronesia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moldova	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mongolia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mozambique	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Namibia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nauru	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nepal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Netherlands	8,386	1,576	6,519	1,260	3,683	737	1,247	225
New Zealand	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Niger	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norway	—	—	—	—	1	0	—	—
Pakistan	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Palau	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Palestine Authority	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Papua New Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Portugal	22	4	89	32	244	56	—	—
Republic of Ireland	5,630	2,340	8,615	2,672	10,627	3,603	11,532	4,383
Romania	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Russia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
San Marino	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sao Tome and Principe	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senegal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seychelles	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sierra Leone	7	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Slovakia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Slovenia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Solomon Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Somalia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spain	594	201	40	13	215	82	205	76
St. Helena	10	9	9	4	12	3	15	3
St. Helena Dependencies	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Kitts and Nevis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Lucia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sudan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Suriname	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Swaziland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sweden	11	9	10	9	9	2	—	—
Tajikistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tanzania	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

UK exports of beef to countries who do not ban the importation of UK beef

	2002		2003		2004		January to August 2005	
	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes
Tonga, Kingdom of	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trinidad and Tobago	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tunisia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Turks and Caicos Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tuvalu	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vanuatu	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Yugoslavia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zimbabwe	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note:
2005 data are subject to amendments
Source:
H M Revenue and Customs
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the countries which do not permit the import of beef from the UK; and which of the countries export meat to the UK. [25517]

Jim Knight: The following table shows a list of countries who currently ban the importation of beef from the UK. Data is shown for all of these countries who have exported beef to the UK 2002 to August 2005.

UK imports of beef from countries who have banned the importation of UK beef into their country

Country	2002		2003		2004		January-August 2005	
	£000	tonnes	£000	tonnes	£000	tonnes	£000	tonnes
Albania	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Algeria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Angola	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Argentina	31,995	18,269	21,796	9,372	24,188	8,641	19,726	6,639
Armenia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Australia	15,703	5,453	13,659	4,338	17,077	5,280	10,443	3,165
Azerbaijan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bahamas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bahrain	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barbados	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Belarus	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bolivia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brazil	31,678	19,088	52,855	32,058	60,805	34,611	45,016	24,660
Brunei	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bulgaria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Burkina Faso	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cameroon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Canada	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cayman Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Central African Republic	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chad	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chile	—	—	113	33	413	146	1,980	663
China (People's Republic of)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Colombia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congo (Democratic Republic of)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congo Brazzaville	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cote d'Ivoire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Croatia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cuba	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dominican Republic	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ecuador	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Egypt	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
El Salvador	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Equatorial Guinea	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gabon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grenada	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guatemala	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guyana	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
India	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Indonesia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Japan	—	—	—	—	17	12	—	—
Jordan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kenya	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Korea (South)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kuwait	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kyrgyzstan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Libya	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Macau	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mexico	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Monaco	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Montserrat	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

UK imports of beef from countries who have banned the importation of UK beef into their country

Country	2002 £000	2002 tonnes	2003 £000	2003 tonnes	2004 £000	2004 tonnes	January-August 2005 £000	January-August 2005 tonnes
Morocco	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nicaragua	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nigeria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oman	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Panama	—	—	101	122	12	11	—	—
Paraguay	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Peru	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Philippines	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Qatar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rwanda	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Samoa	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Saudi Arabia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Singapore	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Africa								
Sri Lanka	229	127	10	12	23	12	25	25
Switzerland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Syria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Taiwan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thailand	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Togo	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Turkey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Turkmenistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Uganda	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ukraine	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
United Arab Emirates	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
United States of America	22,654	11,706	16,462	6,280	18,092	5,571	14,531	4,561
Uruguay	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Uzbekistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Venezuela	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vietnam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Yemen	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zambia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note:
2005 data is subject to amendments
Source:
HM Revenue and Customs
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, Defra

Bottled Water

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the number of litres of bottled *(a)* sparkling and *(b)* still water consumed in the United Kingdom in each year since 2002; and what percentage was supplied in (i) plastic, (ii) glass and (iii) other materials. [27887]

Jim Knight: It is estimated that 736 million litres of mineral water were consumed in the UK in the 12 month period starting in April 2003. This estimate is based upon records of consumer purchases from the Expenditure and Food Survey.

DEFRA does not collect statistics which distinguish between sparkling and still waters or the way water is packaged. However, figures published by Mintel in its Bottled Water Report of June 2003 indicate that 75 per cent. of bottled water in 2003 was still and 25 per cent. sparkling. In addition, 79 per cent. was packaged in plastic bottles, 20 per cent. in glass bottles and 1 per cent. in cans.

Bypasses (Aylesbury Vale)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely impact of building bypasses upon the rural environment in Aylesbury Vale. [25937]

Jim Knight: None. The responsibility for assessing the environmental impacts of proposed road schemes rests with the relevant transport planning authority, in this case either the local authority or the Highways Agency.

Cattle Passports

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on cattle passport fraud. [25308]

Jim Knight: The evidence we have on the incidence of serious offences committed under the Cattle Identification Regulations 1998 (as amended) concerning cattle passports is that it is low.

In order to ensure a high level of compliance with the Regulations, 10 per cent. of cattle farms are inspected annually by the Rural Payments Agency. In England, around 6,000 farms and around 960,000 animals are examined for their compliance with tagging, passport, database registration and record-keeping rules. The results show a continuing improvement in compliance with the rules-there were 4 per cent. fewer errors made in 2004–05 than in the previous year.

Local Authorities also undertake enforcement activities covering cattle, including unannounced inspections on farms, at livestock markets and during transport (by undertaking spot roadside stops). At slaughterhouses, the Meat Hygiene Service undertake checks on identification of cattle to ensure that only properly identified and traceable cattle enter the human food chain.

Inspections are carried out on the basis of risk, with higher risk activities being inspected most. When non-compliance with the cattle identification rules is found, appropriate enforcement action is taken. This can range from advice, warning letters and restrictions on movements through to full prosecution resulting in prison sentences or fines. So far in 2005, 19 convictions have been obtained.

Education is as important as enforcement, and this year the Rural Payments Agency has sent two statements to all registered cattle keepers of their Cattle Tracing System (CTS) database records to encourage them to keep their records accurate and up-to-date. In April 2005, they issued clear and comprehensive guidance to all keepers in their "Cattle Keeper's Handbook". The response to the CTS statements has been encouragingly high, all the more so for being voluntary, and taken together with the improvements shown in inspections, indicates to us that the cattle industry is keen overall to ensure that their animals are fully traceable and that compliance is good.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will release data relating to individual recipients in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Wales of payments under the Common Agricultural Policy. [27062]

Jim Knight: RPA released information on CAP payments relating to individual recipients in March 2005, supplemented by a further regional analysis in July 2005. The information covers those payments for which RPA is responsible and includes payments made under Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) schemes in England and under non IACS schemes throughout the UK. It did not include information about payments made under IACS schemes by the EU Paying Agencies in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

The disclosure of information held by other countries within the UK is a matter to be considered and decided upon by their devolved assemblies.

Departmental Estates

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the director of building and estate management is in her Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of her career to date. [26318]

Jim Knight: Defra's head of estates division is Michael Watkins. He joined Defra on 1 March 2004.

Michael Watkins holds a BSc in land administration and is a member of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Prior to joining Defra Michael Watkins was employed by BAA Plc as head of asset management at Heathrow airport. He was formerly employed by a firm of managing agents in Westminster, by the Royal borough of Kingston upon Thames, Waverley borough council and the Metropolitan Police Service in varying property roles.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the director of human resources is in her Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26320]

Jim Knight: Defra's director of human resources will be Francesca Okosi. She joined Defra on 3 February 2003 as director of the improvement and delivery group and will take up post as director of human resources on 1 December 2005.

Francesca Okosi holds an HMD in business studies and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and of the Institute of Directors. Prior to joining Defra Francesca Okosi was employed as director of human resources and consultancy services at the London borough of Brent, chief executive's department; and was formerly assistant chief executive of human resources and equalities, London borough of Merton and head of human resources strategy, London borough of Havering.

Endangered Species

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions have been brought in each of the last three years for illegal imports of endangered species, broken down by species. [28153]

Jim Knight: In 2002 there were two prosecutions:

Two defendants were found guilty of illegally importing 23 birds of prey; the species involved were:

	Number
Brown Fish owl	1
Malay Fish owls	3
Black eagle	1
Barred Eagle owl	1
Asian Brown Wood owl	1
Asian Barred owlets	2
Eastern Marsh harrier	1
Mountain Hawk eagles	2
Oriental Bay owls	2
Brahminy kites	5
Pied harriers	2
Harrier	1
Forest eagle	1

Another defendant was found guilty of illegally importing 15 reptiles; the species involved were:

	Number
Tegu lizards	4
Uromastyx's	2
Varanus lizards	4
Pythons	4
Egg Eating snake	1

There was one prosecution in 2004, the defendant pleaded guilty to the illegal import of seven primate skulls and one turtle skull.

Farm Subsidies

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements are in place to deal with full payments due to farmers under the Single Payment Scheme in 2005 not being made by the 30 June 2006 deadline. [24736]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is responsible for implementing the Single Payment Scheme and making payments in England. RPA is currently validating around 120,000 claims received to the 2005 scheme. RPA remains on course to commence payments in February 2006 and complete 96 per cent. of payments by the end of March, in line with announcements made at the start of the year. RPA's objective remains to complete payment on all valid claims by the end of the payment window on 30 June 2006. Any claims that cannot be resolved by 30 June 2006 will be paid as soon as possible after that date, once eligibility has been confirmed.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will agree to the National Farmers Union proposal to increase the budget of the hill farm allowance to £50 million; and if she will make a statement. [28281]

Jim Knight: The current Hill Farm Allowance is due to finish at the end of the current England Rural Development programming period in 2006.

The Secretary of State gave a commitment on 22 April 2004 to consider how upland communities could receive appropriate support from rural development funds. Future arrangements are currently being reviewed in the context of the new EU Rural Development Regulation which will come into effect in 2007. The budget for the next ERDP is currently under negotiation in Brussels.

Farmland Birds

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of farmland bird species which are *(a)* in decline and *(b)* recovering in England and Wales. [28155]

Jim Knight: Assessments of farmland bird populations in England have been made annually between 1970 and 2003 by the British Trust for Ornithology, using data from the Common Bird Census and Breeding Birds Survey. Data for England and Wales have not been analysed. The assessments show that of 19 farmland bird species:

(a) The populations of Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge, Reed Bunting, Skylark, Starling, Turtle Dove and Yellowhammer have been in decline since the 1970s and the population of Rook has also seen a decline in the last ten years. In total eight species are in decline.

(b) The populations of Greenfinch, Goldfinch and Kestrel declined during the 1980s but have recovered to 1970 levels, while Lapwing, Linnet, Tree Sparrow, Whitethroat and Yellow Wagtail are showing signs of recovery in the last ten years following earlier declines. In total eight species are recovering.

The populations of the remaining three species (Jackdaw, Stock Dove and Woodpigeon) have increased since 1970.

Fruit Growing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the fruit-growing industry in *(a)* England and *(b)* Lancashire. [24953]

Jim Knight: The fruit-growing industry is worth over £300 million at the farm gate and supports substantial downstream activity, including packhouses and processing. The sector benefits from Defra's substantial research and development programme and growers are eligible for assistance under the England Rural Development Programme. The Government does not make special provision for the fruit-growing industry on a regional basis.

Horse Passports

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure horse owners are aware of the requirement for horse passports; and what estimate she has made of the number of horses in England and Wales without a horse passport. [28799]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* We have taken extensive steps to publicise the requirements for horse passports. We have done this by mailings of publicity leaflets to equine organisations, including those with whom horse owners are likely to have regular contact. We have also advertised the requirement in equine publications and urged equine organisations to help publicise the measure to their members. Officials have attended various equine shows and events and comprehensive information has been placed on the Defra website. The requirement has also been well covered in magazines devoted to horse and countryside interests.

The take up of horse passports—at over 661,000 passports—is already higher than many people forecast. It is difficult to estimate the total number of horses without passports given that there is no definitive figure on the total number of horses in this country.

Hunting

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to promote EU legislation to prohibit *(a)* the promotion of canned hunting trips and *(b)* the importation of dead animals as trophies; and if she will make a statement. [26135]

Jim Knight: I do not consider that new EU legislation to prohibit the promotion of particular types of hunting trips would be enforceable, while powers are already available to regulate the import, holding and sale of hunting trophies of endangered species.

We are currently considering responses to a recent public consultation on whether we should use existing powers to prohibit the holding of certain animal specimens, including parts or derivatives of tigers, bears, Tibetan antelopes and rhinos (apart from worked antique specimens or licensed hunting trophies), and some respondents have asked that this be extended to cover all hunting trophies.

We will of course need to take all views into account before coming to a final decision on this matter but I can assure that I will not hesitate to take appropriate action where there is evidence of unsustainable hunting of CITES species.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many IT projects have been developed for her Department since 2001; and whether she has agreed to make public Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23491]

Jim Knight: Since the beginning of the financial year 2001–02, there have been 673 IT projects developed for the Department using the central IT function. Projects not commissioned through the central IT function are excluded as to gather such information would incur a disproportionate cost.

Gateway reviews are conducted on a confidential basis for the business owners of projects and are not published as a matter of course. However, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 each request for the release of information in a Gateway Review is considered on a case-by-case basis. No such requests have been received during this period.

Live Animal Imports

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of live animals imported for slaughter in the last year for which figures are available. [28105]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Trade statistics as gathered by HM Revenue and Customs are classified such that it is not always clear whether imported live animals are destined for slaughter or for the breeding herd/flock. Removing the cases where the animal is obviously intended for further breeding our best estimates for 2004 are as follows:

	£000	*Tonnes*	*£000 head*
Poultry	936	857	1,214
Cattle	39	34	0.1
Pigs	28,926	31,778	407
Sheep	0	0	0
Goats	0	0	0
Total	29,901	32,669	1,622

Source:
HM Revenue and Customs
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, Defra

Orchards

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate how many orchards there are in England; and how many have preservation orders applied to them. [25007]

Jim Knight: Data from the June 2004 agricultural census indicate that in England there are 2,520 holdings of commercial orchards, covering an area of 19,239 hectares; and 3,739 holdings with non-commercial orchards, covering an area of 3,030 hectares.

The Department does not hold data on local authority preservation orders. However, under stewardship agreements, about two-thirds of the area of traditional orchards benefit from Defra funding for conservation and maintenance.

Pet Travel Scheme

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of the Pet Travel Scheme. [29247]

Mr. Bradshaw: We believe the Pet Travel Scheme has worked well in facilitating the entry of properly protected pets into the UK from qualifying countries without the need for quarantine since its inception five years ago. Today we are announcing a review to see whether there are elements of the scheme that might be improved.

Poultry Industry

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people are employed in the poultry industry; what the economic value of the poultry industry was in 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [24942]

Jim Knight: The information is as follows:

1. Number employed on farm

Numbers of people employed on farm is only available from DEFRA for England (broiler production in England accounts for 73 per cent. of the UK total).

The analysis is presented in two ways:

Numbers employed
on the 17,800 holdings with at least one poultry animal
on the 2,000 holdings classified as specialist poultry

In the first situation much of the labour will be employed on other farm work so therefore numbers employed will be overestimated and in the second case mixed farms which have poultry but are not classified as specialist poultry will be excluded thus numbers employed will be underestimated.

June 2004 Agricultural Census—England all holdings

	Number
Labour on holdings with poultry	
Full-time holders on holdings with poultry	17,778
Part-time holders on holdings with poultry	33,520
Full-time employees on holdings with poultry	8,986
Part-time employees on holdings with poultry	7,243
Total labour force on holdings with poultry inc. casuals	73,455
Labour on holdings with a main farm type specialist poultry	
Full-time holders	2,042
Part-time holders	5,750
Full-time employees	3,536
Part-time employees	1,923
Total labour force inc. casuals	14,306

2. Number employed in the poultry processing sector

According to figures collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from their Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) the number of people employed in licensed GB poultry slaughter houses in 2003 was just over 40,000.

3. Value of poultry production

The value of poultry production in the UK in 2003 was £1.2 billion[1]

4. Value of poultry processing

Based on estimates supplied by the ONS from their Annual Business Inquiry, the turnover of companies engaged in the slaughter of poultry in 2003 was £2.4 billion[2]. The ONS figures may underestimate the number of companies which process poultry meat.

Sources:

1 Agriculture in the UK 2004

2 ONS Annual Business Inquiry 2003.

Revenue Funding (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding was allocated by her Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25758]

Jim Knight: The Department does not allocate or account for its capital or revenue funding on a parliamentary constituency basis or indeed on a regional basis. Expenditure is decided along policy objective lines in support of ministerial priorities. Chapter 8 of the Public Expenditure Analysis shows overall Government expenditure on a regional basis with Hemel Hempstead being included in the East of England Region.

Rights of Way

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many outstanding applications for Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS) there were at *(a)* December 2003, *(b)* January 2005 and *(c)* May 2005. [27530]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* We have been collecting data on the numbers of applications for byways open to all traffic from some time. However, we do not currently have this data for the particular periods you specify. We have set about gathering this information from local authorities and have 30 responses at the time of writing this reply, but it will take further time to get all the returns in. I will write to you as soon as I have this information and place a copy in the Library of the House.

Roof-nesting Gulls

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government have published best practice guidance on the management of roof-nesting gulls. [29385]

Jim Knight: Defra in conjunction with the RSPB are preparing a leaflet on urban gull management. This leaflet will be published in the new year.

Rural Development Service

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many grants from her Department's Rural Development Service have been made in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and what each grant was used for. [25306]

Jim Knight: The following information sets out the number and value of grant payments that were made in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley during 2004–05 for each of the principle schemes administered by the Rural Development Service. The aims and objectives of each scheme are briefly set out as follows:

The "Organic Farming Scheme" (OFS) aims to encourage the expansion of organic production in England in order to help supply the increasing demand for organically produced food.

The "Environmentally Sensitive Areas" (ESA) scheme aims to encourage farmers to adopt agricultural practices which would safeguard and enhance parts of the country of particularly high landscape, wildlife or historic value.

The "Energy Crops Scheme" (ECS) provides establishment grants for two energy crops, short-rotation coppice (SRC) and miscanthus, and aid to help SRC growers set up producer groups.

The "Countryside Stewardship Scheme" (CSS) aims to sustain landscape beauty and diversity, to protect and extend wildlife habitats, to conserve archaeological sites and historic features, restore neglected land or features, create new habitats and landscapes and improve opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside.

The "Farm Woodland Scheme" (FWS) and "Farm Woodland Premium Scheme" (FWPS) aim to enhance the environment through the planting of farm woodlands, thereby improving the landscape, providing new habitats and increasing biodiversity. (Now closed to new applications and replaced by the Forestry Commission 's England Woodland Grant Scheme.

"Project-based Schemes" (PBS), including the Rural Enterprise Scheme, Processing and Marketing Grant and Vocational Training Schemes, are focussed around individual developments and projects, and aim to promote imaginative and varied schemes within rural areas. The schemes are generally available to farmers and rural businesses to help them develop new opportunities and widen the skills they already possess.

The OFS, CSS and ESA schemes are now closed to new applications and have been replaced by Environmental Stewardship that was launched in March this year. There are already over 270 live ES agreements in Lancashire.

(a) Number and value of grants paid for rural development service (RDS) agreements and projects in Lancashire during 2004–05

Scheme	*Number of payments*	*Value of payments (£)*
OFS	14	27,276.93
ESA	2	16,466.46
ECS	0	0
CSS	449	2,351,450.52
FWS	3	1,007.80
FWPS	139	93,353.55
PBS	73	847,596.59
Total	680	3,337,151.85

(b) Number and value of grants paid for rural development service (RDS) agreements and projects in Chorley[1] during 2004–05

Scheme	*Number of payments*	*Value of payments (£)*
OFS	1	9,075.90
ESA	0	0
ECS	0	0
CSS	23	186,937.45
FWS	0	0
FWPS	3	1,466.00
PBS	0	0
Total	27	197,479.35

[1] Please note that the data for Chorley was extracted using agreement holder postcode and matching it to the constituency boundary.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received about delays in implementing the single farm payment scheme; and if she will make a statement. [26211]

Jim Knight: Ministers and Rural Payments Agency (RPA) officials are in regular contact with all stakeholder groups, farmers and agents. Ministers and the RPA chief executive have also received several hundred written representations on issues affecting the administration of the single payment scheme (SPS). RPA announced in January 2005 that payments under the SPS in England would begin in February 2006. The regulatory payment window for the 2005 scheme laid down by the European Union runs from 1 December 2005 to 30 June 2006.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to resolve delays in the mapping of farms under the single farm payment scheme; and if she will make a statement. [26254]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Since September 2004 the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has received over 100,000 requests to digitise land parcels or to amend their boundaries, representing a substantial increase on the previous level of requests. The majority of these requests have now been processed, and RPA has recently outsourced 85 per cent. of the outstanding mapping requests to a trusted third party. This has significantly increased resources, enabling RPA to remain on course to commence payment under the Single Payment Scheme in February 2006, in line with announcements made at the start of the year.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether payments under the single farm payment scheme in England and Wales will start by January 2006; and if she will make a statement. [26258]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The Rural Payments Agency is responsible for implementing the Single Payment Scheme and making payments in England. RPA announced in January 2005 that payments under the Single Payment Scheme in England would begin in February 2006. RPA remains on course to commence payments in February 2006.

The Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for implementing the Single Payment Scheme in Wales. They have confirmed that they are on track to make payments to as many farmers as soon as possible after the opening of the payment window (1 December).

Stewardship Scheme

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people met the 31 August deadline for *(a)* higher and *(b)* entry level stewardship. [27993]

Jim Knight: The number of Environmental Stewardship applications received by the Rural Development Service as at 31 August were as follows:

	Number
Entry Level Scheme	7,545
Organic Entry Level Scheme	317
Higher Level Scheme	221
Organic Higher Level Scheme	7

Environmental Stewardship agreements can be made at any time. Monthly start dates are operated under for the purposes of Entry Level and Organic Entry Level agreements. For Higher Level agreements, applications received by 31 August are currently being processed with a view to introducing the first agreements from early next year.

Transport (Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what change there has been in *(a)* road transport vehicle carbon dioxide emissions and *(b)* single occupancy car commuting from her Department against a baseline year of (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [28091]

Jim Knight: The following information relates to Defra and its executive agencies.

(a) Road transport vehicle carbon dioxide emissions (tons)

			Percentage
	2002–03[1]	-6,072	—
(i)	2003–04	-5,403	-11
(ii)	2004–05	-5,750	-5.3

[1] Baseline year

(b) Single occupancy car commuting

			Percentage
	2002–03[1]		
(i)	2003–04		+1
(ii)	2004–05		+1

[1] Baseline years

Water Voles

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government is taking to maintain the population of water voles. [27136]

Jim Knight: The Government and its agencies are providing funding for a number of key projects and activities to maintain the population of water voles. These include:

English Nature, Environment Agency, People's Trust For Endangered Species, and Royal Holloway, University of London have identified 13 sites in England that contain sustainable populations of water voles. These sites have been designated as national key sites and are managed sympathetically for the voles and contribute to a national monitoring scheme for the species. The project partners are also encouraging the sympathetic management of the countryside around these sites to allow the populations to expand.

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, English Nature, Environment Agency, and Mammals Trust UK are studying the practicality and cost-effectiveness of mink control at a catchment scale in north Wiltshire. This project has involved a wide range of collaborators and volunteers to control mink and monitor water vole populations in three selected river catchments.

The Environment Agency, English Nature, and Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, University of Oxford are producing an expanded and updated version of the Water Vole Conservation Handbook, which was first published in 1998. The new edition will contain a wealth of new material from case studies and will provide good practice guidance on the management of land where water voles are present.

It is difficult to estimate the number of water voles with any great degree of accuracy, but the current best estimates are 875,000 in the UK, with 486,000 in England. A more comprehensive national monitoring scheme is currently being planned as part of the Tracking Mammals Partnership.

Wildfowl

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what regulations govern the release of wildfowl into the wild; and how many wildfowl have been released into the wild in each of the last five years. [23356]

Jim Knight: The term "wildfowl" relates to all species of ducks and geese, and also swans (three species in England in winter). Only certain ducks and geese may be hunted. There are no specific regulations governing the release of native wildfowl into the wild. Only Mallard are released for the purposes of wildfowling. Mallard are native to England and they would not be covered by the provisions of section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which prohibits releases of species of birds not ordinarily resident in or a visitor to the European territory of any member state.

The Game Conservancy Trust (GCT) record certain information about gamekeeping and shooting activities through the National Gamebag Census (NGC), a voluntary scheme established by GCT in 1961. The GCT has estimated that over the last 5 years, around one in 10 NGC shoots in England release ducks and the average number released per shoot in England is under 500.

TRANSPORT

Bus/Light Rail Use

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average cost of a bus ticket to Brighton from Bexhill-on-Sea will be in 2006 following changes to Government subsidies. [29327]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not forecast average ticket prices on particular bus routes. Fare levels are primarily a commercial decision by the operator concerned who will no doubt take into account a wide range of factors.

Concessionary fares provision by local authorities will also be relevant. From 1 April 2006, people aged 60 and over and disabled people will be entitled to free off-peak travel on bus journeys within their local authority area and local authorities have discretion to work together to provide concessions on cross-border routes.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by how much the use of *(a)* bus and *(b)* light rail changed in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005 to date compared with 2000 (A) in England and (B) broken down by region; and what the predicted level is for 2010. [27563]

Ms Buck: The information is given in the following table.

	Percentage change from 2000-01 to		
Region	*2003-04*	*2004-05*	*2010-11 (forecast)*
Bus			
North East	-9	-13	n/a
North West	0	-2	n/a
Yorkshire and the Humber	-6	-9	n/a
East Midlands	-2	-7	n/a
West Midlands	-8	-10	n/a
East of England	-8	-9	n/a
South East	-3	-3	n/a
South West	-2	-2	n/a
England ex London	-5	-7	n/a
London	26	32	43
England	6	7	n/a
Light Rail			
North East	17	13	n/a
North West	6	10	n/a
Yorkshire and the Humber	11	16	n/a
East Midlands	n/a	n/a	n/a
West Midlands	-5	-7	n/a
England ex London	11	23	n/a
London	28	35	138
England	19	28	n/a
Bus and Light Rail			
England ex London	-4	-6	n/a
London	26	32	47
England	7	8	n/a

n/a = not available

A forecast for passenger journeys in England outside London will be prepared, once the full impact of free concessionary fares for disabled travellers and those aged 60 and over can be properly assessed.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many buses in operation offer easy access facilities; and what is his target for easy access facilities on buses. [28310]

Mr. Darling: Information provided by bus operators shows that 46 per cent. of full-size buses running on local routes are wheelchair accessible. This equates to 21,300 vehicles from a fleet size of 46,300 full size buses. The number of accessible buses is much greater in larger towns and cities, and in the case of London is virtually 100 per cent. PSV Accessibility Regulations require all large buses used on local or scheduled services to be wheelchair accessible by 1 January 2017.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department between the end of the 2003-04 session and the end of April, broken down by Act. [28368]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The question is taken to refer to criminal offences created directly in primary (rather than subordinate) legislation

sponsored by the Department for Transport which received Royal Assent in the period 1 October 2004 to 30 April 2005.

The relevant legislative provisions are as follows.

The Railways Act 2005

(Royal Assent: 7 April 2005)

1. Paragraph 11 (7) of Schedule 2 (transfer schemes) makes it an offence for a person intentionally to alter, suppress or destroy a document which he has been required to produce by notice under paragraph (4) (notice to produce specified documents or information).

2. Paragraph 11 (8) of Schedule 3 (transfer of safety functions) makes it an offence for a person to contravene a requirement imposed by a notice under paragraph 11 (notice served by the Office of Rail Regulation for the purpose of obtaining information which that office needs for the carrying out of its safety functions) or for a person to use certain information disclosed to him in accordance with paragraph 11 other than for the purposes of the safety functions of that office.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

(Royal Assent: 7 April 2005)

Section 8(2) of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 adds a subsection (5) to section 49 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to make it a criminal offence to pretend to be an inspector of rail vehicles.

Departmental Vehicles

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles his Department owns; and what the purpose, annual cost, type of fuel and average number of miles used per week is in each case. [25637]

Ms Buck: The requested information is provided in the following table.

The annual costs and mileage incurred relate specifically to the unique operational environment in which our property centres operate.

For example, the Highways Agency operate a large winter maintenance fleet and due to the harsh environment in which they operate have a disproportionately high running cost. Mileage data has not been provided for the salt loaders or for the snow blowers. The salt loaders, although road registered, rarely leave the depot and the snow blowers are transported to the site on the back of a lorry and may only get used once a season.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency vehicles are used mainly for transporting personnel and equipment in response to emergencies.

Direct comparison between the costs and mileage incurred by DfT property centres is therefore not meaningful.

Mobility and vehicle information service

	Costs and mileage incurred
Number of vehicles owned	30
Vehicle purpose	Disabled driver training and assistance
Fuel used	
Petrol	26
Diesel	3
Dual fuel	1
Annual cost	Not available
Average mileage per week	959

Driving Standards Agency

	Costs and mileage incurred
Number of vehicles owned	206
Vehicle purpose	Driver testing/examiner training and supervision
Fuel used	
Petrol	185
Diesel	11
Dual fuel	10
Annual cost	£525,132
Average mileage per week	15,855

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

	Costs and mileage incurred
Number of vehicles owned	11
Vehicle purpose	Automatic number plate reader vehicles: tax evasion monitoring and recording
Fuel used	
Diesel	11
Annual cost	£43,000
Average mileage per week	594

Highways Agency

	Costs and mileage incurred
Number of vehicles owned	367
Vehicle purpose	Winter maintenance: salt spreaders, salt loaders and snow blowers
Fuel used	
Diesel	367
Annual cost	£19,600
Average mileage per week	122

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

	Costs and mileage incurred
Number of vehicles owned	402
Vehicle purpose	Search and rescue
Fuel used	
Diesel	402
Annual cost	£424,000
Average mileage per week	23,892

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

	Costs and mileage incurred
Number of vehicles owned	258
Vehicle purpose	HGV/PSV road traffic enforcement[1], road traffic accident investigation, mobile office and workshop, pool vehicles, training aids, MOT incognito.
Fuel used	
Petrol	46
Diesel	159
Dual fuel	53
Annual cost	£478,534
Average mileage per week	43,615

[1] Powers to stop, automatic number plate reader.

Mobile Phones

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the operation of the regulations introduced in December 2003 prohibiting the use of mobile phones while driving. [29348]

Dr. Ladyman: The police are responsible for the enforcement of the prohibition on the use of hand held mobile phones while driving. The Road Safety Bill, currently before Parliament, contains provisions to make the offence endorsable (3 penalty points) which also automatically raises the Fixed Penalty Notice to 60. If a case goes to court, the penalty on conviction will include penalty points and discretionary disqualification on top of the existing maximum fine of £1,000 (£2,500 in the case of a goods vehicle or a bus/coach driver).

Railways

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date the consultation on rail closure procedures will start; and if he will make a statement. [26462]

Derek Twigg: We expect to consult on the closure guidance in due course.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* a.m. peak and *(b)* p.m. peak figures for (i) passengers in excess capacity and (ii) the total number of passengers were for London commuting service trains servicing Milton Keynes as measured in the most recent survey. [27180]

Derek Twigg: For the Milton Keynes/Northampton to Euston service group, in the 'AM' peak, Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PIXC) is 0.2 per cent. The total number of passengers using this service group was 6559.

For the Euston to Milton Keynes/Northampton service group, in the 'PM' peak, PIXC is 0.5 per cent. The total number of passengers using this service group was 6,748.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rail penalty fares were *(a)* issued, *(b)* appealed and *(c)* successfully appealed in the last year for which figures are available. [28263]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport does not keep records of how many penalty fares are charged, or appeals made. This is a matter for the train operators concerned.

Taxis

Mr. Geoffrey Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish the draft Taxi Access Regulations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and if he will make a statement. [27969]

Ms Buck: We are currently developing a technical specification to set the design parameters for accessible taxis. To assist this process, the Department held a seminar for stakeholders from industry, organisations representing disabled people and licensing authorities in June to discuss the complex issues around taxi accessibility. The views expressed at the seminar will be used to shape a consultation package.

We do not yet have a timetable for introduction of taxi accessibility regulations but the current situation is that local licensing authorities remain free to introduce their own accessibility policies and many have done so already.

Transport Modernisation

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government are taking to modernise *(a)* buses and *(b)* trains. [26455]

Ms Buck: Outside London, bus services are deregulated and the provision of vehicles is primarily a matter for operators. In London, Transport for London can determine the standard of vehicle used by contracted operators. A survey carried out by the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT) of its members found a reduction in the average fleet age of buses from 7.5 years in 2002 to 7.2 years in 2004.

On the railways, some 4,500 new carriages have been introduced into service over the last five years. This has meant replacing around 40 per cent. of all carriages, with the result that the UK rolling stock fleet is now among the youngest in Europe.

Transport Plan

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent to which the 10-Year Plan for Transport of July 2000 has been implemented, with particular reference to the *(a)* 50 per cent. growth in passenger rail services and *(b)* 80 per cent. growth in freight by 2010. [26956]

Ms Buck: The implementation of the 10-Year Plan is now being taken forward by the Future of Transport White Paper published in July 2004. The current PSA target for rail, as outlined in the White Paper, is:

"to improve punctuality and reliability of rail services to at least 85 per cent. by 2006 with further improvements by 2008".

This was agreed for the three year period relating to the Spending Review 2004.

Figures on rail passenger usage and rail freight are published quarterly in National Rail Trends (published by the Strategic Rail Authority up to 24 June 2005 and thereafter by the Office of Rail Regulation) and in the Department's annual publication Transport Statistics Great Britain.

Transport Security

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government are taking to improve security on transport. [26456]

Ms Buck: Mature and proportionate security regimes are maintained across all security regulated transport modes. These are kept under continuing review, and take account of new and emerging threats with, currently, a particular focus on transport "soft targets".

Further information is available in the 'Transport Security and Contingencies Directorate Annual Report (April 2004–March 2005)', a copy of which is in the House Library.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Leader of the House how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Office in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27412]

Mr. Hoon: The information requested is as follows.

Consultants:

The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons employed one consultant on IT issues during August 2005 at a cost of £3,760.

Special Advisers:

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158–162WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

WALES

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures are being taken to tackle drug and alcohol abuse in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [25942]

Nick Ainger: Wales is tackling drug and alcohol misuse by the delivery of its national substance misuse strategy. The Welsh Assembly Government has significantly increased funding for this strategy from £3.3 million in 2002–03 to £15.4 million in 2005–06. The strategy in Wales is implemented at a local level by the 22 Community Safety Partnerships via the delivery of their action plans.

Pensioners (Cold Weather)

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with Members of the National Assembly for Wales regarding provision for those over 65 years to ensure that they are not adversely affected by the cold in winter 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23040]

Nick Ainger: I regularly meet with the Assembly Ministers to discuss a range of issues such as provisions for those over 65 affected by the cold winter months.

The Welsh Assembly Government have policies and actions in place to reduce the impact of colder winter weather on the health of older people. For instance, it funds the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, which provides the installation of central heating in homes, and runs the annual "Keep Well This Winter" campaign. This campaign encourages older people to take extra measures to look after their health during the winter such as having the flu vaccination, eating properly and taking appropriate exercise, and by keeping warm and safe.

In addition, in winter 2004–05 over 464,000 households in Wales benefited from winter fuel payments of at least £200. Out of these households, 110,000 with someone aged over 80 received £300 winter fuel payment.

Police Service

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the level of funding for the Police Service in Wales. [25721]

Nick Ainger: The Government recently consulted on options for change to the grant distribution formula, to which all police authorities in England and Wales were given the opportunity to respond.

Welsh Police Authorities received good settlements this year, each receiving an increase of 3.75 percent. over 2004–05. This is in line with the minimum increase guaranteed for all police authorities in England and Wales. Details of the settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be announced in late November or early December.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with police forces in Wales on improving road safety; and if he will make a statement. [25921]

Nick Ainger: Under the Government's road safety strategy we are working towards a 40 percent. reduction in deaths and serious injuries by 2010. The Road Safety Bill, currently being considered in the other place, addresses drink-driving, speeding, and driver training and testing. It also covers driver fatigue, vehicle safety and driver licensing.

The Welsh Assembly Government have provided more than £35 million in local road safety grant in the last five years. Tamsin Dunwoody, Deputy Assembly Minister for Economic Development and Transport, is currently meeting Welsh Chief Constables, to discuss measures for improving road safety.

Welsh Language Newspaper

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if the Government will take steps under the provisions of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages to facilitate and support the creation of a daily newspaper in the Welsh language. [29504]

Mr. Hain: Promotion of the Welsh language is primarily a matter for the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Language Board. I am aware of recent moves to establish a Welsh language daily newspaper and that the promoters are in discussion with the Assembly and its sponsored bodies.

The Welsh Language Board has encouraged all those with an interest to contribute to the current review of the charter.

Youth Crime

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on youth crime in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [25941]

Nick Ainger: The Government is supporting a wide-ranging programme to tackle youth offending and to prevent children being drawn into crime. This includes tackling deprivation and working with families and education services, along with ongoing implementation of the 10-year anti-drugs strategy. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently announced a major new drive to increase the take-up of parenting contracts and orders, as part of our strategy for fostering respect in society.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the British Government's attempts to tackle poppy production in the Nangarhar area of Afghanistan. [26826]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The UK, as lead nation on counter narcotics (CN), remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive 2005 CN Implementation Plan and in updating their National Drug Control Strategy. We continue to work with the Afghan Government and others to increase activity in all areas of their strategy. As well as co-ordinating the activity of international partners, we are providing substantial financial and practical support—more than £270 million over the next three years. I refer to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) on the counter narcotics programme in Afghanistan on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 235W, which includes support to Nangarhar.

In August, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) announced provisional cultivation figures for 2004–05 from their annual poppy survey, which showed that cultivation had dropped by 21 per cent. to 104,000 hectares in Afghanistan. Nangarhar saw the greatest decrease, with opium poppy cultivation dropping by 96 per cent. to 1,093 hectares. Success can be partly attributed to an effective Government of Afghanistan communications campaign in late 2004–05, which we supported, alongside Governor-led eradication initiatives and a market adjustment to high levels of cultivation in 2004. UNODC are due to publish their final report in the next few weeks, but these figures are unlikely to change.

Colombian Refugees

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the number of Colombians *(a)* internally displaced and *(b)* seeking refuge in neighbouring countries in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [29001]

Mr. Thomas: DFID relies on statistics compiled by other organisations rather than its own assessment of internally displaced persons in Colombia and those seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. It is difficult to establish totally accurate statistics in each year since 2001.

According to the Colombian Government, an estimated 1,148,000 people were internally displaced over the period 2000–03. The Colombian non-government organisation (NGO), Consultancy for Human Rights and Development (CODHES) reports 1,247,000 internally displaced persons over the same period. CODHES reported some 287,500 displacements in 2004, and have reported increasing numbers in the first six months of 2005. According to Government figures, the total number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Colombia is 1.6 million as of June 2005. Unofficial estimates suggest the actual number could be over 3,400,000.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that there are currently 280,000 displaced Colombians in Ecuador (30,000 refugee and asylum seekers), 101,500 in Panama (1,500 refugee and asylum seekers) and 274,000 in Venezuela (4,000 refugee and asylum seekers).

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27387]

Mr. Thomas: The list of DFID's 10 most valuable assets recorded in the departments asset register, underpinning our 2004–05 resource accounts balance sheet are:

Immovable	*Net book value (£000)*
1. Palace Street, HQ	27,668
2. Abercrombie House, HQ	7,830
3. Overseas Property, India	605
4. Overseas Property, Bangladesh	368
5. Overseas Properties, Malawi	323
6. 20 Victoria Street, HQ	306
7. Overseas property, Zimbabwe	201
8. Overseas property, Zimbabwe	198
9. Overseas property, Rwanda	186
10. Overseas property, Zimbabwe	148

Movable	*Net book value (£000)*
1. Caris System	309
2. PABX Switch	111
3. Armoured Vehicle	106
4. Generator and Cabling	98
5. Air Condition Plant Carrier	87
6. Armoured Vehicle	80
7. Infozone, Palace Street	79
8. Armoured Land cruiser	71
9. LAN	68
10. Generators	51

Disaster Relief

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the World Food Programme's

(WFP) work with regards to the *(a)* Asian tsunami disaster and *(b)* the earthquake in Pakistan; and if he will make a statement. [28999]

Mr. Thomas: The World Food Programme's (WFP) early intervention in tsunami-affected countries is considered to have contributed significantly to the improvement of the humanitarian situation. The scale of the disaster posed particular challenges in terms of assessment of food needs. In the early stages of the response, the WFP adopted an appropriately broad approach to food distribution.

As host to the common logistics services, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) and United Nations Joint Logistics Service (UNJLC), the WFP also played an important role in underpinning the UN's logistical operation. Early inefficiencies with the UNHAS operation were eventually ironed out, and the UNJLC is considered to have performed adequately in a complex operating environment. On behalf of the Government of Indonesia, other agencies and non-government organisations (NGO)s, the WFP launched an unprecedented non-food logistical operation to deliver 600,000 metric tonnes of reconstruction supplies to Aceh and Nias, being funded from the multi-donor trust fund for Aceh and North Sumatra.

DFID support to the WFP (including UNHAS and UNJLC) in the tsunami response amounted to £3.5 million in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, with the further contribution of five helicopters and a fuel farm to support operations in Indonesia.

Following the South Asia earthquake, the World Food Programme deployed to the field quickly and has since been distributing food to the affected population through a variety of channels. Although they face challenges including extensive logistics and access constraints, the WFP's ongoing food distributions, in support of the Government of Pakistan activities in this sector, are an important humanitarian intervention for the affected population.

The WFP is also host to the common services, the UNHAS and the UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC), and is providing a special operation for common logistics services including portable storage units and common trucking for the International Community.

To date, DFID has provided financial and in-kind support to the WFP common services operation totalling £3.1 million to date. In addition, the UK Government have deployed three RAF Chinook helicopters in support of the UNHAS operation.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will ensure that it is a condition of the aid provided that public buildings being rebuilt in Pakistan using UK aid are earthquake-proof. [28636]

Hilary Benn: Good building codes exist in Pakistan. The challenge is how these are carried through into practice. DFID has also funded research into building codes and post-earthquake reconstruction recommendations. DFID incorporates work on building codes and building code implementation within a broader approach to Disaster Risk Reduction, which seeks to reduce the vulnerability and increase the disaster preparedness of poor people and Governments. In Pakistan, DFID is an invited member of the Steering Group helping to advise the Pakistan Government's Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA). This includes encouraging appropriate design for reconstructing public buildings in affected areas and improving the knowledge of building codes for engineers, contractors and planners involved in post-earthquake reconstruction.

Buildings can only be made earthquake-resistant, not earthquake-proof, even with very significant expenditure. Good implementation consists of appropriate design and construction based on the seismic risk.

Engineering Students

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries sponsored engineering students through the British Council Education UK partnership in the last year for which figures are available; what the total budget allocated to *(a)* all training and *(b)* engineering-based training was; and what the (i) titles and (ii) length of the engineering courses undertaken were. [26775]

Mr. Thomas: The information supplied by the British Council notes that the Education UK Partnership is a membership organisation, comprising 252 UK education institutions i.e. universities, colleges, independent colleges and schools and the British Council. The programme provides marketing services in 18 countries, which support the partners' individual marketing, recruitment and related strategies. Data is held at each individual higher institution and is not readily available from the institutions themselves.

Nevertheless, using the information from the British Council, DFID has extracted some available data on overseas engineering and technology students studying in the UK. This information is for the year 2003–04 and the total number of engineering and technology students studying in the UK was 39,575 and were from 192 developing and developed countries of which, 3910 were from China, 3000 from Greece, 2515 from Malaysia, 2320 from India and 1480 from France.

The total number of overseas students with no award or financial backing was 22,535.

Further information of this scheme is available from the British Council.

HIV/AIDS

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the change in the incidence of HIV/AIDS cases in Eastern Europe; what projects to address this issue his Department has *(a)* set up and *(b)* funded in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [29000]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not make independent assessments of HIV and AIDS but supports the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in their assessments of the progress of the epidemic globally, including in Eastern Europe and the wider Europe and Central Asia region. At a country-level, DFID is involved in supporting governments to strengthen

national surveillance and data collection systems to ensure better and more accurate information on the patterns of the epidemic.

In Eastern Europe, DFID has been funding a regional HIV and AIDS project since 2003. This is a three-year project operating in Serbia and Montenegro with a total investment of £1.5 million. The project is working with relevant government ministries to develop national HIV strategies for the prevention, treatment and care of vulnerable populations, while at the same time supporting non-governmental organisations (NGO)s and civil societies to set up demonstration projects with drug users and sex workers. National research institutes are also being supported to develop evidence to show the feasibility and acceptability of effective HIV prevention activities. Lessons from the project are being disseminated to other countries.

DFID recognises that the Europe and Central Asia region has one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics globally and that regional action is urgently needed to tackle this. To this end, DFID is also working with governments and regional partners in Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia to address HIV and AIDS.

Ministerial Travel

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* flights and *(b)* helicopter flights have been taken by Ministers within his Department for (i) UK and (ii) overseas visits in each year since 1995; on how many occasions (A) charter flights were used and (B) first and club class tickets were obtained; and if he will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27804]

Hilary Benn: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

The information is not readily available in respect of domestic travel for the period in question without incurring a disproportionate cost.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used, (and shows how many Officials accompanied Ministers in those circumstances). The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Nepal

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of Nepal's conflict on children; what projects to address this issue his Department has *(a)* set up and *(b)* funded in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [29002]

Mr. Thomas: The conflict in Nepal has had very serious consequences for large numbers of children in Nepal, exacerbated by the extreme poverty of many children and their families. Children have been killed, injured or subject to rape and other sexual abuse by both parties to the conflict, and have been forcibly recruited by the Maoists to provide logistical support, including for frontline military operations. There is frequent disruption by the Maoists of schools in many parts of the country, notably through abductions of children and teachers. Widespread poverty and lack of legal employment opportunities in Nepal continues to result in many girls being trafficked to India.

DFID's knowledge of the impact of the conflict on children draws extensively on reports by groups such as Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (to which DFID has provided funding) and human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch.

DFID is providing £20 million over the period 2004–09 towards the Government of Nepal's national primary education programme and £50 million over the period 2004–10 towards its national health programmes, which have specific targets relating to reducing infant and child mortality. Despite the conflict, both these Government programmes provide essential services and have wide reach throughout the country, including areas controlled by the Maoists.

DFID provided £720,000 to Save the Children between 2003 and 2005 for a programme in Nepal for children affected by armed conflict. The programme helped establish protection committees and child protection officers in those districts most impacted by the conflict. It also created information systems to monitor child movements, provided direct support to 10,000 separated and vulnerable children and support for the repair and maintenance of schools and health posts.

Through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, to which DFID contributes, the British Government are providing £800,000 in the current financial year 2005–06 to the Nepal Mission of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This mission aims to curb all human rights abuses in the country including those committed against children.

Population Growth (African Lakes)

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the environmental impact of rapid population growth on lakes in African countries; what projects to address this impact his Department has *(a)* set up and *(b)* funded in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [28998]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development (DFID) has not undertaken any specific assessment of the environmental impact of population growth on African lakes. DFID supports programmes that integrate consideration of environmental issues (including the impact of population growth) within planning for overall development and poverty reduction.

For example, DFID has supported an Integrated Lake Management project in Uganda, which recently helped the Government to decentralise natural resource management and empower local communities to co-manage these resources, improving the livelihoods of the poor around these lakes. In Kenya, DFID is helping the National Environmental Management Authority to effectively implement environmental regulations which will help to mitigate negative impact of human development and expansion around the country's lakes.

DFID is also a significant contributor to the Global Environment Facility. This Facility encompasses support to improving management of freshwater resources under threat from challenges such as population growth. The Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project is one such example.

Sudan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid the UK is providing to the displaced population in the Darfur region of Sudan. [28933]

Hilary Benn: Since September 2003, the Department for International Development has provided over £92 million in humanitarian funding to Darfur through UN agencies and non-governmental organisations. These funds have provided assistance to displaced populations in Darfur and Eastern Chad as well as assisting resident populations, covering, among others, shelter, food and nutrition, non-food items, water and sanitation and immediate health care projects.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what the average difference in pay was between full-time male and female company directors in each year since 2001. [26800]

Meg Munn: Figures from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings from the Office for National Statistics show that in 2005 the median hourly pay (excluding bonuses) for full-time male company directors was £47.09, for women this figure was £43.84.

Unfortunately, reliable figures for 2001–04 are not available due to small sample sizes.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the implications of the gender pay gap for levels of female employment. [26803]

Meg Munn: I have not made any specific assessment of the implications of the gender pay gap for levels of female employment. The employment rate for women in the UK currently stands at 70 per cent. I am pleased to see that the gender pay gap has now fallen to 13.2 per cent. from 14.5 per cent. last year.

It is important that we tackle the gender pay and give women real choice about balancing work with caring responsibilities. This is why we introduced the Work and Families Bill in October, which will extend the scope of the flexible working law to carers of adults.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Tours

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how much money has been made from the provision of tours of the House during the summer recess. [28721]

Nick Harvey: Tour ticket costs during the summer are designed to cover costs and not to make a surplus. This year, due to the impact of the works on the Chamber Screen and in Westminster Hall, they were held to 2004 levels and as a result a small deficit of around £39,000 was expected. However following the 7 July terrorist attacks in London, visitor numbers slumped from an anticipated 103,000 to a final total of 77,873. This, together with the increased cost of security resulting from the attacks, produced a deficit of £320,000.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

British Olympic Association

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the evidence from the Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 1 November, which voting members of the British Olympic Association were contacted by UK Sport; who the UK Sport representative was; and what the outcome was. [29505]

Mr. Caborn: I can confirm that neither the Chair nor any other representative of UK Sport initiated any contact with any voting member of the BOA regarding the election of the new Chair.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies. [29098]

Mr. Lammy: When undertaking a procurement exercise to engage a consultant or a consultancy firm, DCMS includes within its Invitation to Tender documentation tendering instructions and a Travel and Subsistence Appendix. The instructions specifically ask the tenderers to provide a fixed price and to include all other expenses, the appendix sets out the Department's travel and subsistence rates which we insist consultants abide by. Travel within the London area is expected to be covered within the fixed price of the contract's value.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since

2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29099]

Mr. Lammy: The projects undertaken by consultants in each of the years are as follows:

Consultants	*Project*	£
2000		
Lorien	NDPB Review Programme (Framework)	
PKF	NDPB Review Programme (Framework)	223,602
Capita	NDPB Review Programme (Framework)	
PKF	BBC's Financial Reporting	27,300
ORC International	Staff Survey Report	13,130
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate		22,600
Total		286,632
2001		
McKinseys	Culture Online Formation	1,340,000
AHL Ltd.	Internal Audit Resources	70,000
Organisational Consulting	Horse Race Levy Scheme	40,000
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Commonwealth Games Review	58,500
AJW Associates	Coaching Task Force	10,600
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate		37,100
Total		1,457,100
2002		
Kingshurst Consulting Group	Capital of Culture Analysis	30,480
Richard Lambert	BBC News 24 requirement	44,700
MORI	BBC News 24 requirement	
Robert Palmer	Capital of Culture Adviser	30,000
PricewaterhouseCoopers	E-Commerce Impact Study	43,750
Stanton Marris	Touchstone Project	85,000
Hay Group	Skill Audit	136,195
Atkins Management Consultants	Financial Adviser—Apethorpe Hall	17,290
Experian	Cultural Facilities Register	42,400
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate		28,600
Total		458,415
2003		
Kingshurst Consulting Group	Capital of Culture shortlist	16,875
Health Food and Safety Solutions	Fitness for Purposes	16,000
PricewaterhouseCoopers	London 2012 Costs and Benefits	38,000
Gillian Ashmore	Review of Heritage Protection	50,000
Odgers, Ray and Berndtson	Public Appointments Advice	50,000
Europe Economics	BBC Online Review	
Spectrum Strategy Consultants	BBC Online Adviser	332,000
Philip Graf	BBC Online Review Co-ordinator	
ASK Europe plc	360 Degree Feedback	130,070
Denis Allnut	Tourist Data Project	15,750
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate		23,450
Total		672,145
2004		
PA Consulting	Local Communities Project	151,410
PKF	Historic Environment Review	40,090
The Gartner Group	Benchmarking of IT Services	29,100
Patrick Barwise	BBC New Digital Services—TV	161,300
Tim Gardam	BBC New Digital Services—Radio	
Shared Intelligence	Peer Reviews	61,300
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Efficiency Review	89,410
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Olympic Cost Review	114,080
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Olympic Games Impact Study	72,000
AHL Ltd.	Audit Services	23,100
Ubiqus	BBC Charter Review	42,000
Angela Watson and Associates	Cultural Services Framework	40,000
Eftec	Olympic Games Impact Study	128,530
Morris Hargreaves McIntyre	Museums Education Strategy	12,000
Deloitte and Touche	Sports Strategy	24,000
Odgers, Ray and Berndtson	Headhunting	18,000
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate		26,000
Total		1,032,320
2005		
Opsis Renewal Consulting	Framework for NDPB Reviews	66,900
Hedra plc	NDPB Governance	47,660
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Licensing Act	29,500
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Sponsorship of British Library	24,000
KPMG	Olympic Games Validation	255,000
Ubiqus	BBC requirement	38,500
Veredus	Public Appointments Advice	14,000
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate		42,500
Total		518,060

Outside legal firms employed by DCMS have not been included in the list.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in her Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed. [29116]

Mr. Lammy: My Department now operates a system in which all contracts over £10,000 in value are subject to an evaluation and report by the contract managers on the performance of the work.

All DMCS consultancy projects are carried out under either the Department's own terms and conditions or those of the Office of Government Commerce's (Buying Solutions) Services Catalogue (S-Cat).

This allows two courses of action to be taken should a project become unsuccessful:

Terminate the contract without notice and withhold payment of any work that is not carried out successfully.

Arrange for the project to be carried out by alternative means and recover from the consultant the cost of obtaining the alternative service.

There have been no circumstances since 2000 when DCMS has been required to invoke any damage or break clauses under either procurement route.

Correspondence

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects Ofcom to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Mid Dorset and North Poole dated 26 May, passed to Ofcom by her Department. [27721]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The hon. Member's letter was replied to on 14 June 2005 by the Office of Communications (Ofcom).

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter dated 1 September from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, ref CMS 22294/DC. [28888]

James Purnell: I wrote to my right hon. Friend for Birmingham, Ladywood on 11 November 2005.

Digital Switchover

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what is her latest estimate of the date by which households across Pendle constituency will be able to receive digital terrestrial broadcasts. [28282]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has confirmed the regional timetable for digital switchover; it will take place between 2008 and 2012 by ITV region in the following order:

	Region
2008	Border
2009	West Country, HTV Wales, Granada
2010	HTV West, Grampian, Scottish Television
2011	Yorkshire, Anglia, Central
2012	Meridian, Carlton/LWT (London), Tyne Tees, Ulster

Note:
Further details can be found at www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk

Digital Switchover will enable coverage for Digital Terrestrial Television to reach the same level as that of the current analogue signals. It will take place in Pendle (Granada region) in 2009.

Licensing Act

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the Licensing Act on performances in schools and hospitals; and if she will make a statement. [25969]

James Purnell: The Government believe that the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on schools, hospitals, and similar venues will be positive. The organisers of private performances at such venues do not require licences under the present licensing framework, and will not do so under the new regime introduced by the 2003 Act. Public entertainment licences are required in respect of performances for which the general public may buy tickets, under both the old and new regimes. The new regime introduces much greater flexibility and accountability in the application processes for public entertainment and other forms of licence.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance the Government have provided on licensing appeals to magistrates courts under the Licensing Act 2003. [25974]

James Purnell: It would not be appropriate for the Government to issue guidance to the Courts on dealing with appeals. The Government have, however, discussed this matter with the Magistrates Association and the Justices Clerks Society through the Department for Constitutional Affairs, and has offered whatever support has been sought to assist the courts in establishing their arrangements for dealing with appeals.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate the Government have made of the number of licensing applications made under the Licensing Act 2003 that have been considered by *(a)* magistrates courts, *(b)* Crown courts, *(c)* the High Court and *(d)* the Court of Appeal; and what assessment she has made of the impact of the number of appeals on the court system. [25975]

James Purnell: Appeals against licensing authorities' decisions are made to magistrates courts. There is no appeal to the Crown court, the High Court and the Court of Appeal would consider only requests for Judicial Review.

My Department estimates that there may be up to 1350 appeals to magistrates' courts during the transitional period; 540 in the year following the introduction of the new licensing regime, and up to 360 a year thereafter.

These estimates were included in the public consultation document concerning fee regulations to be made under the Licensing Act 2003.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance the Department has issued on the grounds for appealing a Licensing Act 2003 licensing appeal decision of the magistrates court to the Crown court. [24968]

James Purnell: My Department has not issued guidance on this issue. The Licensing Act 2003 places no limitations on the grounds for appeal, so long as appeals are made within the time limits specified. It is for the courts to decide on the legitimacy or otherwise of the grounds for appeals, in the light of general case and common law.

Olympic Games

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions her Department has had with the London Development Authority regarding businesses in the Marshgate Lane area being relocated to make way for Olympic development; how many of these businesses have reached agreement over relocation; how many have appointed advisers regarding relocation negotiations; what the situation of the remaining businesses is; and when she expects all agreements to be completed. [25708]

Tessa Jowell: There are 274 businesses in the Olympic Park area that need to relocate (96 of these are in or adjacent to Marshgate Lane).

The London Development Agency (LDA) is engaging with each business to understand their relocation requirements and to discuss with them the LDA's offer to acquire their premises by agreement. This is the LDA's preferred approach to land acquisition.

More than 150 businesses have appointed advisers and the LDA is actively encouraging businesses who have not yet done so to appoint advisors as soon as possible. The LDA has reached in-principle agreements with around 30 firms.

The aim is to complete the final agreements with businesses by the end of 2006 to allow sufficient time for relocation. The LDA has compulsory purchase powers in cases where individual agreements are not reached.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the proposed Olympic Park site is *(a)* greenfield and *(b)* brownfield land; and how much is planned to be *(a)* greenfield and *(b)* brownfield land after the games are completed. [28738]

Mr. Caborn: The Olympic Park site as defined in the Olympic and Legacy planning permissions for the construction, operation and legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games comprises 273 hectares.

Of this, 100 hectares are currently open space, comprising green space and landscaped land. This land will be augmented to provide 127 hectares of open space after the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Of the existing 100 hectares of open space, currently only 76 hectares are fully accessible. After the games, all 127 hectares of open space will be accessible.

173 hectares within the Olympic Park site are currently developed space (either brownfield or occupied). There will be no brownfield sites in the Olympic Park after 2012 as they will all have been landscaped into new open space or developed.

The following table summarises the existing and proposed land use for the Olympic Park:

	Built (hectares)		*Open space (hectares)*	
	Area	*Percentage*	*Area*	*Percentage*
Existing	173	63	100	37
Proposed (post games legacy)	146	53	127	47

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the composition of the Olympic Delivery Authority Board will be; and what criteria will be used when selecting members. [22611]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Our expectation is that the Board of the Olympic Delivery Authority will comprise a Chair and between seven and 11 members whose expertise will be relevant to the nature of the authority's functions and to the places in which it exercises them. The selection criteria will encompass the normal skills required of the members of the Boards of non-departmental public bodies plus the specific skills that the role specifications for each position on the Board will require. The composition of the Board and the role specifications will be determined following consultation with the Chair when he/she is appointed but we expect that the Board will include among its members experts in the management and procurement of large construction projects.

Television Licences

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the annual average number of people given prison sentences for not paying their television licence was over the last five years; and what the average annual cost of that process was in each year. [25907]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The information on the annual number of people given prison sentences for not paying their television licence over the last five years is in the following table, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system. The Prison Service does not collect data relating to the costs of keeping prisoners in custody by offence type.

Receptions into prison of people given prison sentences for using a TV without a licence by year—England and Wales

	Number
2000	36
2001	30
2002	14
2003	20
2004	28

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in Leeds, North-West have been prosecuted for not having a television licence in each of the last five years. [25768]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 3 November 2005]*: I have been asked to reply.

The information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of people proceeded against at magistrates courts in West Yorkshire police force area for offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts 1949 to 1969 (mainly television licence evasion), 1999–2003 is provided in the table.

It is not possible to identify those prosecutions in Leeds, North-West as the data are not collected at this level of detail. Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Persons proceeded against at magistrates courts for offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts 1949 to 1967[1], West Yorkshire police force area, 1999 to 2003[2]

	Number
1999	6,025
2000	9,535
2001	5,975
2002	6,612
2003	5,822

[1] Mainly television licence evasion.

[2] These data are on the principal offence basis.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum and Immigration Appeals

Mr. Chope: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many asylum and immigration appeals lodged prior to 4 April are still outstanding; how many have been determined in each month since that date; and when the outstanding cases are expected to be resolved. [22878]

Bridget Prentice: The latest provisional information available from the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) indicates that, at the end of March 2005, *(a)* 16,300 outstanding asylum appeals, *(b)* 10,500 immigration appeals (comprising in-country and entry clearance appeals) and *(c)* 8,600 family visitor appeals were outstanding before the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA), and the Immigration Appeal Tribunal (IAT).

All outstanding work before the IAA and the IAT was transferred to an appropriate stage of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) following its commencement on 4 April 2005.

Outstanding cases are those either listed and awaiting hearing before an immigration judge, or appeals that have been heard and that await determination by the immigration judge.

The latest provisional figures available from the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) indicate that, at the end of June 2005, the numbers of outstanding asylum and immigration appeals determined in each month from April 2005 to June 2005, and which were lodged prior to 4 April 2005, are as follows:

2005	Asylum appeals	Immigration appeals
April	3,528	2,875
May	3,025	2,514
June	2,194	2,488

The transitional arrangements for the treatment of outstanding asylum and immigration appeals, prior to the commencement of the AIT, are set out in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 (Commencement No. 5 and Transitional Provisions) Order 2005 (SI 2005/565).

At present it is not possible to specify the number of outstanding appeals, lodged prior to 4 April 2005, which remain to be determined, nor the estimated time for those cases to pass fully through the system, without incurring disproportionate costs.

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many asylum appeals are outstanding in Scotland. [28962]

Bridget Prentice: The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) considers outstanding cases to be those either listed and awaiting hearing before an immigration judge, or appeals that have been heard and that await determination by the immigration judge.

The latest provisional figures from the AIT show that, as at 15 November 2005, there were 125 asylum appeals outstanding in its Glasgow hearing centre.

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many immigration appeals have been held in Scotland in 2005. [28963]

Bridget Prentice: Information available from the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) shows that, in the period from 1 January 2005 to 30 September 2005, 526 substantive immigration hearings (comprising both entry clearance and in-country cases) were heard in its Glasgow hearing centre.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by her Department. [27386]

Bridget Prentice: The 10 most valuable moveable assets owned by the Department as at 31 March 2005 are listed as follows:

	£000
LIBRA	12,084
Furniture Pool	4,871
Information Commissioner Casework Management System	3,742
LINK ITIP	
Southside Server	2,861
Central Criminal Court	2,513
Southwark Crown Court	2,364
Inner London Crown Court	1,909
Manchester Crown and County Courts	1,935
Kingston-upon-Thames Crown Court	1,868
Snaresbrook Crown Court	1,638

The 10 most valuable immoveable assets owned by the Department as at 31 March 2005 are listed as follows:

Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London
Liverpool Combined Court Centre
Kingston-upon-Thames Crown Court
Southwark Crown Court
Bristol Crown Court
Wood Green Crown Court, London
Blackfriars Crown Court
Sheffield Combined Court
Inner London Sessions House, Newington Causeway
Newcastle upon Tyne Combined Court

For commercial reasons I am not able to give individual valuations for each site but the total net book value of these sites is circa £600 million.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27451]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The figures for civil servants are published in Civil Service Statistics. Table C of Civil Service Statistics 2004 shows permanent staff numbers (Full-time equivalent basis) between 1998 and 2004. The data for 1997 can be obtained from Table C in Civil Service Statistics 2003. Civil Service Statistics 2004 are available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management of the civil service/statistics/civil service statistics/index.asp

The most recent figures, as at 30 June 2005, were published on 6 October 2005. http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management of the civil service/statistics/news/in dex.asp#061005

Data for the number of contractors is not currently collected.

Data on numbers of casual staff is also published on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management of the civil service/statistics/civil service statistics/index.asp. Data on numbers of agency temporary workers is not currently collected.

Equality/Diversity Units

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost to public funds of supporting *(a)* equality and *(b)* diversity units within central Government was in the last period for which figures are available; if he will deposit a list of these groups in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [28098]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Information on expenditure of equality and diversity units in individual Government Departments is not held centrally. However, the NAO report 'Delivering Public Services to a Diverse Society' published in December 2004 estimated that the direct costs in 2002–03 associated with co-ordinating strategy across gender, race, disability and civil service work force representation were over 19 million.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many staff in his Department were affected by the increase in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28931]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No staff in the Cabinet Office or the Central Office of Information were affected by the October increase in the national minimum wage as minimum salary levels exceeded the rates.

Strategy Unit

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to his answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1353–54W, on the Strategy Unit, what the other phases of the work will be. [28823]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Phase two of the report was the final phase of this work and contained policy recommendations. This has been withheld under Section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the progress made in reducing narcotics production and trafficking in Afghanistan; [27155]

(2) what representations he has received from his US counterpart regarding the progress made in reducing narcotics production and trafficking in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement; [27156]

(3) what discussions he has had with his NATO counterparts regarding the possibility of the international security assistance force resuming a role in counter narcotics missions; and if he will make a statement. [27161]

Mr. Ingram: UK armed forces are helping the Afghans create a secure environment in their country on which the eventual elimination of the Afghan opium trade depends. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime report states that there has been a 21 per cent. drop in poppy cultivation this year, down from 131,000 hectares to 103,000 hectares. Favourable weather conditions resulted, however, in an increase in the opium yield per acre from 32 kg in 2004 to 39 kg in 2005. It will take time for the impact of international assistance to counter narcotics activity in Afghanistan to be evident in Afghanistan and also in the supply of heroin to the UK.

The UK regularly discusses ongoing military assistance to counter narcotics with allies, including the United States. ISAF's role in support of counter narcotics is currently under discussion in NATO.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what funds have been provided by his Department *(a)* to assist Afghanistan's counter narcotics effort and *(b)* to train Afghan police; and if he will make a statement. [27157]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has not provided funds specifically for either counter narcotics or Afghan police training. In both cases, however, United Kingdom armed forces provide support, including information, training and logistic assistance, to Afghan forces.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what funds his Department has provided *(a)* to help create a new Afghan army and *(b)* to reconstitute Afghanistan's police force since 2002; [27164]

(2) if he will make a statement on progress in training the Afghan national police. [27159]

Mr. Ingram: The development of the Afghan National Army (ANA) is led by the United States. The UK Ministry of Defence has not contributed funds but has provided resources and assisted ANA capacity building within means and capabilities in theatre.

The development of the Afghan national police (ANP) is led by Germany. The UK Ministry of Defence has not contributed funds to ANP training, although we do provide assistance through our provincial reconstruction team in Mazar-e-Sharif, and would look to do the same in any future deployment to southern Afghanistan.

Some financial support to both the ANA (paying for students attending Sandhurst) and the ANP (work in Mazar-e-Sharif) has been funded by the global conflict prevention pool, which is co-owned with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development.

HMS Sheffield

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many requests have been made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for information relating to HMS Sheffield; when the requests were made; and on what date a decision was made on each request. [28356]

Mr. Ingram: Three requests for information (RFI) from different applicants have been made relating to HMS Sheffield under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. One RFI was made in January, and the other two in February. Full replies have been deferred pending the outcome of the departmental review that I commissioned in April 2005 to consider what information can be made available publicly concerning the investigation into the loss of HMS Sheffield during the Falklands conflict. My letter of 7 April (D/MSU/2/5/1) refers, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Armed Forces

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints of *(a)* unfair treatment, *(b)* discrimination, *(c)* harassment and *(d)* bullying have been made by members of the armed forces in each year since 1997. [27614]

Mr. Touhig: The armed forces do not record complaints of unfair treatment as a separate category, nor do they differentiate between those relating to discrimination and harassment.

The number of complaints received by the armed forces of *(a)* discrimination and harassment and *(b)* bullying in each year since 1998 are as follows:

	Discrimination/harassment	*Bullying*
1998	114	37
1999	72	44
2000	50	67
2001	59	41
2002	30	55
2003	29	35
2004	45	47

Comprehensive figures for 1997 are not available.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many servicemen and women injured on active service since 2000 have stayed on in the armed forces in a non-combatant role; and if he will make a statement. [28283]

Mr. Touhig: According to the Geneva Conventions (Protocol 1, Article 43), the only uniformed personnel to whom the term "non-combatant" applies are medics and chaplains. Therefore, if a serving member of the armed forces who is subject to illness or injury is medically downgraded, enabling them to continue in service while being unfit for operational deployment, this does not mean that they become a non-combatant (unless of course they are discharged from the armed forces or they subsequently transfer to one of the non-combatant branches).

The information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1067W, how many foreign nationals are serving in the armed forces, broken down by country of origin. [28362]

Mr. Touhig: The numbers of UK armed forces personnel who are foreign nationals are shown in the following table:

UK regular forces who are foreign nationals

September 2005[2]	*All services*[3]	*Naval Service*	*Army*	*Number RAF*
Total recorded foreign nationals[4]	7,155	485	[5]6,460	[5]210
Country				
Antigua	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
Australia	110	20	75	15
Bahamas	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
Bangladesh	5	[6]—	5	[6]—

UK regular forces who are foreign nationals

September 2005[2]	*All services*[1]	*Naval Service*	*Army*	*RAF*
				Number
Barbados	20	5	10	[8]
Belize	5	[9]	5	[9]
Botswana	5	[9]	5	[9]
Cameroon	20	[9]	20	[9]
Canada	105	20	65	20
Cyprus	[8]	[8]	[8]	[9]
Dominican Republic	15	[8]	15	[9]
Egypt	[8]	[9]	[9]	[8]
Eire	335	60	210	60
Falkland Islands	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Fiji	2,040	70	1,965	5
Gambia	75	[8]	70	[8]
Germany[3]	5	[8]	[8]	[9]
Ghana	590	[8]	585	[8]
Gibraltar	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Grenada	55	[8]	50	[9]
Guyana	15	[9]	15	[9]
India	45	5	40	[9]
Jamaica	1,030	25	975	25
Kenya	105	5	95	5
Malawi	85	[8]	80	[8]
Malaysia	10	[8]	5	[8]
Malta	10	[8]	5	[8]
Mauritius	25	[9]	20	[8]
Montserrat	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Namibia	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Nepal	25	[9]	25	[9]
New Zealand	85	10	65	5
Nigeria	55	[8]	55	[9]
Other African Country	[8]	[9]	[9]	[8]
Other Asiatic Country	[8]	[9]	[9]	[8]
Pacific Islands	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Pakistan	10	[8]	10	[8]
Papua New Guinea	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Seychelles	10	[9]	10	[9]
Sierra Leone	40	[9]	40	[9]
Singapore	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
South Africa	710	55	650	5
Sri Lanka[4]	15	[9]	10	[8]
St Christopher	[8]	[9]	[9]	[8]
St Helena	30	[8]	20	10
St Kitts	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
St Lucia	225	[8]	220	[8]
St. Vincent	420	135	285	[8]
Swaziland	5	[9]	5	[9]
Switzerland	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Tanzania	[8]	[9]	[8]	[9]
Tonga	5	[9]	5	[9]
Trinidad and Tobago	95	15	70	10
Uganda	35	[9]	35	[9]
Ukraine	[8]	[8]	[9]	[9]
United Arab Emirates	10	10	[9]	[9]
USA	5	[8]	[8]	[8]
West Indies	5	[8]	[8]	[9]
Zambia	20	[8]	15	[8]
Zimbabwe/Rhodesia	590	15	565	10
Other Non-British[5,6]	20	[9]	20	[8]
Not Recorded	705	600	25	80[7]

[1] RAF and Army data are for UK regular forces (trained and untrained), including Nursing Services and excluding full-time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists. Naval Service figures are for UK Regular Forces including Nursing Services, FIRS and activated reservists.

[2] Naval Service data are provided by AFPAA as data are not centrally held. Data are for personnel serving at 3 October 2005.
Army data are provided by DASA for personnel serving at 1 September 2005.
RAF data are provided by AFPAA as data are not centrally held. Data are for personnel serving as at 16 September 2005.

[3] Includes personnel with nationality recorded as West German.

[4] Includes personnel with nationality recorded as Ceylon.

[5] Includes personnel with nationality recorded as Commonwealth/foreign and personnel with nationality recorded as Foreign/foreign.

[6] Includes personnel with nationality recorded as Foreign National.

[7] Includes 80 personnel recorded as Commonwealth by birth, but with no nationality recorded.

[8] Denotes less than five.

[9] Denotes zero.

Note:
Data are rounded to 5 to prevent disclosure of sensitive personal information. Due to the founding methods used totals may not always equal the sum of the parts.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of armed service personnel in 2002–03 were *(a)* Irish citizens and *(b)* foreign nationals. [28396]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the following table. Historical nationality data for the naval service and the RAF cannot be provided as data is not centrally held. Army data is provided by the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA):

Percentage

	Irish citizen	*Foreign nationals*
1 April 2002		
Naval service	n/a	n/a
Army	2.0	2.5
Royal Air Force	n/a	n/a
1 April 2003		
Navel service	n/a	n/a
Army	2.0	4.0
Royal Air Force	n/a	n/a

n/a = denotes data not available

Note:
UK Regular Forces include Nursing Services and exclude full-time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists. They include both trained and untrained personnel.

Source:
DASA(Tri-Service)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the terms of reference were of research undertaken in the past five years into the socio-economic background of recruits to the armed services; what the size was of the sample in each case; what the principal conclusions were; and if he will place copies of research in the Library. [26274]

Mr. Touhig: No research has been undertaken by the Ministry of Defence in the last five years into the socio-economic background of recruits.

However, in 1999–2000, research into the socio-economic background of a sample of 500 Army recruits in the Cardiff catchment area was undertaken privately by a member of the armed forces in connection with an academic thesis, and was referred to in the evidence provided to the House of Commons Defence Committee for their inquiry into Duty of Care.

Gulf War Veterans

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Gulf War veterans in Northern Ireland are in receipt of *(a)* financial and *(b)* medical support provided by his Department. [28161]

Mr. Touhig: As at 30 June (the latest date for which figures are available), there were approximately 50 veterans in receipt of a war disablement pension whose service included operations in the Gulf Conflict with addresses in Northern Ireland. Others with a lower level of disablement may have received a gratuity award, but we do not have available figures for these. Not all the injuries or medical conditions claimed relate to service in the Gulf but our statistics do not enable us to distinguish the origin of the disablement. Veterans may also qualify for financial assistance through armed forces occupational pension schemes in addition to the normal social security benefits. Information on the numbers of veterans in receipt of benefits under the occupational schemes are not recorded.

127 1990–91 Gulf veterans, with addresses in Northern Ireland have attended the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme (GVMAP), based at St. Thomas's Hospital, London. GVMAP patients with mental health issues are referred to specialised centres, including those administered by Combat Stress. Approximately 25 per cent. of the 53,462 veterans who deployed to the Gulf in 1990–91 are still serving and their medical care is the responsibility of the Defence Medical Services. The Department may under the provisions of the War Pension Scheme defray expenses in respect of medical treatment that is not provided free of charge under other United Kingdom legislation. Information is not available on the number of payments made under this provision in Northern Ireland.

Iraq

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of *(a)* health problems of British troops returning from serving in Iraq and *(b)* the causes thereof. [21158]

Mr. Touhig: As a result of the lessons identified during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict, the Ministry of Defence took early action to put in place a large scale epidemiological study to monitor the physical and psychological health of personnel who served in Operation Telic. This research is being undertaken by King's College, London and the results are expected to be published in 2006.

Medals

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the issuing of medals. [22685]

Mr. Touhig: A number of measures, including the introduction of new information technology and an additional medal engraving facility have recently been introduced, and our procedures for the issuing of medals remain under continuous review.

Since forming in March of this year, the Ministry of Defence Medal Office has reduced the overall backlog of medal applications from 50,000 to some 24,000. With the exception of a handful of human administrative errors, all have been handled accurately.

Military Airfields

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records are maintained of US civil registered aircraft landing at UK military airfields. [28785]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence maintains a record of all civil registered aircraft that have landed at UK military airfields, including aircraft registration numbers, the name of the pilot and the departure date and destination of the aircraft.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records are maintained of individuals who arrive into the UK at military airfields on US registered aircraft. [28786]

Mr. Ingram: Where individuals have arrived in the United Kingdom on aircraft registered with any nation and stay in the UK, their details are passed by the Ministry of Defence to HM Revenue and Customs and the Immigration Service in accordance with standing military instructions and the local stipulated requirements of those organisations. Such details are not necessarily retained by the MOD.

Where aircraft transit through military airfields, to refuel for example, and passengers do not leave the airfield, the MOD records the names of the pilot and aircraft owner but does not record the details of passengers; international and national aviation regulations do not require the recording of passenger information when transiting UK territory or airspace.

Military Flying Training System

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planning assumption is for entry into service of the UK military flying training system; what the forecast cost is for *(a)* spending on the assessment phase of the project and *(b)* the demonstration and manufacture phase of the project; and if he will make a statement. [27169]

Mr. Ingram: Initial service provision of the UK military flying training system (UKMFTS) will be set at the time of the main investment decision. We expect that we will spend up to £39 million during the assessment phase. UKMFTS is being procured as a public private partnership that does not have a conventional demonstration and manufacture phase.

RAF (Recruits)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many recruits to the Royal Air Force there were in each of the last eight years; and how many he expects there to be in the next two years. [27619]

Mr. Touhig: For information relating to the last eight years I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 709W.

The current forecasts for the next two years are:

Financial year	*Officers*	*Other ranks*	*RAF total*
2006–07	550	1,380	1,930
2007–08	660	2,280	2,940

Notes:

1. Figures are for UK Regular forces and therefore exclude Full Time Reserve Service Personnel and mobilised reservists.
2. Figures include intake from civil life and those already within the armed forces.

These forecasts are subject to change.

RAF Bases (Ministerial Visits)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force bases Ministers have visited in the last 12 months. [27617]

Mr. Touhig: Defence Ministers have visited 14 Royal Air Force stations in the last 12 months.

Random Drug Testing

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria are used in selecting departmental establishments for random drug testing. [27652]

Mr. Touhig: All service personnel are liable to compulsory drug testing and selection for testing of military units is carried out randomly. The Royal Navy tests all ships, establishments and Royal Marine units over a two year cycle; the priority for the Army is operational units which are liable for deployment to operational theatres; the RAF tests each of its large units at least twice per annum.

Royal Navy

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the Royal Navy's budget will be for each of the next five years. [29165]

Mr. Ingram: The defence budget is not broken down by individual service. Tables 2 and 3 of The Government's Expenditure Plans 2005–06 to 2007–08, Ministry of Defence (Cmd 6532), show the resource and capital spending plans of the Navy's two Top Level Budget holders, the Commander-in-Chief Fleet and the 2nd Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, in the years 2005–06 to 2007–08. Spending plans for later years will be determined by the outcome of the comprehensive spending review and the subsequent departmental planning round.

Service Discharges

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces have been discharged as unfit in each year since 1990 from each service. [28280]

Mr. Touhig: The following table shows trained outflow due to medical reasons from UK Regular forces:

Financial year	*Total*	*Naval service*	*Army*	*RAF*
1989–90	[1]	[1]	480	200
1990–91	700	90	460	160
1991–92	680	100	440	140
1992–93	770	210	430	130
1993–94	810	210	430	170
1994–95	920	270	480	170
1995–96	1,180	310	640	230
1996–97	1,050	340	500	200
1997–98	1,140	380	550	220
1998–99	1,040	410	460	160
1999–2000	1,120	480	480	160
2000–01	1,040	450	420	170
2001–02	1,040	410	470	160
2002–03	950	340	490	110
2003–04	880	280	340	260
2004–05	1,080	390	520	160

[1] Denotes figures unavailable.

Notes:

1. UK Regular Forces includes nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists and Naval Activated Reservists.
2. Figures include trained outflow from recalled reservists on release.
3. Due to the rounding methods used, totals may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Service Personnel

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel have been based in each region of the UK in each year since 1995. [27483]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the tables. Information is shown on different tables due to the re-classification of several Government office regions between 1995 and 2005.

UK regular forces distribution across UK at the 1 July situation date

	1995	1996
United Kingdom	182,180	177,360
England	149,410	146,600
Wales	5,220	4,350
Scotland	16,880	15,460
Northern Ireland	9,890	10,480
Unknown	770	470
Government office region (England)		
Northern	1,520	1,160
Yorks and Humberside	12,320	12,150
East Midlands	9,360	8,560
East Anglia	11,310	11,620
South East	62,450	60,910
South West	45,230	44,840
West Midlands	5,130	5,290
North West	2,090	2,080

Source:
DASA (Tri Service)

	1997	1998
United Kingdom	171,570	173,440
England	142,640	144,550
Wales	3,330	3,240
Scotland	13,890	14,210
Northern Ireland	11,460	11,030
Unknown	250	400
Government office region (England)		
North East	1,290	1,420
North West	1,980	1,510
Merseyside	200	220
Yorks and Humberside	10,960	12,090
East Midlands	7,790	6,960
West Midlands	5,100	4,690
Eastern	17,040	16,260
London	7,340	7,380
South East	46,570	49,590
South West	44,370	44,430

Source:
DASA (Tri Service)

	1999	2000	2001	2002
United Kingdom	171,740	170,300	171,710	171,440
England	144,350	143,040	142,320	142,130
Wales	3,270	3,220	2,570	2,110
Scotland	14,940	15,080	14,460	13,460
Northern Ireland	8,990	8,390	9,400	5,160
Unknown	190	570	2,970	8,580
Government office region (England)				
North East	1,440	1,420	1,340	1,320
North West	2,130	1,900	1,290	1,500
Yorks. and Humberside	11,040	13,060	12,800	13,840
East Midlands	8,400	8,810	8,040	7,200
West Midlands	6,450	6,720	6,840	6,740
Eastern	17,880	17,310	17,810	17,010
London	7,340	6,430	6,410	6,370
South East	50,370	49,620	49,040	51,230
South West	39,310	37,770	38,750	36,930

Source:
DASA (Tri Service)

	2004	2005
United Kingdom	175,390	169,600
England	149,390	144,980
Wales	3,080	2,860
Scotland	14,150	13,240
Northern Ireland	7,690	6,970
Centrally Administered	1,360	1,530
Unknown	280	30
Government office region (England)		
North East	1,470	1,550
North West	1,760	2,050
Yorks. and Humberside	14,210	13,420
East Midlands	8,710	9,180
West Midlands	7,310	6,560
Eastern	18,620	18,470
London	6,800	6,530
South East	49,110	46,840
South West	41,410	40,380

Notes:

1. Figures are for UK regular forces, both trained and untrained, located in the UK. They therefore exclude Ghurkhas, full-time reserve service personnel, the home service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.
2. Figures show the UK regular forces posted location. Posted location is where an individual is permanently based.
3. Naval service personnel on sea service are included against the region containing the home port of their ship.
4. Naval service personnel serving in flights at sea are included against the region containing the base airfield of their flight.
5. The detailed figures in this publication have been compiled from unit statistics related to unit postcodes. For some units postcode information is either unavailable or inappropriate.
6. Location statistics are not available for FTRS, the home service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.
7. Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.
8. Comparisons should not be made between data before July 2002 and data after July 2004 due to the different methodologies used to collate the data.

Source:
DASA (Tri Service)

Service personnel location statistics are published in Tri-Service Publication 10 (UK Regular Forces Distribution Across the UK), copies of which can be found in the Library of the House. TSP 10 was suspended in 2003 due to concerns over the data quality.

Territorial Army

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the Territorial Army live in Paisley and Renfrewshire, North constituency. [28958]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Freedom of Information

Peter Law: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list Freedom of Information (FOI) requests made to the Law Officers which have been passed to the FOI clearing house for evaluation, broken down by *(a)* subject and *(b)* date of request. [28947]

The Solicitor-General: Information about the handling of Freedom of Information requests is published in "Freedom of Information Statistics on Implementation in Central Government". The most recently published report was 30 September 2005 and copies were placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Additional information about the role of the Clearing House can be found on the Department of Constitutional Affairs' website at: http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm#2. Departments do not provide details about the internal handling of requests, such as details of which requests were referred to the Clearing House for guidance.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Solicitor-General how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23524]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service has undertaken a Programme of IT projects since 2001[1]. This Programme has been the subject of the Gateway review process since its inception.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office became an independent Department on 18 April 2005; prior to that date it was part of HM Customs and Excise. To date it has not developed any new projects.

The Serious Fraud Office has developed 12 IT projects since 2001, none of which had a risk profile requiring the Gateway review process. However in the interest of best practice three Gateway reviews have been undertaken.

The Treasury Solicitor's Office has developed 22 IT projects since 2001, only two of which were subjects of the Gateway review process.

None of the Departments has published findings from the Gateway reviews, nor have I been asked to do so.

[1] This reply also covers HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate

PRIME MINISTER

Financial Contribution

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister in what areas of the cost of his *(a)* accommodation, *(b)* security and *(c)* transport (i) he and (ii) his family makes a contribution to the expenses incurred by the Government. [28102]

The Prime Minister: The Government are reimbursed as necessary for personal expenses incurred, as has been the practice of successive Governments.

Peerages

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister what account he takes of the record of donation to political parties of persons he is minded to recommend for elevation to the peerage; and if he will make a statement. [29461]

The Prime Minister: The fact of having made a political donation should not in itself exclude the appointment to a peerage where the candidate's experience or achievements justify one. The House of Lords Appointments Commission, who carry out the scrutiny of candidates, is given information, where relevant, about political donations.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in *(a)* Havering, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Greater London have had (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three and (iv) four or more antisocial behaviour orders issued against them in the last four years. [27127]

Hazel Blears: It is not possible from the data on antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) collected centrally to identify, within an acceptable degree of accuracy, persons issued with different numbers of ASBOs. A table giving a breakdown of ASBOs issued, by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed, is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk. This table gives data by year since ASBOs were introduced.

At-risk Children

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were on the at-risk register in each local authority in England at the end of each council year since 1989. [26431]

Beverley Hughes: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is available from the Department's website at:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgatewav/DB/VOL/v000553/index.shtml

Bail Hostels

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many bail hostels serve courts in Surrey. [27514]

Fiona Mactaggart: Approved Premises (formerly bail and probation hostels) operate in all parts of England and Wales and provide places for those bailed by the courts, offenders serving community sentences or those released from prison on licence. Surrey has one Approved Premises which serves the courts in the county. In addition, the local probation area has an arrangement with a housing provider in the county for access to accommodation for those on bail who are assessed as medium or low risk of harm.

Community Service Offenders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to make community service offenders wear recognisable clothing. [25205]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office through the National Offender Management Service is examining ways of making compulsory unpaid work more visible and this includes looking at the use of a 'Community Payback' logo to identify the work carried out by offenders supervised by local probation areas. Currently probation areas are implementing the proposals of the National Probation Directorate and using this logo to mark current and completed work projects.

The emphasis is on badging the work offenders undertake in order to raise public awareness of the benefits this brings to the communities. In accordance with Health and Safety requirements, offenders on unpaid work projects are regularly required to wear suitable protective clothing and some badging of equipment and protective clothing is currently being introduced.

Counter-terrorism

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his oral answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 9, on counter-terrorism, which EU countries can detain terrorist suspects without trial for four years. [27334]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There are a number of EU countries where terrorist suspects can be detained, without trial, for four years. In France, for example, a suspect can be detained for up to four years if the crime in question carries a sentence of over 10 years, and this includes many terrorism-related offences. In Germany there is no maximum detention period, although the grounds for detention must be reviewed at least every six months. In Spain there is an initial detention period of up to two years, renewable for a further two if the crime carries a sentence of six or more years and the investigating magistrate fears a risk of absconding.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of Criminal Records Bureau checks made per week *(a)* was in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004 and *(b)* has been to date in 2005. [26895]

Hazel Blears: The average number of Disclosures issued per week in 2003 was 40,762 and 47,853 in 2004. The average number for 2005 stands at 50,798.

De-activated Firearms

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many de-activated Lee Enfield Mark 1, First World War rifles have been used in the commission of an offence in the last five years; and if he will make a statement on the effect of the Violent Crime Reduction Bill on owners of such rifles. [30087]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The requested data are not collected centrally. De-activated firearms have been exempted from the definition of realistic imitation firearm and owners of these rifles will be largely unaffected by the provisions in the Bill. Provisions in the Bill relating to the sale of imitations to minors will apply and it will be an offence in future to sell a de-activated firearm to a person under the age of 18.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time equivalent employee reductions *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06 as a result of the Gershon review in his Department; what (i) cost savings relating to IT projects and (ii) total efficiency savings (A) were achieved in 2004–05 and (B) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06 as a result of that review; and if he will make a statement. [25915]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* My Department's 2005 Annual Report (Cm 6528) recorded that gains in value for money estimated to be worth £717 million per year were achieved during 2004–05 and that the size of the headquarters had been reduced by 876 full-time equivalent posts.

These improvements form a significant first step towards achieving my Department's targets to increase value for money by £1,970 million per year by 31 March 2008 and to reduce the size of the headquarters by 2,700 full-time equivalent posts.

Value for money increases have been supported, in some areas, by new or changed use of information technology (IT). However IT investment has generally formed only part of a wider change to the way in which work is carried out; it is not possible to show separately what proportion of the Department's substantial gains have arisen directly as a result of IT.

DNA Database

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individual records have been added to the national DNA database in each month since January 2004. [4675]

Andy Burnham: The estimated number of records pertaining to individuals added to the National DNA Database in each month since January 2004 is shown in the following table. The figures shown take account of replicate sample records on the database. There were an estimated 2,888,855 individuals on the database at the end of July 2005.

Estimated number of individuals added to the database

Month	*Number*
2004	
January	35,403
February	37,998
March	51,329
April	33,192
May	29,259
June	38,545
July	38,964
August	45,173
September	28,653

Estimated number of individuals added to the database

Month	*Number*
October	43,720
November	44,321
December	43,350
2005	
January	39,638
February	41,336
March	44,100
April	45,566
May	47,443
June	48,204
July	45,514

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been found guilty on the basis of evidence from the DNA database since its inception. [28065]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 10 November 2005]*: It is not possible to provide information on the number of individuals who have been found guilty on the basis of evidence from the National DNA Database as statistical data are not kept in this form.

Government Telecommunications

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the security implications of the supply of Government telecommunications equipment by overseas manufacturers. [27313]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The procurement of Government telecommunications equipment, irrespective of the source of supply, always involves a security assessment appropriate to the purpose for which the equipment is to be used.

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to police forces regarding the development of contingency plans for use in the event of an influenza pandemic; and what plans he has to update this guidance. [26007]

Hazel Blears: The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has been alerted to the potential consequences of an outbreak of pandemic influenza, and has communicated this to police forces in order to inform contingency planning. This work will be guided by the Government's UK Influenza Contingency Plan (latest version 19 October 2005). The Home Office will continue to liaise with ACPO in the production of contingency plans as necessary.

Malicious Damage Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under sections (A) 35 and (B) 36 of the Malicious Damage Act 1861 in each year since 1984. [27143]

Hazel Blears: Statistics on the number of males and females charged with an offence are not centrally collected. Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of males and females found guilty of criminal damage at all courts England and Wales, 1984–2003 is contained in the table. It is not possible to separate data on convictions under sections 35 and 36 of the Malicious Damages Act 1861 from data relating to other offences of criminal damage. Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Number of males and females found guilty at all courts for criminal damage England and Wales, 1984–2003[1]

	Criminal damage endangering life (excluding arson)[2]		*Other criminal damage*[3]	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
1984	50	3	8,202	492
1985	43	—	8,327	514
1986	60	3	7,313	444
1987	43	4	7,805	459
1988	41	7	8,773	536
1989	61	7	6,578	425
1990	69	6	8,113	613
1991	50	4	7,433	606
1992	50	7	7,318	581
1993	40	2	7,091	574
1994	71	1	7,519	587
1995	54	7	7,208	556
1996	86	9	7,524	643
1997	97	8	7,775	686
1998	81	6	8,372	711
1999	90	10	8,147	754
2000	70	9	7,448	690
2001	80	12	7,724	754
2002	82	12	7,914	830
2003	101	15	7,995	872

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

[2] Includes offences under Explosive Substances Act 1883 s.2 (in part) and s.3 (in part), Malicious Damage Act 1861 ss 35, 36, 47 and 48, Criminal Damage Act 1971 s.1(2).

[3] Includes offences under Explosive Substances Act 1883 s.2(in part) and s.3 (in part) Malicious Damage Act 1861 ss 35, 36, 47 and 48, Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Area Act 1979 s.28(1), Post Office Act 1953 s.60, Criminal Damage Act 1971 s.1(1) (value over £5,000 or at the same time as an other offence).

Mental Health

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to provide offenders with mental health problems rehabilitation after sentencing. [27515]

Fiona Mactaggart: Wherever possible, subject to the need to protect others, mentally disordered offenders receive treatment rather than punishment. Where they cannot be diverted to hospital at sentencing, the Home Secretary has power to direct their transfer to hospital from prison. Discharge or release from hospital is subject to statutory aftercare arrangements under s117 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Where mentally disordered offenders do receive prison sentences, Prison Mental Health In-reach teams work to link them with their "home" Community Mental Health Teams before their release to ensure continuity of care under the Care Programme Approach and the Offender Mental Health Care Pathway.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how regional offender managers will be involved in contestability under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [23271]

Fiona Mactaggart: Regional Offender Managers (ROMs) will be commissioning services from the Prison Service and from Probation Boards from April 2006. Meanwhile, proposals for increasing contestability across the National Offender Management Service estate are being developed. Contestability is expected to result in ROMS commissioning correctional services from a range of public, private and voluntary and community sector providers.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete *(a)* assessment of and *(b)* consultation on the organisational design options to deliver (i) integrated offender management, (ii) increased contestability and (iii) the clear purchaser/provider split as set out in the 2005–06 Business Plan. [12040]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 13 July 2005]:* A consultation paper, "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending", was published on 20 October, setting out how we propose to introduce a clear purchaser/provider split and increased contestability of integrated offender management services (current legislation already allows for competition in the provision of prison services but not of probation services). The consultation period ends on 20 December and we will publish a summary of responses as soon as possible thereafter.

Neighbourhood Disruption

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that juveniles do not cause disruption to others in their neighbourhood after 9 pm. [27147]

Hazel Blears: A wide range of powers are available to limit disruption caused by juveniles after 9 pm, these include powers given to the police to designate an area where there is persistent antisocial behaviour and a problem with groups causing intimidation. In these areas the police, in agreement with the local authority, have a power to disperse groups where their presence or behaviour has resulted, or is likely to result, in a member of the public being intimidated, alarmed or distressed.

The groups can then be excluded from a specified area for up to 24 hours antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) can also be used as an effective means of curbing disruptive behaviour in local neighbourhoods. ASBOs contain prohibitions which place restrictions on the behaviour of individuals. These prohibitions may include a curfew which ensures young people are in their homes by a given time.

In situations where groups of young people are causing disruption, targeting ringleaders with ASBOs may be a useful way of dispersing the group. acceptable behaviour contracts, which are voluntary agreements, may also be used to ensure young people are not causing disruption in their neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Watch

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes are in operation in West Lancashire. [27841]

Hazel Blears: In January 2005 there were 1,510 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Lancashire as a whole, covering some 79,481 properties. The most recent available figures suggest that there are currently around 300 Neighbourhood Watch schemes operating in West Lancashire.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding is available for neighbourhood watch in West Lancashire. [27842]

Hazel Blears: Neighbourhood Watch groups in West Lancashire, in common with Neighbourhood Watch organisations in other parts of England and Wales, can approach their local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and local councils for financial and other support. The Home Office does not provide direct grant funding to local Neighbourhood Watch groups. Instead we provide other types of support such as the www.neighbourhoodwatch.uk.com website, free public liability insurance for local groups and free crime reduction literature for use by these groups.

Offences Against the Person Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the operation of section 36 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. [27140]

Hazel Blears: Section 36 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 makes it an offence to use threats or force to obstruct or prevent ministers of religion in the discharge of their duties. The maximum penalty is two years imprisonment. In the years 1999 to 2003, there have been six cases proceeded against at magistrates courts under section 36 of the 1861 Act.

Police

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to merge police forces according to the bounderies used for regional assemblies; and if he will make a statement. [26404]

Hazel Blears: We have made clear to the police service that the very strong starting presumption is that any new force areas should not cross Government office regional boundaries. It follows that very strong arguments would need to be submitted in support of any merger proposals which went contrary to this presumption.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has evaluated on the effectiveness of national recruiting guidelines for the police force; and if he will make a statement. [26565]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office and Centrex, the Central Police Recruitment, Training and Development Authority, are responsible for evaluating the results and effectiveness of the recruit assessment centre across all forces in England and Wales. Their research has shown that those selected through the national police recruitment assessment centre go on to perform well at initial police probationer training and also perform effectively in the job as a constable. I will place a copy of the latest Predictive Validity Report in the Library.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place a copy of the national guidelines on recruitment standards for the police force in the Library. [26566]

Hazel Blears: Potential candidates are assessed in seven competencies; Respect for Race and Diversity, Resilience, Effective Communication, Team Working, Problem Solving, Personal Responsibility and Community and Customer Focus.

The seven different competencies are measured through four interactive exercises, two written exercises, and a competency based structured interview and two ability tests, one testing verbal reasoning the other numerical reasoning. Respect for Race and Diversity competency area is designed into and assessed in each exercise as a 'golden thread'. The other six competencies are measured a minimum of three times across the other exercises and interview. Candidates must pass at the agreed level. Other recruitment standards are set out in Home Office Circulars 6/2003, 25/2003, 54/2003, 43/2004 and 59/2004.

These are available on the Home Office website and I have placed a copy of them in the Library.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training in management skills is available for police officers. [26567]

Hazel Blears: The Core Leadership Development Programme provides a suite of leadership modules aimed at post probationary constables, sergeants, inspectors and corresponding police staff—providing them with leadership and management skills across a range of areas of expertise. This has been externally accredited by the Chartered Institute of Management.

The Senior Leadership Development Programme, aimed at middle and senior managers, develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours to improve operational professionalism and performance and deliver high quality services. It is a requirement for superintendents and chief superintendents to pass the Strategic Command Course to become a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers.

This course provides police officers with the skills to take on the most demanding roles in the police service.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are on the force in Gravesham; and if he will take steps to increase this number. [28592]

Hazel Blears: Figures for Gravesham are not collected centrally. However, Gravesham comes within the North Kent Basic Command Unit and as at 31 March 2005 there were 388 (full-time equivalent) police officers within the North Kent BCU. The number of police officers in North Kent has increased by 46 since March 2002. The deployment of police officers to basic command units and other specialist units in Kent police is an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what boundaries the Government will use for the restructuring of police forces; and what assessment he has made of the merits of using Government office regions as the basis for the reorganisation. [26944]

Hazel Blears: We have made clear to the police service that the very strong starting presumption is that any new force areas should not cross Government office regional boundaries. It follows that very strong arguments would need to be submitted in support of any merger proposals which went contrary to this presumption.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to improve the quality of local policing in Coventry, South; and if he will make a statement. [27239]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* The Government are committed to a major programme of police reform, to help build safer and stronger communities. This will help to drive performance in every force and includes: building a more responsive, citizen-focused police service with neighbourhood policing at its heart—reshaping the national policing landscape to ensure effective policing at district, force and national level—further modernising the police work force.

This is building on the significant progress that has already been made: overall crime is down by 35 per cent. since 1997 and the chance of being a victim of crime is at a 20-year low—police numbers are at an all time high. We now have over 141,000 police officers, 71,000 police staff and 6,300 community support officers—investment in policing has increased by over a quarter since 1997. We have also sought to instil a strong performance culture. This is taking hold delivering real and sustainable improvements. In terms of West Midlands Police's local performance and how this is enhanced, as for any force this is principally a matter for the chief officer team and the police authority. The Home Office

has recently published assessments for every force in the country. West Midlands Police received a "Good" and "Improved" grading in the local policing domain.

The Government's work with all 43 forces to develop neighbourhood policing, initially within pathfinder areas, will enhance the quality of local policing. In West Midlands, the pathfinder is North Sandwell Operational Command Unit.

The development of neighbourhood policing within the pathfinder will inform the development of neighbourhood policing across the force. Following the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary on improving protective services, I have also asked police forces and police authorities to develop options for restructuring forces and to submit their final reports, including their final options, to the Home Office by 23 December 2005. Larger, more strategic forces will support neighbourhood policing as they will have the resilience to prevent the abstraction of neighbourhood policing teams to major incidents.

Prison Service

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on individuals employed by the Prison Service who wish to continue working beyond the age of 60. [28916]

Fiona Mactaggart: The public sector Prison Service is currently reviewing its age retirement policies across all grades of staff. It is expected that the Prison Service Management Board will consider the outcome of the review in December 2005 and advise staff of the outcome of the review in early 2006. Prison officers and operational managers are not routinely permitted to work beyond the age of 60.

In exceptional circumstances, prison governors have discretion to allow individuals to work beyond the age of 60 where there is a specific operational need to retain the individual member of staff due to their specialist skills or involvement in a particular project or specific work. Operational support grades and industrial staff may continue to be employed until the age of 65. Under a temporary policy, due to expire on 31 March 2006, administrative staff and non-operational management grades are currently permitted to work on an annual basis beyond the age of 60. The review will determine whether these grades will be allowed to work beyond the age of 60 after this date.

Prisoner Release

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of prisoners are released with *(a)* no arranged employment and *(b)* no accommodation. [18611]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prisoners are asked immediately before release about arrangements for accommodation and ETE (Employment Training and Education) after release. Figures provided as follows refer to accommodation, ETE and Freshstart bookings (interviews arranged at the local Jobcentre Plus).

Percentage of prisoners who have not had accommodation or employment arranged prior to release. Year-to-date September 2005.

	Percentage
No accommodation	18
Without employment[1]	74

[1] Not to be mistaken with unemployed (see following table for details).

The breakdown of those released without employment[1]. Year-to-date September 2005.

	Percentage
In education/training	10
Unavailable to work (i.e. long-term carer, sickness, retirement)	9
Unknown (no information recorded)	51
Unemployed	29

[1] 57 per cent. of those released without employment were booked a FreshStart Interview by Jobcentre Plus.

Prisons

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to enable prisoners to continue with educational courses started in prison after their release. [16963]

Fiona Mactaggart: In August 2005, the Learning and Skills Council took responsibility in three development regions (the North West, North East and South West) for planning and funding an integrated learning and skills service for offenders in custody and the community, linking it much more explicitly with mainstream provision for post-16 learners. The remaining six regions in England will follow in August 2006.

The key features of the new service are described in The Offenders Learning Journey (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning/uploads/docs/adultpercent20OLJpercent20V0.5.doc) which specifies an early, intense focus on assessing learning needs followed by seamless arrangements for delivering those requirements to offenders across prisons and probation and on into mainstream learning and skills provision.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to provide victim support-based treatment for prison inmates who were victims of sexual abuse prior to incarceration. [21724]

Fiona Mactaggart: A number of voluntary and self-help groups offer support to both female and male offenders who are survivors of sexual abuse, including interventions by rape crisis centres, counselling services and other health professionals. Services are contracted by prisons according to local circumstances.

The Prison Service has issued operational advice and good practice guidelines entitled "Supporting Women in Prison who have been Abused, Raped or who have experienced Domestic Violence (June 2005)." A directory of services for women who have experienced abuse as children or adults has also been published recently.

The Service has also consulted a number of relevant non-statutory agencies, as well as undertaking an extensive literature review on the impact of

victimisation and its links with crime by women. Offending behaviour programmes currently being piloted with women are taking account of the role of childhood maltreatment in the causes of offending and substance use for women.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many assaults have taken place on prison officers *(a)* in total, *(b)* in the Prison Service and *(c)* within private prisons in each of the last five years. [25446]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service does not routinely collect separate data on assaults on prison officers. However, the following table shows the number of serious assaults on all members of staff for the last five full financial years and for the first six months of 2005–06. The data include serious assaults on both prison officers and staff in civilian roles.

	Prison system total	*HM Prison Service*	*Contracted prisons*	*Contractor escorts*
2000–01	122	105	6	11
2001–02	126	113	9	4
2002–03	133	120	9	4
2003–04	197	173	14	10
2004–05	188	162	14	12
2005–06	91	68	14	9

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of overcrowding on the operation of Springhill Prison; [25861]

(2) what steps his Department is taking to reduce overcrowding in Springhill Prison. [25862]

Fiona Mactaggart: No prisoners are held in crowded conditions at HMP Springhill.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to reduce the number of suicides in prisons. [26465]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prisoner suicide prevention operates by embedding suicide prevention through every area of prison life-including detoxification, decency, health care, staff training, and the built environment. The key intervention currently being introduced across public and private prisons is the new care-planning system for at-risk prisoners: ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork). ACCT aims to improve the quality of care by introducing flexible care understanding at-risk prisoners.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people *(a)* joined and *(b)* left the Probation Service in England and Wales during (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05, broken down by grade. [23829]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not available for the full period requested. Data collected prior to 1 April 2003 is unreliable, and is not directly comparable with the more accurate figures collected since that time. The figures presented in the table show full-time equivalent (FTE) figures at the close of each quarter from 1 April 2003 to 30 June 2005.

The starters and leavers data in the table does not capture movements/promotions between grades. For example, the vast majority of new probation officers are trainee probation officers who are appointed at the successful completion of their training. Because these trainees are already employed by the National Probation Service (NPS) at the time of their appointment to a probation officer post, this is not recorded as a 'new start' and does not appear in the starters figures.

This gives the appearance that the number of leavers in the probation officer category continuously exceeds the number of starters. This is not an accurate representation, as probation officer numbers continue to grow in the NPS. The comparison of starters and leavers figures (in order to gauge net growth/loss in staff numbers) is only representative when comparing the overall total figures in each period.

2003–04

	Quarter 1		*Quarter 2*		*Quarter 3*		*Quarter 4*	
	Starters	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*
Senior Probation Officer	4.00	20.00	2.00	20.00	1.50	16.50	1.40	18.50
Senior Practitioner	0.00	3.00	9.00	6.00	1.00	4.00	0.00	7.60
Probation Officer	33.90	78.20	29.10	147.00	34.60	84.10	11.10	95.70
Trainee Probation Officer	2.00	11.00	211.00	15.00	518.00	17.80	135.00	19.00
Probation Services Officer	239.00	111.30	346.10	133.80	229.16	146.01	131.53	113.13
Psychologist	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50
Other Operational Staff	30.40	56.20	30.70	35.20	49.30	18.30	48.74	23.60
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	1.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
AGO and Equivalent	1.00	2.00	4.70	9.00	5.00	5.67	5.00	6.20
Area/District Manager	2.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	8.00
Section or Function Head	4.00	5.00	19.00	10.00	8.50	10.00	7.00	16.00
Support Staff-Admin	187.80	87.20	176.60	109.70	244.23	113.57	164.99	117.83
Support Staff Other	44.10	13.00	30.40	39.40	38.91	26.30	21.54	16.11
Other Specialist Worker	7.40	6.60	15.00	25.00	10.60	6.00	7.00	13.60
Total	556.60	397.50	874.60	553.10	1,143.80	451.25	535.30	459.77

2004–05

	Quarter 1		*Quarter 2*		*Quarter 3*		*Quarter 4*	
	Starters	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*
Senior Probation Officer	4.00	22.60	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	6.00
Senior Practitioner	1.00	2.40	0.00	5.00	1.27	1.00	2.00	0.00
Probation Officer	14.50	84.40	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	1.50	3.00

	2004-05							
	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Starters	Leavers	Starters	Leavers	Starters	Leavers	Starters	Leavers
Trainee Probation Officer	2.00	16.00	4.00	11.90	8.00	8.07	8.31	13.38
Probation Services Officer	137.44	138.03	171.83	158.52	165.18	110.98	193.51	103.77
Psychologist	0.00	2.00	38.47	13.90	21.58	8.20	27.00	14.09
Other Operational Staff	13.65	19.45	9.30	13.32	9.00	3.60	10.78	5.89
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	0.00	0.00	1.60	24.90	3.00	15.17	6.05	16.10
AGO and Equivalent	0.00	5.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	0.00	2.50
Area/District Manager	2.00	1.50	4.20	106.96	25.66	93.68	23.64	84.30
Section or Function Head	5.50	9.58	38.00	36.00	430.00	24.00	96.00	9.00
Support Staff-Admin	104.61	142.66	208.18	159.83	255.53	132.86	296.81	106.79
Support Staff Other	27.05	21.98	2.00	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
Other Specialist Worker	10.68	8.00	21.25	20.80	21.44	17.03	36.15	19.10
Total	322.43	473.60	498.83	558.13	942.66	426.58	702.75	383.92

	2005-06 Quarter 1	
	Starters	Leavers
Senior Probation Officer	2.00	1.27
Senior Practitioner	0.50	4.00
Probation Officer	1.00	0.00
Trainee Probation Officer	9.00	7.30
Probation Services Officer	177.21	109.30
Psychologist	18.10	15.32
Other Operational Staff	13.50	11.30
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	5.90	15.00
AGO and Equivalent	2.00	10.20
Area/District Manager	17.90	99.88
Section or Function Head	1.00	13.00
Support Staff-Admin	236.89	124.70
Support Staff Other	0.00	0.60
Other Specialist Worker	22.53	24.41
Total	507.53	436.28

Prostitution

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to bring forward legislation on prostitution following his recent review. [25920]

Fiona Mactaggart: Following public consultation last year we are developing a coordinated strategy for England and Wales on the wide-ranging issues arising from prostitution, which we will publish as soon as possible. This strategy will set out any legislative changes we plan to make as a result of the review and responses to the consultation.

Protection from Harassment Act

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many times the powers under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 have been used to prevent an individual from contacting a spouse or partner in each year since the Act came into force; what standard of proof is required before such powers are exercised; and if he will make a statement; [24524]

(2) on how many occasions powers under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 have been used to prevent a person from accessing their marital home; and if he will make a statement. [28061]

Fiona Mactaggart: The available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of restraining orders made under section 5 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 up to 2004 is contained in table one.

The available information from the Department for Constitutional Affairs County Court Statistics Module Database on the estimated number of injunctions granted under section 3 of the Act, 1998 to 2005, is contained in table two. (The number is estimated because there is no specific reference to section three of the Act within the dataset.) It is not possible to identify those orders or injunctions that were intended to prevent contact with a partner or spouse, as information about the purpose of such orders and injunctions is not centrally collected. Both restraining orders made under section 5 of the Act and civil injunctions granted under section three are civil orders.

Both orders are preventative rather than punitive and are intended to give protection to victims. In determining whether a restraining order is necessary, the criminal court will apply a civil standard of proof. If a civil court is satisfied on a balance of probabilities that harassment has taken place or is anticipated, then it may grant an injunction.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

	Injunctions granted
1998	374
1999	390
2000	283
2001	433
2002	482
2003	761
2004	354
2005 (to September 2005)	482

Defendants given a restraining order, principal and non-principal, 1997–2004

	Crown court	Magistrates court	All courts
1997	0	1	1
1998	38	822	860
1999	146	1,290	1,436
2000	59	1,559	1,618
2001	3	1,602	1,605
2002	127	1,807	1,934
2003	520	1,947	2,467
2004	602	2,204	2,806

Source:
RDS-NOMS

Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of Sir Michael Lyons' independent review of public sector relocation; to which locations they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [25913]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* During 2004–05, the Home Office announced that a corporate shared services centre for the Prison Service would be established in Newport (Monmouthshire) by March 2008. That would create 500 posts in South Wales and reduce the number of comparable posts, in London and the South East, by around 620 as well as reducing administration support posts in prison establishments across the country.

By the end of 2004–05, a further 320 posts had been created in Sheffield (70 posts) and the regions more widely (250 posts), avoiding post creation in London and the South East in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. During 2005–06, the Home Office will continue to review scope to relocate posts away from London and the South East in support of the Government's policy following Sir Michael Lyon's review.

Reoffenders

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convicted criminals re-offended while on bail in the last period for which figures are available. [27586]

Hazel Blears: Information on re-offending while on bail is not collected centrally.

Sexual Offenders

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is being taken by his Department to increase the provision of treatment for sex offenders in prison. [25854]

Fiona Mactaggart: The range of accredited sex offender treatment programmes delivered by the Prison Service have been increased this year. These sex offender treatment programmes are designed to address different levels of risk and need. Resources are concentrated on those who are in prison long enough to benefit from a full programme. Some who do not attend a programme in prison may do so while on licence in the community.

Terrorism

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with his Australian counterpart on the operation of detention policy for *(a)* terrorist suspects and *(b)* those suspected of aiding terrorists. [28954]

Hazel Blears: My right hon. Friend met Phil Ruddock, the Australian Attorney General, on 27 October to discuss all aspects of anti-terrorism legislation.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department requested United Kingdom police forces to contact hon. Members on the subject of the Terrorism Bill. [28096]

Hazel Blears: In the debate in the House of Commons on 2 November, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, suggested that over the weekend Members of Parliament discuss the counter-terrorism issues with their constituents, and highlighted the importance of professional advice from local police.

On 3 November, he suggested to ACPO that Chief Constables write to MPs in their police authority area, making themselves or relevant senior officers available to MPs, of all parties, who wanted to know their local police attitude to these issues. He naturally made clear that this should not be on a party political basis. Chief Constables responded to this in a number of different ways ranging from taking no action to setting out their views. The Government believe that it is entirely proper for the Police Service—who are tasked with protecting our security—to make the case for new powers which they have sought and which they feel are necessary to protect the nation, as they did over a period of time with this proposal.

Women Prisoners

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women in Wales were sentenced to a period of imprisonment in the last five years, broken down by prison. [27927]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of women sentenced in Welsh courts and their destination establishment from 2000 to 2004 is in the following table, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

Number of women sentenced from Welsh courts and their destination prison establishment

	Number
2000	
Total	299
Brockhill	1
Drake Hall	1
Eastwood Park	234
Low Newton	2
Styal	61

Number of women sentenced from Welsh courts and their destination prison establishment

	Number
2001	
Total	349
Brockhill	5
Drake Hall	2
Eastwood Park	262
Highpoint	1
Holloway	1
New Hall	9
Styal	69
2002	
Total	312
Brockhill	4
Downview	1
Eastwood Park	232
Holloway	1
New Hall	4
Styal	70
2003	
Total	330
Buckley Hall	3
Brockhill	4
Eastwood Park	260
Foston Hall	3
Holloway	2
New Hall	1
Styal	57
2004	
Total	373
Brockhill	2
Bullwood Hall	2
Eastwood Park	298
New hall	6
Styal	65

Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the findings of the research project into the impact of section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 to be published.

Fiona Mactaggart: At the present time it is planned to publish the findings of the research into the impact of section 41 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 in the spring of 2006.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the band D council tax was in 2004–05, in the billing authorities affected by the 2004–05 in-year capping designation, giving separately *(a)* pre-capping band D bill for the whole billing authority and *(b)* the post-capping band D bill for the whole billing authority; and what the average parish precepts were in each case. [26912]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is tabled as follows:

£

Local authority	*Pre-capping band D area council tax*	*Post-capping band D area council tax*	*Average parish precept band D*[1]
Bromsgrove[2]	1,183	1,179	12
Fenland	1,210	1,200	16
Herefordshire	1,185	1,178	28
Malvern Hills[2]	1,183	1,180	51
Nottingham	1,259	1,257	0
Redditch[2]	1,192	1,189	0
Shepway	1,230	1,214	17
Torbay	1,168	1,155	0
Worcester[2]	1,159	1,155	2
Wychavon[2]	1,146	1,142	28
Wyre Forest[2]	1,200	1,196	9

[1] This is the aggregate amount of parish precepts within the billing authority's area divided by the tax base for the whole of the billing authority's area. Only parts of the area of some billing authorities are parished, however, although precise information on this is not held centrally. In such cases, the figure shown is understating the average parish precept for parished areas.

[2] These authorities were not themselves capped, but had their area council tax reduced due to the capping of Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority.

In 2003–04, the last year in which capping powers were not exercised, the average council tax increase in England was 12.9 per cent. This reduced to 5.9 per cent. in 2004–05 and fell again to 4.1 per cent. in 2005–06—in both these years, the Government made clear that they were prepared to use their powers to cap excessive council tax increases.

English Partnerships

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money has been raised by English Partnerships in each of the last four years through the sale of assets in Milton Keynes. [27510]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* English Partnerships (EP) has received the following amounts in receipts from Milton Keynes over the last four years;

	Receipts £ million
2001–02	74
2002–03	58
2003–04	77
2004–05	136
Total	345

Within Milton Keynes, EP is looking at mechanisms to unlock payments for key infrastructure and a new local delivery vehicle, the Milton Keynes Partnership, has been established. The partnership has been given planning powers to help facilitate growth in a defined urban development area. Within this area plans and costings have been drawn up to guide development and the infrastructure needed to support growth.

Firefighters

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time firefighters serviced (i) Northamptonshire and (ii) Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [29311]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of part-time and full-time firefighters in Northamptonshire in each year since 1997 was as follows:

As at 31 March:	*Retained (part-time)*	*Whole-time (full-time)*
1997	221	286
1998	226	294
1999	221	293
2000	221	296
2001	221	296
2002	242	292
2003	228	307
2004	220	311

Source:
ODPM annual returns.

Information on the number of firefighters at the constituency level are not available.

Gershon Review

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the total amount of money to be saved from Gershon initiative efficiency savings in local government in England; and how those savings will be treated in relation to local government financing. [26909]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects local government (including councils, schools, police, and fire authorities) to achieve at least £6.45 billion of efficiency gains by 2007–08, of which at least half should be cashable gains, releasing money that can be reallocated elsewhere. The remainder will be non-cashable, with improved performance achieved from the resources used. Councils retain the resources they release through the achievement of efficiency gains and are free to determine how to use cashable efficiency gains, whether for reinvestment in local services or to hold down council tax.

Home Improvement Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to conduct a pilot scheme for home improvement packs; and if he will make a statement. [26923]

Yvette Cooper: A dry run of the home information packs process will take place during 2006 to facilitate a smooth transition from using elements of packs on a voluntary basis to implementation of a mandatory scheme throughout England and Wales in 2007. A

central aim of the dry run is to meet the property industry's needs for assurance that the process will operate effectively in the best interests of consumers. The form of assurance required varies between different parts of the industry, and we are in discussion with a wide range of stakeholders about their assurance requirements and how these can best be met. The outcome of these discussions will determine the final detail of the dry run.

The first phase of this assurance process is already under way, with an ever growing number of estate agents, conveyancers and others providing home information packs on a voluntary basis. We are monitoring these activities through feedback from pack providers and home buyers and sellers. We envisage that by the second half of 2006 all the components of the statutory home information pack will be available. This will provide the opportunity for systems, processes and procedures to be fully tested and fine-tuned during the period leading up to implementation. This will involve a continuous process of testing and feedback across the whole industry. Feedback from industry and consumers will be monitored and assessed continually and will inform the making of any necessary changes to the process at the earliest opportunity.

Standards Board

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice the Standards Board has issued to *(a)* councillors and *(b)* monitoring officers in relation to whether a ward councillor may sit on a licensing sub-committee under the Licensing Act 2003 considering an application for a premises in their ward; and if he will make a statement. [26913]

Mr. Woolas: The Standards Board has issued no specific advice to either monitoring officers or councillors of the sort referred to. The board has issued general guidance on members' responsibilities under the conduct regime for local government, including the requirements relating to the declaration of interests.

Local Government Funding

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what impact he expects changes in the local government formula grant to have on public services delivered by *(a)* Dacorum borough council and *(b)* Hertfordshire county council. [29582]

Mr. Woolas: Final decisions on possible changes to the formula grant distribution system have not yet been announced.

The provision of local services is a matter for Dacorum borough council and Hertfordshire county council themselves, bearing in mind their statutory responsibilities.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what responses relating to the local government finance consultation he has received from *(a)* Dacorum borough council and *(b)* Hertfordshire county council; and when the responses were received. [29584]

Mr. Woolas: One response to the consultation on formula grant distribution was received by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from Hertfordshire county council. Three Members of Parliament also responded to the consultation in support of Hertfordshire county council. The representation from the county council was received on 10 October—the closing date of the consultation period.

No response to the consultation was received from Dacorum borough council.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated total *(a)* assets and *(b)* liabilities are of the local government pension scheme; what assumptions underlay the calculation of the liability; what discount rate has been used; and what the liability would be if a discount rate was used equivalent to the yield on index linked gilts. [27044]

Mr. Woolas: The most recent actuarial valuation of the local government pension scheme in England and Wales, carried out on 31 March 2004, showed assets of £80 billion and total liabilities of £107 billion. An actuarial valuation of each of the 89 pensions funds in the scheme is undertaken by actuary's appointed by the relevant local authority and the remaining information requested is consequently not held centrally.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local government manual workers who began employment before 1991 completed 12 months' service entitling them to membership of the local government pension scheme. [28500]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Housing

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what proportion of Tamworth's council housing stock has been sold under the right-to-buy scheme in each year since 1980; [27494]

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many council homes were sold under the right-to-buy scheme in Tamworth in each year since 1980. [27495]

Yvette Cooper: The number of local authority dwellings sold under the right-to-buy scheme since 1980 are listed in the following table. The table also shows the right-to-buy sales as a proportion of local authority stock.

Financial year	*RTB sales*	*Stock at beginning of period*	*Proportion sold each year (percentage)*
1980–81	0	8,693	0.00
1981–82	2	8,850	0.02
1982–83	5	8,587	0.06
1983–84	2	8,364	0.02
1984–85	0	8,269	0.00
1985–86	0	7,854	0.00

Financial year	RTB sales	Stock at beginning of period	Proportion sold each year (percentage)
1986–87	136	7,676	1.77
1987–88	174	7,491	2.32
1988–89	419	7,296	5.74
1989–90	311	6,820	4.56
1990–91	168	6,504	2.58
1991–92	89	6,399	1.39
1992–93	54	6,368	0.85
1993–94	57	6,310	0.90
1994–95	81	6,234	1.30
1995–96	67	6,168	1.09
1996–97	69	6,104	1.13
1997–98	152	6,034	2.52
1998–99	98	5,883	1.67
1999–2000	147	5,785	2.54
2000–01	116	5,634	2.06
2001–02	164	5,522	2.97
2002–03	226	5,356	4.22
2003–04	240	5,131	4.68
2004–05	139	4,891	2.84

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable homes he expects will be built in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* Kettering constituency in each year to (i) 2011, (ii) 2021 and (iii) 2031 as part of the growth area agenda. [29312]

Yvette Cooper: The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS 8) outlines the general approach to affordable housing provision in the region. Policy 17 of the Strategy states that the level of affordable housing to be provided should be justified by local housing need assessments.

Policy 17 does not set an affordable housing target for the region. However, it does state that the appropriate indicator for monitoring whether affordable housing need across the East Midlands as a whole is being met is around 3,950 dwellings per annum. This represents 25 per cent. of the total housing provision identified by the Strategy between 2001 and 2021.

Any specific affordable housing targets for Northamptonshire Districts will be set by Local Planning Authorities in their Local Development Frameworks.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable homes were provided by housing associations in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [29313]

Yvette Cooper: The number of affordable dwellings provided by housing associations on behalf of, *(a)* local authorities within Northamptonshire and *(b)* Kettering local authority are tabled as follows.

Number of affordable dwellings[1]

Financial year	Northamptonshire	Kettering
1997–98	509	18
1998–99	613	91
1999–2000	406	56
2000–01	423	38
2001–02	494	41
2002–03	402	74
2003–04	361	26
2004–05	599	89

[1] Includes affordable dwellings built and acquisitions for rent and shared ownership. Figures prior to 2001–02 exclude dwellings provided through S. 106 agreements and without Housing Corporation funding.

Sources:

Housing Corporation, Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return to ODPM

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many housing associations were in receipt of Government funding *(a)* in England, *(b)* in Northamptonshire and *(c)* in Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [29314]

Yvette Cooper: The number of housing associations which received approval for funding via the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme each year since 1997 are detailed in the table as follows.

Total number of housing associations

	(a) England	(b) Northamptonshire	(c) Kettering
1997–98	385	15	6
1998–99	496	11	2
1999–2000	512	16	3
2000–01	489	13	4
2001–02	447	14	7
2002–03	454	22	3
2003–04	415	17	2
2004–05	378	19	3

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of affordable housing have been built in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [29583]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not available for the constituency of Hemel Hempstead. Affordable homes built on behalf of Dacorum local authority district are tabled as follows.

Dacorum, affordable homes built

Financial year	Number of dwellings[1]
2000–01	96
2001–02	0
2002–03	108
2003–04	135
2004–05	15

[1] Includes affordable new dwellings built for rent and for shared ownership. Figures prior to 2001–02 exclude dwellings provided through S. 106 agreements and without Housing Corporation funding.

Sources:

Housing Corporation, Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return to ODPM.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much housing market renewal grant funding has been allocated to the demolition of properties in each Pathfinder area in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [26908]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows our estimate of the amount of Housing Market Renewal Funding (HMRF) spent on demolitions, new build and refurbishment in each of the pathfinders where this information is available for 2004–05. Data for 2005–06 has not yet been collected.

£ million

Pathfinder	*HMRF spent on Demolition 2004–05*	*HMRF spent on new build 2004–05*	*HMRF spent on Refurbishment 2004–05*
Birmingham Sandwell	0.43	3.76	0.16
East Lancashire	0.72	0	6.09
Hull and East Riding	0	0	0
Manchester Salford	n/a	0	18.89
Merseyside	0.32	0.38	1.17
Newcastle Gateshead	1.14	0.95	n/a
North Staffordshire	1.38	0.34	1.27
Oldham and Rochdale	0.24	0	1.95
South Yorkshire	6.87	0	14.33
Total	11.10	5.43	43.86

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 18 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1433W, on empty homes, how many of the empty homes in *(a)* Kettering, *(b)* East Midlands and *(c)* England were under local authority ownership. [29316]

Yvette Cooper: The number of empty council homes in *(a)* Kettering, *(b)* East Midlands and *(c)* England at 1 April 2005 is presented in the following table:

Number of local authority owned empty homes at 1 April 2005

	Number
Kettering	57
East Midlands	5,000
England	48,600

Source:
ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 35W, on local government finance, if he will publish estimates for each local authority for 2005–06. [26888]

Mr. Woolas: The requested information has been placed in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Lyons review have allocated to commissioning research from outside bodies in relation to local government finance in the past five years; and what research has been commissioned by his Department's Local and Regional Government Research Unit in relation to local government finance. [26920]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) currently expects to have spent £2.01 million overall on 32 research projects by outside bodies in relation to local government finance across the five financial years from 2000–01 to 2005–06. Of that total £230,000 relates to research commissioned on behalf of the Lyons inquiry into local government.

These 32 projects have been commissioned through the ODPM's Local and Regional Government Research Programme. They are as follows:

Project title

Evaluation of asset management plans and capital strategies

Evaluation of the Bellwin scheme

Review of visitors indicators used in Formula Spending Shares

Review of the seasonal adjustment of benefit claimants data

Evaluation of the Single Capital Pot

Examples of best practice in local government asset management and capital strategies

An evaluation of the role of property owners in Business Improvement Districts

LG Finance Independent Inquiry—Research Support: Project 1—English review of evidence

LG Finance Independent Inquiry—Research Support: Project 2—International review of evidence

LG Finance Independent Inquiry—Research Support: Project 3—Application of international evidence

LG Finance Independent Inquiry—Research Support: Project 4—User-satisfaction Qualitative evidence

LG Finance Independent Inquiry—Research Support: Project 5—User-satisfaction Quantitative evidence

LG Finance Independent Inquiry—Research Support: Project 6—Research Support seminars

The rebilling costs faced by LAs as a result of council tax capping

Modelling Options for Transitional Arrangements

Small Business Rate Relief Survey

LG Service Diversity—practice and public attitudes

International lessons in balance of funding

Public knowledge and attitudes to balance of funding

Relationships between balance of funding and voter turnout

Developing the Single Capital Pot assessment process

Public knowledge and use of information on LA expenditure

Prudential framework

Definition of an LA company

Consulting local taxpayers on local tax and spend decision: good practice guidance

Up-dating census indicators

Further fixed and variable costs

Business attitudes towards local government

Review of the EPCS block Formulae

Evaluation of the Capital Challenge scheme

Data catalogue for potential use in SSAs

Refining the ACA: potential application of NHS methodology and updating base year data

Markets

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his Department have had with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the future of (i) the Red House cold store on West

Poultry Avenue and (ii) the Fish Market and the Smithfield general market buildings on Farringdon Road, Snow Hill and West Poultry Avenue. [27858]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* Neither my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister or officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have had any recent discussions with the Department for Culture Media and Sport on these matters.

Village Shops

Barbara Keeley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of business rate reductions for village shops. [29229]

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the scheme for reduced business rates for village shops. [29244]

Mr. Woolas: No detailed assessment has yet been made of the effectiveness of this scheme.

In April 1997 the Government introduced 50 per cent. rate relief for sole village general stores or post offices. In 2001 this was extended to include sole village public houses, petrol stations and village food shops. In addition the local authority can grant discretionary relief. This scheme provided almost £8 million in rate relief to over 8,000 businesses in 2003–04.

From 1 April 2005 many small businesses that do not qualify for the relief under this scheme may be eligible for the new small business rate relief.

HEALTH

Auto-immune Diseases

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment has been made of the effects of mycophenolate mofetil on patients with auto-immune diseases, with particular reference to *(a) scleroderma* and *(b) systemic lupus erythematosus*; [24740]

(2) what the average cost is of treatment of an auto-immune disease with *(a)* mycophenolate mofetil and *(b)* cyclophosphamide; [24741]

(3) what guidance has been issued to primary care trusts on the prescription of mycophenolate mofetil for the treatment of auto-immune disease; [24742]

(4) which hospitals in England are prescribing mycophenolate mofetil for patients with auto-immune diseases; [24743]

(5) how many patients with auto-immune diseases are being prescribed mycophenolate mofetil from a *(a)* hospital consultant and *(b)* general practitioner; [24744]

(6) how many primary care trusts have agreed to fund mycophenolate mofetil for patients with auto-immune diseases. [24745]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not commissioned or undertaken any research into the use of mycophenolate mofetil for patients with auto-immune diseases.

Statistical information on the use of mycophenolate mofetil or cyclophosphamide is not collected centrally in the forms requested.

Cancelled Operations

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations were cancelled by West Hertfordshire hospital trust *(a)* for medical reasons and *(b)* because of a lack of beds at (i) St. Albans hospital, (ii) Hemel Hempstead hospital and (iii) Watford hospital in each month between January 2004 and September 2005. [26375]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not collected in the format requested. However, the table shows the number of cancelled operations for non-clinical reasons for West Hertfordshire hospital national health service trust, which St. Albans hospital, Hemel Hempstead hospital and Watford hospital are a part of.

Cancelled operations for non-clinical reasons, Department of Health dataset, Quarterly Monitoring of Cancelled Operations (QMCO)

		Number of last minute cancellations for non-clinical reasons in the quarter
West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust[1]:		
Q4	January 2004 to March 2004	301
Q1	April 2004 to June 2004	164
Q2	July 2004 to September 2004	153
Q3	October 2004 to December 2004	189
Q4	January 2005 to March 2005	160
Q1	April 2005 to June 2005	99

[1] Data are not collected for individual hospitals.

Cancer

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the Department's research and development priorities in cancer treatment. [24027]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The Department's priorities for cancer research were set out in the NHS Cancer Plan (September 2000). These priorities include working with all those involved in the funding and delivery of cancer research to establish the National Cancer Research Institute; committing funds to support the national health service infrastructure for clinical cancer research in the form of the National Cancer Research Network; and supporting specific programmes of cancer research in areas of high priority including epidemiology, prevention, screening, genetics, primary care and palliative care.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the average waiting times for radiotherapy in the NHS, broken down by *(a)* radical and *(b)* palliative treatment intent. [23069]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Data on waiting times for radiotherapy is not collected centrally. From information provided by the

Royal College of Radiologists we understand that waiting times for radiotherapy in some parts of the country are unacceptably long.

The NHS Cancer Plan set out maximum waiting time targets for cancer treatment, which include radiotherapy where this is given as a first definitive treatment. Standards of a maximum wait of one month from diagnosis to first treatment and a maximum two month wait from urgent general practitioner referral to first treatment for breast cancer are already in place. From December 2005 these targets will be in place for all cancer patients.

To tackle radiotherapy waiting times we are increasing the numbers of therapy radiographers in post and in training, making better use of existing staff, making unprecedented investment in new radiotherapy equipment, and streamlining the patient journey.

Capital Investment (Liverpool Hospitals)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has for new capital investment in the *(a)* Royal Liverpool university hospital and *(b)* Royal Liverpool children's hospital at Alder Hey. [26250]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Plans are in hand with regard to the redevelopment of the Royal Liverpool university hospital and Alder Hey hospital. These redevelopments will be achieved via the private finance initiative. They form part of a redevelopment programme involving four national health service trusts in the North Merseyside area. The strategic outline case for this was approved in July 2004. The Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen university hospitals NHS trust and the Royal Liverpool children's NHS trust are currently in the process of developing the relevant outline business cases which will determine the overall size and scope of these schemes prior to them going out to tender.

Clinical Negligence Payments

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many successful clinical negligence claims were made against each hospital in hospital trusts in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority in 2004–05; and what the total cost of all successful claims was against each hospital. [26376]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Dentistry

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists are operating in Morecambe and Lunesdale. [26332]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 30 September 2005, there were 42 national health service dentists with a general dental services or personal dental services contract within the Morecambe and Lunesdale parliamentary constituency.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action she is taking to improve dental services in Wakefield. [26997]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Wakefield West primary care trust (PCT) and the Eastern Wakefield PCT have been working with dental practices in Wakefield to support them in moving over to the new personal dental service (PDS) contract.

The Wakefield West PCT has received £2.2 million, and the Eastern Wakefield PCT £1.4 million, growth money from the Department for practices transferring to PDS. In addition, the Wakefield West PCT has received £143,000 for capital grants and £61,000 revenue for access, and the Eastern Wakefield PCT has received £106,000 for capital grants and £45,000 revenue for access.

As a result of both the access money and growth money, the Wakefield PCTs have been able to increase national health service dental registrations by 16,000 since March 2004.

The PCTs plan to improve access further. A new dental practice, staffed by international dentists, is scheduled to open in Wakefield in January 2006 and is expected to achieve a further 16,000 registrations. Two other dentists, internationally recruited, are already working within the Eastern Wakefield PCT area.

The Wakefield West PCT has been working to establish a dental registration telephone line to facilitate patient registrations. The Wakefield PCTs also provide an emergency dental access service for unregistered patients, facilitated by NHS Direct, who assess patient needs and offer appointments with local dentists. Furthermore, the weekend urgent dental service has been extended to cover appointments between 9 am and 5 pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

Diagnostic Scans

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many diagnostic scans were carried out in the NHS in 2004. [14421]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the total number of diagnostic scans is not centrally available. Data is collected on the number of imaging and radiodiagnostic examinations or tests. The latest data, for 2003–04, is available at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity

Health Services (Contractors)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 349W, on Health Services (Contractors), what the value is of each of the contracts agreed with the independent sector provider. [14214]

Mr. Byrne: The value of individual contracts with the independent sector cannot be disclosed due to issues of commercial confidentiality.

Housing

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the individual budget pilots will clarify the relationship between the Single Assessment Process and the housing sector, including Supporting People. [25423]

Mr. Byrne: The programme of individual budget pilots that is currently being developed will include two housing related income streams: supporting people and

disabled facilities grants. The pilot sites will between them cover all main adult client groups to whom social services are provided. A number of pilots will be looking at services and support for older people.

The pilot programme will offer opportunities to look at assessment needs and how they are identified and met, including the scope for integration between assessment processes for the various funding streams involved.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of responses to the Green Paper on Independence Well-being and Choice included comments on the contribution of housing and housing-related services to the quality of care; and what action she plans to take in response. [25424]

Mr. Byrne: The Green Paper Independence, Well-being and Choice received 21,000 comments. Of these, 250 specifically mentioned housing.

There is no specific information available on housing related services, although 74 per cent. of responses supported the vision set out in the Green Paper. This promotes choice and independent living, as well as promoting the protection of people whose particular circumstances might make them vulnerable.

A copy of the Green Paper analysis 'Responses to the consultation on adult social care in England: Analysis of feedback from the Green Paper Independence Well-being and Choice is available in the Library.

The outcome of the consultation is being fed into the White Paper 'Your Health, Your Say, Your Care'

Medway Primary Care Trust

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients from *(a)* Sheppey and *(b)* Sittingbourne were treated by Medway Primary Care Trust in Medway hospitals in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [24837]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The number of patients from Sheppey and Sittingbourne who were treated by Medway Primary Care Trust (PCT) in Medway Hospitals in 2003–04 is shown in the table. However, the figures for the number of patients treated in 2004–05 are not available as they have not yet been published.

Finished consultant episodes and patients treated in Medway NHS Trust 2003–04

Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
900	637

Notes:
Finished Consultant Episode (FCE)
A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
Patient Counts
Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HESID. This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.
Ungrossed Data
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in date, that is the data are ungrossed.
Source:
Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Midwifery

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacant positions there are for midwives in the NHS; what plans her Department has to recruit more midwives into the NHS; what recent estimate she has made of the effect on NHS budgets of extended stays in hospital caused by shortage of midwives; and if she will make a statement. [15533]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service work force vacancy survey collects information on the number of vacancies for midwives lasting three months or more; which represent those vacancies NHS organisations are finding hard to fill. As at March 2005, there were 348 three month vacancies for midwives, which represents a rate of 1.8 per cent., which is a fall from 3.3 per cent. the previous year.

The Department has issued a six point action plan to address midwifery work force issues, which includes; increasing training places for midwives, improving working lives, filling vacancies in hard to fill areas and raising the profile of midwifery. Information is not collected on the establishment of NHS organisations, however, as at September 2004, there were 24,844 midwives employed in the NHS, which is an increase of almost 2,300 since 1997. We recognise that there are still shortages of midwives in some areas of the country and expect that numbers employed in the NHS will increase as a result of increased numbers entering training and better retention.

No estimate has been made of the cost to the NHS of extended stays in hospital.

Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses have been employed by Morecambe Bay hospital trust in each year since 1997. [26334]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff[1] in the Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust as at 30 September each specified year

	Headcount
1998	1,350
1999	1,473
2000	1,411
2001	1,465
2002	1,456
2003	1,479
2004	1,529

[1] Figures exclude bank staff. The number of nursing bank staff returned by the Trust for the 2004 census was incorrect, and bank staff numbers have been excluded in order to be consistent.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

National Service Framework for Older People

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many integrated continence services have been set up in England; how many are planned to be established; and when she expects to meet the target for continence services set out in the National Service Framework for Older People. [26503]

Mr. Byrne: The Healthcare Commission, Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Audit Commission and Kings College London are working together to produce a national report on progress in England on implementation of the national service framework for older people. It is planned to publish the report in December 2005.

NHS Employers

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed by NHS Employers; and what its annual budget has been since establishment. [23072]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* NHS Employers was established from 1 November 2004.

For 2005–06, the budget from the Department of Health is £14.8 million. This is for a mixture of running costs including salaries for 106.5 staff and programme expenditure.

NHS Finance

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral answer to the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond) of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 156, on NHS finance, how many NHS organisations were in deficit in each year since 1997; and what the level of deficit was in each year. [23458]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is provided in the table. This shows the number of national health service organisations reporting a deficit between 1996–97 and 2004–05.

	Total number of bodies in existence	*Total number in deficit*	*Total net (deficit)/surplus (£ million)*
1996–97	529	209	(460)
1997–98	525	197	(122)
1998–99	502	146	(19)
1999–2000	476	209	(129)
2000–01	455	40	111
2001–02	577	50	71
2002–03	607	71	96
2003–04	600	106	73
2004–05	600	167	(252)

Notes:

1. Please note these may not sum due to rounding.
2. The figures in the table are from the audited summarisation schedules from 1996–97 to 2004–05.
3. The figures for 2004–05 include NHS foundation trusts.

I regret that on 25 October at column 156, I stated that three quarters of NHS organisations were in deficit, eight years ago. On further reflection, it would have been clearer and more helpful to have said that it was three quarters of health authorities that were in deficit eight years ago.

I have written to the hon. Member concerned, the Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond) to apologise.

Nurses

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial provision is available for nurses returning to the profession after a break. [26576]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the former Minister of State for Health (Mr. Hutton) on 24 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1066W.

Primary Care Trust (Funding)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the funding per capita was for each primary care trust in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [14984]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Radiotherapy

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the average waiting times for *(a)* radical and *(b)* palliative radiotherapy in the area covered by West Hertfordshire hospital trust. [25755]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Rehabilitation Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what national standards there are for rehabilitation services for blind and partially-sighted people. [26856]

Mr. Byrne [holding answer 10 November 2005]: Rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people are predominantly provided by local authorities and to some extent national health service trusts.

The Association of Directors of Social Services published national standards of social care for visually impaired adults in October 2002. The Department funded the Improving Lives Coalition, from 2003 to 2005, to help them to raise awareness and to publicise the standards. The final report is available at: www.adss.org.uk/eyes.shtml

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what terms of reference have been given to the Department's scoping of the provision of rehabilitation services in the NHS and social services; and when she expects this work to be completed. [26857]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Department's scoping study is looking at rehabilitation services currently provided by the national health service and social care, with the aim of

- mapping levels of provision and models of service and, where possible, the cost-effectiveness of rehabilitative services;
- identifying any gaps in provision;
- identifying good practice exemplars; and
- identifying opportunities to improve services.

Ministers will be considering the results of the study in December.

School Nurses

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurses are practising in Hemel Hempstead constituency. [25585]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of school nurses is not collected in the format requested. However, the table shows the number of school nurses in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strategic health authority area, which includes Hemel Hempstead.

NHS hospital and community health services: qualified nurses in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strategic health authority area in the school nursing[1,2] area of work as at 30 September 2005

	Headcount
All qualified school nursing	85
Qualified school nurses[1]	42
School nursing nurses[2]	43

[1] Only registered nurses with a specific school nursing qualification are defined as qualified school nurses.
[2] Other qualified nurses who work in the school nursing area of work but do not hold a specific school nursing qualification.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Sleep Apnoea

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research the Government have commissioned on the effects of continuous positive airway pressure equipment for people suffering from sleep apnoea. [26111]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Executive South East funded a research project in 2000 on the effectiveness of continuous positive airway pressure treatment for those suffering from sleep apnoea.

Details can be found on the Department's research findings register at www.refer.nhs.uk

Vaccinations

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of the new general medical services contract on the provision of childhood vaccination services. [27550]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* Immunisation coverage levels are used to assess uptake in the population and the overall effectiveness of services under general medical services (GMS). Coverage levels at 12 months of age increased slightly in January to March 2005 compared to the previous quarter and are now around 91 per cent. At 24 months uptake levels for all vaccines were between 93 per cent. and 94 per cent. Coverage with measles, mumps and rubella at 24 months has increased by 2.2 per cent. to 83 per cent. for April to June 2005, compared with the previous quarter.

The target payment scheme used in the previous 1990 general practitioner contract is part of the GMS contract. The incentives in the scheme include targets at 70 per cent. and 90 per cent. Based on 2004 strategic health authority data, 93 per cent. of practices achieved the higher target payment of 90 per cent., and the remaining 7 per cent., between 70 per cent. and 89 per cent.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 453–54W, whether those referred to as other sources and partners, who will supply an average 15 per cent. of capital funding for an academy, are public or private bodies.

Phil Hope: National Skills Academies will contribute to the competitiveness of our industries and the modernisation of our public services by operating as focused networks providing local delivery, contributing to regional development and addressing national sector skills shortages. There will be a wide range of partners who would benefit directly from the development of a National Skills Academy in their sector, particularly if the Academy is located near their own centre of operations. These will include local employers and training providers and local authorities, and larger employers and regional development agencies who will have regional priorities for skills development.

The source, amount and therefore proportions of capital funding provided by private and public sector partners to supplement the investment from the lead employer sponsors and the Learning and Skills Council, will be agreed as part of Business Plan development and approval. These Business Plans, which are expected in late spring 2006, will vary from sector to sector.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the new skills academies in *(a)* manufacturing, *(b)* construction, *(c)* food and drink and *(d)* financial services.

Phil Hope: A modern, successful economy with high performing, productive workplaces must have an education and training system delivering top quality learning driven by the needs and ambitions of employers and individuals. National Skills Academies will be a key element of this, helping to transform the quality and status of vocational education and training. Employers are leading the establishment of National Skills Academies and investing their own funds in the development of national centres of excellence for their sector. These centres will work in partnership with the public education sector to deliver high quality and responsive learning to young people and adults.

We recently announced (31 October) the first four sectors that will move forward to the business planning phase of the National Skills Academy programme. The sectors are Construction, Manufacturing, Food and Drink and Financial Services. We expect robust business plans to be developed by April 2006. Once the plans have been agreed with the Learning and Skills Council, more detailed information on each of the proposed National Skills Academies will be available.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding mechanism is for training organisations providing apprenticeships. [24995]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council has responsibility for planning and funding work based learning for young people in England up to the age of 24. It has set out its approach to funding Apprenticeships in the document 'Requirements for Funding Work Based Learning for Young People 2005/06', which can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/FundingLearning/WorkBasedLearning The document constitutes an integral part of the LSC's funding agreement, conditions of funding (Grant), conditions of funding (employers) and the financial memorandum with providers.

Bichard Report

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes she proposes for disclosure of details of sexual activity by minors when coming into contact with health professionals in response to the Bichard Report. [28232]

Beverley Hughes: Current Department of Health guidance stresses the importance of confidentiality for under 16s. However, it makes it clear that health professionals must take time to explore whether each individual case may involve coercion or abuse. Where there is cause for concern the case would be referred through local child protection procedures.

The public consultation on Working Together to safeguard children sought views on when and how to share information to protect sexually active young people from harm and abuse, following the recommendations in the Bichard Inquiry Report. The consultation exercise ended on 28 October and we are now considering the responses. We aim to issue the revised version of Working Together in the near future.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23730]

Maria Eagle: The Government estate has been set a target within the Energy White paper to reduce absolute carbon, from fuel and energy use by 12.5 per cent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000.

The Department is not currently signed up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. However, we are reviewing how this programme may compliment and fit within our existing and planned activities e.g. ISO14001 certification.

Career Guidance

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) in which areas of England graduates are eligible for free career support; [25089]

(2) why she has removed the right to free career guidance from anyone who achieves level 2 qualifications from 1 August; and if she will make a statement; [25090]

(3) who is eligible for *(a)* one and *(b)* more than one free interview with an adult guidance practitioner. [25091]

Phil Hope: Every adult in England can access a free, integrated information and advice service comprising the national "learndirect" telephone and on-line advice service and local "nextstep" information and advice services, with no limit on the number of inquiries or advice sessions. Within the universal offer provided by "learndirect" and "nextstep", priority has been given since August 2004 to those adults who do not have a qualification at level 2, since they are more likely to lack the skills foundation for employability and lifelong learning, and are less likely to get a secure, well paid job. Graduates may additionally receive continued career support from their former institutions or from other higher education institutions in their area, although the decision to offer this service, with or without charge, is a matter for individual institutions.

The White Paper "Skills: getting on in business, getting on at work" set out a long-term ambition: that everyone should be able to get help if and when they want it to take stock of where they are in their lives and their careers; to review where they would like to get to; and assess what steps they can take to get there. To help determine how best to achieve this goal we are jointly conducting a review with the Department for Work and Pensions, the DTI, the LSC, Ufi "learndirect", Jobcentre Plus, and the Sector Skills Development Agency which will be concluded by the end of 2006. The review will be informed by extending the "learndirect" telephone service on a trial basis from January 2006 to provide more intensive personal guidance. Adults throughout England seeking to progress in their careers; wanting to gain the skills for jobs typically requiring a Level 3 qualification; and returning to work from career breaks, will benefit from the new service.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what grades were achieved by those receiving the education maintenance allowance in each year that it has been available.

Maria Eagle: This information is not available as we do not separately record information on qualification completion rates for those claiming education maintenance allowances.

Examination Results

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the public examination results were in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* 2005 of the three non-selective state secondary schools nearest to each of the academies opened in (i) September 2002, (ii) September 2003 and (ii) September 2004; and what the equivalent results were in the academies themselves. [25364]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is given in the table. Figures for 2005 will be available once the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables are published in January 2006.

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] in 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Academies[3, 4] and the three nearest non-selective maintained schools[5]*

	2002	2003	2004
Academies opened in 2002:			
Unity City Academy, Middlesbrough	—	16	17
Ormesby School	26	24	21
Gilbrook Technology College	27	29	27
The Newlands Catholic School FCJ	51	48	43
Greig City Academy, Haringey	—	35	26
Hornsey Secondary School for Girls	52	49	54
Highgate Wood Secondary School	43	46	51
Park View Academy	16	23	39
Academies opened in 2003:			
West London Academy, Ealing	—	—	35
Northolt High School	47	52	34
Greenford High School	56	63	63
Queensmead School	60	61	58
City of London Academy, Southwark	—	—	—
Aylwin Girls' School	30	27	33
Walworth School	14	18	21
St. Michael's RC School	39	53	65
The City Academy, City of Bristol	—	—	33
Fairfield High School	27	55	43
St. Mary Redcliffe and Temple School	78	76	77
Speedwell Technology College	25	31	23
The King's Academy, Middlesbrough	—	—	34
The Newlands Catholic School FCJ	51	48	43
St. David's Roman Catholic Technology College	46	46	34
King's Manor School, Specialist Sports College	25	31	37
The Academy at Peckham, Southwark	—	—	12
The St. Thomas the Apostle College	53	53	56
Walworth School	14	18	21
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Secondary School	56	73	69
Capital City Academy, Brent	—	—	29
Cardinal Hinsley High School	21	27	18
Convent of Jesus and Mary Language College	65	63	64
Queen's Park Community School	42	44	46
Djanogly City Academy, Nottingham	—	—	51
The Nottingham Bluecoat School and Technology College	53	64	51
Manning Comprehensive School	19	25	24
Ellis Guilford School and Sports College	37	29	39
Walsall Academy, Walsall	—	—	50
Frank F. Harrison Community School	27	25	48
Sneyd Community School	30	35	41
Sheffield Sports and Community College	39	33	40
Manchester Academy, Manchester	—	—	8
Trinity CofE High School	45	70	61
Whalley Range 11 to 18 High School and Business and Enterprise College	52	46	58
St. Peter's RC High School	20	34	37
Academies opened in 2004:			
The Business Academy, Bexley	—	—	—
Abbey Wood School	12	25	20
Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys	27	36	35
Trinity School, Belvedere	43	39	47
Mossbourne Community Academy, Hackney	—	—	—
Clapton Girls' Technology College	34	49	49
Homerton College of Technology	22	36	32

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] in 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Academies[3, 4] and the three nearest non-selective maintained schools[5]*

	2002	2003	2004
Hackney Free and Parochial Church of England Secondary School Specialist Sports College	18	22	34
Stockley Academy, Hillingdon	—	—	—
Bishopshalt School	52	55	56
Mellow Lane School	42	42	32
Uxbridge High School	34	29	35
London Academy, Barnet	—	—	—
Canons High School	48	49	53
Park High School	74	65	70
Mill Hill County High School	84	79	84
Northampton Academy, Northamptonshire	—	—	—
Weston Favell Upper School	38	34	28
Thomas Becket Catholic School	53	42	39
Northampton School for Girls	67	73	68
Lambeth Academy, Lambeth	—	—	—
La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School	61	71	61
Chestnut Grove School	32	40	47
Battersea Technology College	14	14	23
Academies opened in 2005:			
The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi, Liverpool	—	—	—
Brecksfield Community Comprehensive School	23	28	33
Archbishop Blanch Church of England Voluntary Aided High School A Technology College	63	77	71
Campion Catholic High School	15	25	23
St. Pauls Academy, Greenwich	—	—	—
Welling School	42	32	36
Plumstead Manor School	27	37	43
Abbey Wood School	12	25	20
The Marlowe Academy, Kent	—	—	—
Ellington School for Girls	33	32	27
St. George's Church of England Foundation	33	42	47
The Charles Dickens School	35	41	35
Macmillan College, Middlesbrough	—	—	—
Hall Garth School	31	40	33
King's Manor School, Specialist Sports College	25	31	37
The Norton School	26	26	24
Dixons City Academy, Bradford	—	—	—
Grange Technology College	33	29	46
Bradford Cathedral Community College	16	22	26
Carlton Bolling College	18	17	19
Trinity Academy, Doncaster	—	—	—
Hatfield High School Visual Arts College	26	24	31
North Axholme School	45	38	40
The Snaith School	62	57	62
Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy, Lewisham	—	—	—
Bonus Pastor Roman Catholic School	49	55	59
Catford Girls' School	36	38	42
Sedgehill School	30	32	37
Salford City Academy, Salford	—	—	—
St. Patrick's RC High School and Arts College	53	49	42
Flixton Girls' High School	40	44	52
Wentworth High School	21	27	31
Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College, Lewisham	—	—	—
The St. Thomas the Apostle College	53	53	56
Addey and Stanhope School	32	36	39
Waverley School	26	26	30

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] in 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Academies[3, 4] and the three nearest non-selective maintained schools[5]*

	2002	2003	2004
The Harefield Academy, Hillingdon	—	—	—
Saint Joan of Arc Roman Catholic School	75	72	75
Haydon School	56	68	80
Rickmansworth School	76	83	82

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).

[2] Figures for 2002 and 2003 include GCSEs and GNVQs only. Figures for 2004 include GCSEs and other approved qualifications.

[3] Some Academies were previously a City Technology College. Figures are included in the table only when an institution is under Academy status.

[4] Two Academies only had GCSE results for pupils aged 15 in 2003.

[5] The three nearest non-selective maintained schools are listed in order of their proximity to each Academy.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the budget for the branding and advertising programme for the Learning and Skills Council Local Partnership teams will be. [27960]

Bill Rammell: Local Partnership teams will work within the LSC's national and regional branding, marketing and communications strategy. As this is an operational matter Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive has written to the hon. Member with further information. A copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 17 November 2005:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in which you asked what the budget for the branding and advertising programme for the Learning and Skills Council Local Partnership teams will be. I trust the following will answer your question.

The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) re-organisation is designed to make the organisation smaller, more dynamic, and to improve significantly what it achieves on the ground. This should help ensure consistent standards nationwide in terms of quality and relevance of provision for local communities.

One of the LSC's marketing and communication aims is to simplify and align branding, marketing and communications activity through our partners so making it easier for young people, adults and employers to understand the benefits of learning and access relevant opportunities to progress in life, in work and in business—the local partnership teams are an important link to make this happen but not to specifically procure marketing services.

The 148 local partnership teams the LSC will employ will be responsible for developing strategic relationships with colleges, schools and training providers. From a branding and advertising perspective (defined as a marketing, communications and branding strategy in the LSC), it will be important that these locally based teams work within the agreed national and regional marketing, communications and branding strategy, not to specifically deliver additional services relating to marketing and communications themselves. There will not be a specific allocation (from the LSC's marketing and communications budget) deployed to the local partnership teams.

Level 2 Skills

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the cost benefit to the economy of training to level 2 those adults who lack skills at level 2. [25126]

Phil Hope: A range of independent academic research has shown that there is a link between skills and economic performance and that the UK's relatively poor skills profile contributes to our productivity gap with other countries. Research has also identified a range of benefits from raising qualification levels for the individual, the employer, the economy and society.

Those adults not qualified to at least level 2 are at a greater disadvantage in the labour market in terms of both their earnings and their employment chances. Individuals' attitudes towards learning and participation in learning improve once they reach level 2.

The key evidence supporting the focus on raising adults to at least a level 2 is set out in the Government's recent Skills White Papers; "Skills: getting on in business, getting on at work" and "21st Century Skills, Realising Our Potential" and the Skills Strategy Progress Report; "Skills Strategy—Technical Supplement on Underlying data and Evidence", copies of which will be placed in the House Libraries.

New Deal for Young People

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the impact on training providers of the removal of the training and subsidised job options from the new deal for young people; and if she will make a statement. [25203]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

No options have been removed from the new deal for young people. The full time education and training option which offers people an opportunity to improve their education and skills, and the employment option which offers subsidies to employers who take on new deal participants are still available.

Our aim is to ensure that all new deal participants have access to the full range of programme options. We will continue to ensure that support through the new deal will be available to those customers who need the most help and support, regardless of where they live and we have adjusted some regional budget allocations this year to ensure that we deliver our overall priorities.

Regional Skills Bureaucracy

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she will take to ensure overlap does not occur in their work in relation to skills of the regional development agencies, the sector skills councils, the regional skills partnerships and the proposed Learning and Skills Council regional centres. [28760]

Phil Hope: The Skills White Paper, "21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential", invited Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to lead the establishment of Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs). These bring together the RDA, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) with other regional partners to plan and co-ordinate the

provision of skills and business support that reflects the priorities of the Regional Economic Strategy. Each partner has their own distinctive role. RDAs are responsible for economic development and are the keepers of the Regional Economic Strategy of which skills are a part. Sector Skills Councils provide information on the skills needs of employers, and the Learning and Skills Council uses that information to inform decisions on the supply of training provision. The LSC's recent announcement to strengthen their regional centres will enable them co-ordinate work more effectively with RDAs, Sector Skills Councils and Regional Skills Partnerships.

School Work (Marking)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice is offered by her Department to schools on best practice in the marking of pupils' work. [28305]

Jacqui Smith: It is for schools to formulate their own policy on the marking of pupils' work. The Department, through the National Strategies' Assessment for Learning programme, helps teachers to understand how best to identify pupils' individual learning needs and to determine next steps in their learning. This includes some guidance on the use of written feedback and best practice in the marking of pupils' work.

Sexual Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to publish the findings of the pilot study in Sheffield for the Working Together to Safeguard Children protocols on sexual health. [28248]

Beverley Hughes: If Sheffield Area Child Protection Committee is conducting a pilot study into its protocol on Working with Sexually Active Young People under the Age of 18, it is a matter for the committee whether it publishes the findings of any such study.

Union Learning Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of the courses funded through the Union Learning Fund are *(a)* basic skills courses, *(b)* level 1 and level 2 courses and *(c)* level 3 and above courses; [28579]

(2) what percentage of the courses funded through the Union Learning Fund take under nine hours. [28580]

Phil Hope: The Union Learning Fund is a source of funding to help trade unions boost their capacity as learning organisations and use their influence with employers, employees and learning providers to encourage greater take-up of learning in the workplace. It is not used to provide funding for courses. It enables trade unions and their union learning representatives to provide advice, guidance and support to workers to help them access existing learning opportunities to improve their skill levels.

Earlier evaluations of the Union Learning Fund (copies of which are in the House of Commons Library) indicate that trade unions have been successful in engaging non-traditional learners including older males, people from minority ethnic groups and shift workers. An estimated 80 per cent. of those helped to access a learning opportunity had qualifications below NVQ level 2 or equivalent.

A further evaluation of the Union Learning Fund is currently under way to assess the impact of the fund on trade unions, employers and individual learners. It will include a large scale survey of learners which will provide information on the different types and levels of courses that individuals have accessed as a result of support from the Union Learning Fund. The final report is due to be published next summer and a copy will be placed in the House Libraries.

Youth Work Projects

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will establish a cross-Government working group *(a)* to review, in partnership with the National Youth Agency and others, existing local youth work projects which promote community cohesion and *(b)* to consider the merits of developing an action plan on responsibilities. [26682]

Maria Eagle: There is already a cross-Government strategy—Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society—which brings together measures across Government to increase race equality and promote community cohesion. Work with young people is an integral part of the strategy.

Youth work can play an important part in promoting community cohesion. My officials are already working closely with the National Youth Agency on ideas for building the capacity of the youth work sector in relation to community cohesion.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23732]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions works in collaboration with its PFI Estates Partners, Land Securities Trillium, to install energy efficiency measures across the estate. Examples of projects undertaken are the installation of energy saving devices for white goods and vending machines, improved pipe work insulation and Passive Infrared Detectors for hot-water points. Energy efficiency is also integral to the replacement of equipment at the end of its life cycle, and we are examining the potential for early replacement for obviously inefficient equipment. Improved meter reading systems are also being implemented to provide up to date information to facilitate better energy management. In addition, 60 per cent. of our electricity is now generated from either renewable or Combined Heat and Power sources. Together, these initiatives have reduced the estate's carbon emissions by 30 per cent. over the past seven years.

Initial contact has been made with the Carbon Trust about our joining the Carbon Management programme and a meeting to discuss this is being set up.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the refund due under Child Support Agency reference number 0677911890 will be paid. [29503]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 17 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; when the refund due under Child Support Agency reference number 0677911890 will be paid.

I am sorry to hear that Mr. Goldstone has not received the refund of £340 promised to him on 7 June. Regrettably a technical fault on the Agency's CS2. computer system has prevented the payment from being made. This fault is not yet resolved, but the Plymouth centre has arranged for Mr. Goldstone's refund to be paid on 16 November.

I hope you find this helpful.

Departmental Press Officers

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many press officers are employed in his Department; and what the cost of employing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [22189]

Mrs. McGuire: As at 31 March 2005 19 national press officers and 23 regional press officers were employed at a total cost of £1,533,703.

The costs are based on average salaries for the year and take into account the actual number of press officers and changes in post each month.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new press officers his Department is planning to employ over the next 12 months; and at what cost. [22192]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department has no plans to recruit additional press officers in the next 12 months. There is a recruitment exercise currently under way to fill existing vacancies. Further recruitment exercises may be required in the next year to maintain the agreed level of staffing.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are claiming incapacity benefit in Milton Keynes. [27179]

Mrs. McGuire: As at May 2005, there were 7,500 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance in Milton Keynes.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the quarterly average exit rate for *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability allowance has been since May 1997. [27247]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* For incapacity benefit, the quarterly average exit rate since May 1997 has been 7.9 per cent. of the total caseload. For severe disablement allowance, the quarterly average exit rate since May 1997 has been 1.7 per cent. of the total caseload.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 percent. data.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in West Lancashire constituency are in receipt of incapacity benefit; [27655]

(2) how many people in West Lancashire constituency are in receipt of *(a)* state retirement pension, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance and *(c)* incapacity benefit. [27903]

Mrs. McGuire: At May 2005[1] in the West Lancashire parliamentary constituency, there were 18,200 state retirement pension recipients and 1,496 jobseeker's allowance claimants[2].

There were 5,100 incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants as at May 2005. Of these, 4,100 were incapacity benefit claimants only[3].

[1] Source: DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data as at May 2005

[2] Source: Count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems (including clerically held cases). Figures are unrounded. NOMIS figures include clerically held cases. Based on 100 per cent. claimant count.

[3] Source: Information Directorate 100 per cent. WPLS. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the percentage of incapacity benefit claimants have been receiving the benefit for more than five years; and what this percentage was in May 1997. [27979]

Mrs. McGuire: As the benefit was only introduced in April 1995, we are unable to give the information requested for the five years previous to 2000. As at February 2005, 48.1 per cent. of claimants had been claiming for more than five years.

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of people receive incapacity benefit in Scotland. [28451]

Mrs. McGuire: As at September 2005, there were 323,500 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance in Scotland. This represents 10.2 per cent. of the working-age population.

Parliamentary Question

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer the question tabled on 7 October by the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet, ref. 16546. [29170]

Mrs. McGuire: A reply was given to the hon. Member on 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 791W.

Jobcentre Plus

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what percentage of days were lost through sickness absence in Jobcentre Plus in each of the last two years, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* country; [29214]

(2) what the rate of *(a)* early retirement and *(b)* resignation on grounds of stress and ill health has been in Jobcentre Plus in each of the last two years, broken down by (i) region and (ii) country; [29215]

(3) what the rate of staff turnover was in 2004–05 in Jobcentre Plus, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* country; [29216]

(4) what training needs have been identified for staff in Jobcentre Plus in relation to the proposed changes to disability benefits; and what discussions on training have taken place with staff. [29217]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions regarding sickness absence; early retirement and resignation on the grounds of stress and ill health; staff turnover; identification of staff training needs in relation to the proposed changes to disability benefits, and details of discussions that have taken place with Jobcentre Plus staff on such training. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Information on the percentage of days lost through sickness absence in Jobcentre Plus in each of the last two years, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* country in each of the last two years, is in the table.

Region/country	*Absence rate 2003–04*	*Absence rate 2004–05*
East of England	5.2	4.8
East Midlands	5.0	4.9
London	6.4	6.0
North East	5.0	5.0
North West	5.0	5.1
South East	4.8	5.0
South West	4.5	4.1
West Midlands	4.8	4.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.8	4.5
Scotland	5.0	4.6
Wales	4.5	4.5
Other	5.0	5.4
Total	5.1	5.0

1. Data listed under 'other' consists of absence records for staff for whom a region/country identifier has yet to be confirmed.
2. Data is for operational years April to March in each year.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus

Information is not available on whether people have taken early retirement or have resigned from Jobcentre Plus because of stress. Information on the ratio of people Part of the Department for Work and Pensions who have retired for reasons of ill health generally, and the ratio of general resignations, broken down by region and country in each of the last two years, is in the table.

Percentage

Reasons for leaving	*12 months to March 2004*		*12 months to March 2005*	
	Retirement on grounds of ill health	*Resignation*	*Retirement on grounds of ill health*	*Resignation*
East Midlands	0.04	4.1	0.1	5.2
East of England	0.1	3.8	0.2	5.4
London	0.1	3.2	0.2	3.4
North East	0.1	2.7	0.1	3.2
North West	0.1	3.2	0.1	4.7
Scotland	0.0	2.9	0.1	3.5
South East	0.1	4.2	0.1	5.7
South West	0.1	4.7	0.1	5.5
Wales	0.1	3.2	0.1	4.9
West Midlands	0.1	4.1	0.1	5.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.1	3.1	0.1	4.8
Total	0.1	3.5	0.1	4.6

Source:
Jobcentre Plus

Information on the rate of staff turnover in Jobcentre Plus in 2004–05, broken down by region and country is in the table.

Jobcentre Plus turnover by region/country for 12 months ending March 2005

	Percentage
East Midlands	7.39
East of England	7.79
London	5.98
North East	5.34
North West	6.45
Scotland	5.63
South East	8.25
South West	7.81
Wales	6.52
West Midlands	6.93
Yorkshire and the Humber	6.38
Total	6.65

Source:

Jobcentre Plus

It is too soon to provide information on the training needs for Jobcentre Plus staff in relation to any proposed changes to incapacity benefits. When the full nature of any changes to these benefits has been finalised, we will consult staff to identify training requirements and develop learning modules accordingly.

I hope this is helpful.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incidents of violence against staff working in Jobcentre Plus have been reported in each of the last two years, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* country; and what the ratio of incidents to whole time equivalent employees was in each year, in each case. [29218]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the number of incidents of violence against staff working in Jobcentre Plus that have been reported in each of the last two years, broken down by region and country, and what the ratio of incidents to whole time equivalent (WTE) employees was in each year, in each case. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The available information is in the table.

	2003		*2004*	
Region	*Number of assaults*	*WTE ratio*	*Number of assaults*	*WTE ratio*
Scotland	19	.0024	22	.0031
Wales	2	.0004	13	.0031
North East	4	.0008	13	.0030
North West	36	.0035	38	.0041
Yorkshire and Humberside	26	.0038	23	.0036
East Midlands	18	.0041	28	.0069
West Midlands	29	.0040	26	.0043
South East	11	.0018	29	.0050
South West	18	.0038	18	.0042
East of England	18	.0038	25	.0057
London	54	.0049	94	.0093
Total—English regions	214	.0036	294	.0054
Jobcentre Plus totals	235	.0033	329	.0050

Notes:
1. The ratio of assaults is calculated by dividing the number of assaults by the number of whole time equivalent staff.
2. Data is compiled from reports completed by staff on physical assaults only.
3. Data is provided for calendar years rather than operational years.

Source:
Department for Work and Pensions Workforce Management Project

It may be helpful if I explain the background to these figures. Although data indicates that there has been a rise in the number of incidents reported in the last two years it is not possible to identify any direct casual relationships. This period coincides with a number of initiatives within the Department that have encouraged staff to report all incidents so that lessons can be learned, and appropriate remedial action taken.

Customer facing activity in Jobcentre Plus has been thoroughly risk assessed to ensure comprehensive measures are in place to protect the health and safety of our staff whilst at work. These measures range from ensuring the delivery of user-friendly services to our customers and ensuring all staff have the appropriate skills to manage and diffuse difficult situations, through to more physical controls such as the provision of individual panic alarms for staff, the use of CCTV cameras and deployment of security guards.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many of the recent reductions in staffing at job centres arose from *(a)* resignation of personnel who have not been replaced, *(b)* voluntary redundancy and *(c)* compulsory redundancy. [24765]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many of the recent reductions in staffing at jobcentres arose from *(a)* resignation of personnel who have not been replaced, *(b)* voluntary redundancy, and *(c)* compulsory redundancy. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

We do not keep information of this type separately for jobcentres therefore the answers that I have provided refer to the whole of the Jobcentre Plus organisation. Between 1 March 2004 and 30 September 2005, Jobcentre Plus has seen an overall net reduction in our full-time equivalent staffing totalling 8,066. This figure is a combination of the effects of staff leaving and staff joining the organisation. The number of managed early releases during the same period is 707 full-time equivalent staff. There have been no compulsory redundancies.

I hope this is helpful.

Low-income Families

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the changes his Department have introduced to help low income families since 1997. [20315]

Margaret Hodge: The Government's strategy for tackling poverty is set out in Opportunity for All (published by DWP annually) and the Child Poverty Review (July 2004). This Department makes important contributions to the strategy in relation to providing work for those who can and support for those who cannot.

Since 1997 we have delivered macroeconomic stability, invested in active labour market policies, developed tax and benefit reforms to ensure work pays, and invested in skills. This has helped deliver a more flexible labour market in which as many people as

possible have the opportunity to move in to work. We believe that, for most people, work is the best route out of poverty.

The number of people in employment is higher than ever before and the number of people on working age benefits is declining. This is due to our management of the economy and our successful and cost effective labour market policies delivered through Jobcentre Plus and the new deal.

We have invested, in conjunction with Department for Education and Skills, over £17 billion on early years and child care provision.

Together with HM Revenues and Customs, who administer tax credits and child benefit, we have significantly increased financial support for children. As a result of the Government's reforms of the tax and benefit system since 1997, by October 2005, in real terms families with children will be on average £1,400 a year better off, while those in the poorest fifth will be on average £3,200 per year better off.

The Child Support Reforms in March 2003 introduced the Child Maintenance Premium (CMP). This is where parents with care receiving income support or income based jobseeker's allowance can keep up to £10 a week of the maintenance paid for their children, without it affecting their benefit.

The investment in financial support for families combined with continued progress against employment targets, means that the Government are broadly on track to meet the PSA target to reduce child poverty by a quarter by 2004–5.

New Deal for Young People

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what further education and training has been available through the new deal for young people in each region in each year since 1998; and what education and training is planned to be available through the programme in each region until 2008. [25092]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the education and training opportunities that have been available in each region, in each year, through new deal for young people (NDYP) since 1998 is not available in a suitable form.

We deliver education and training opportunities through the NDYP Full Time Education and Training (FTET) option. The courses are tailored to the needs of the individual and local employers. Since 1998, 185,660 people have participated in this option.

We are currently working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver the Government's Skills Strategy. Trials will be starting next year to test arrangements to enable people on the NDYP FTET and Environmental Task Force (ETF) options, as well as those on Work Based Learning for Adults, to access suitable LSC provision to help them get a job.

There will also be other options available for the same customer group. Trials will be taking place in September 2006 of a new adult learning allowance, equivalent to benefit plus a premium of 10. This will be for people for whom a lack of skills is the main barrier to employment, and will give them the opportunity to gain an s/NVQ qualification.

People aged 18–24 are also eligible for LSC Modern Apprenticeship training where the young person is employed, paid a wage and given the training needed to gain a qualification.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of those on the new deal for young people have a criminal record. [25201]

Margaret Hodge: Information on whether or not participants on new deal for young people have a criminal record is not collected.

Some disadvantaged groups can have early entry to the new deal, and this includes those who have served a custodial sentence. This information is sometimes recorded as a reason for early programme entry, but only when the individual agrees to the disclosure, and where an alternative criteria is not deemed more appropriate.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the *(a)* training and *(b)* subsidised job options will remain as options in the new deal for young people in (i) London and (ii) the North East. [25204]

Margaret Hodge: No options have been removed from the new deal for young people. The full time education and training option which offers people an opportunity to improve their education and skills, and the employment option which offers subsidies to employers who take on new deal participants are still available.

Our aim is to ensure that all new deal participants have access to the full range of programme options. We will continue to ensure that support through the new deal will be available to those customers who need the most help and support, regardless of where they live and we have adjusted some regional budget allocations this year to ensure that we deliver our overall priorities.

NI Telephone Queries

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people called the 0845 8500284 number in respect of national insurance queries; how many times the line was engaged; and how many complaints have been received because the line was engaged in each of the last 10 months. [26214]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Norman Lamb, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning how many people called the 0845 8500284 number in respect of national insurance queries; how many times the line was engaged; and how many complaints have been received, because the line was engaged in each of the last 10 months. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The telephone number referred to relates to the East of England National Insurance Contact Centre, which was set up in May this year and became fully operational in August 2005. The

information provided in the table below covers the 6 month period from the setting up of the Contact Centre. Information is not available on how many times the line was engaged but we do have information about the number of calls received and complaints made during this period.

Month	Calls from applicants	Complaints
May	358	[1]
June	2,255	[1]
July	3,390	[1]
August	5,451	3
September	6,522	12
October	5,056	11

[1] None recorded

You will see from the table that the number of calls received by the Contact Centre has increased significantly over the 6 month period. This has contributed to the difficulty which some customers have experienced in contacting the service. We are putting in place, over the next 6 months, advanced telephony systems which will help us to improve call handling and provide better customer service.

I hope this is helpful.

Pensioners (Benefits)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners in *(a)* Crewe and Nantwich borough and *(b)* England are (i) receiving pension credit and (ii) eligible for but not claiming pension credit; [27950]

(2) how many of those receiving pension credit in *(a)* Crewe and Nantwich borough and *(b)* England are also receiving council tax benefit. [27951]

Mr. Timms: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 20 October. A copy of the report is in the Library.

As at May 2005 there were *(a)* 3,300 pensioner households in Crewe and Nantwich and *(b)* 1,634,6000 pensioner households in England receiving both pension credit and council tax benefit.

It is becoming clear that the number of people who are eligible for pension credit is somewhat less than the initial estimate. National Statistics showing the number of pensioners entitled to pension credit at a national level in the first six months after its introduction and the subsequent take-up rate are expected to be available in December. Information at constituency level will not be possible. The precise date of release of these statistics and the publication plans for the following set, covering 2004–05, will be pre-announced in "National Statistics Updates"; the diary of statistical releases.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Gravesham constituency are *(a)* entitled to and *(b)* in receipt of pension credit. [28376]

Mr. Timms: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 20 October. A copy of the report is in the Library. The number of people in receipt of pension credit in the Gravesham constituency as at June 2005 is 4,800 individuals (3,900 households).

It is becoming clear that the number of people who are eligible for pension credit is somewhat less than the initial estimate. National statistics showing the number of pensioners entitled to pension credit at a national level in the first six months after its introduction and the subsequent take-up rate are expected to be available in December. Information at constituency level will not be possible. The precise date of release of these statistics and the publication plans for the following set, covering 2004–05, will be pre-announced in "National Statistics Updates"; the diary of statistical releases.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners received means-tested benefits *(a)* in the latest period for which figures are available and *(b)* in the equivalent period in 1997, broken down by sex; [25059]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the number of *(a)* women and *(b)* men who rely on means-tested benefits in retirement; and what this figure was in 1997. [27976]

Mr. Timms: The available information is provided in the Table.

Pensioners on income-related benefits by gender: Great Britain, May 1997 and May 2004

	May 1997	May 2004
All	3,160,000	2,690,000
Male	n/a	970,000
Female	n/a	1,700,000
Unknown	n/a	20,000

Notes:
1. n/a = not available. This Information was only collected from May 2004 onwards.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 thousand and are subject to a degree of sampling variation.
3. Figures refer to cases where a claimant and/or partner is aged 60 and over. Therefore will contain some claimants aged under 60 where there is a partner aged over 60 years.
4. Income-related benefits are housing benefit/council tax benefit/ income support (in 1997)/pension credit (guarantee credit) (in 2004)/income-based jobseeker's allowance recipients with all overlaps removed. Savings credit only claimants of pension credit have not been included in the 2004 figures.

Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples
100 per cent. Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2004

Pensions

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Government are taking to reduce the inequality in pensions between men and women at the point of retirement. [26544]

Mr. Timms: Pension credit has helped to reduce the number of pensioners living in absolute low income, with 1.3 million female pensioners lifted above absolute low income since 1997. Two-thirds of the 3.3 million people benefiting from pension credit are women. Future women pensioners will also benefit from the

introduction of state second pension, with 6 million more women building up additional state pension than did under SERPS.

The introduction of Home Responsibilities Protection in 1978, together with women's increased labour market activity, mean that women are building up better pension records. In 2005, 30 per cent. of women reaching state pension age are entitled to a full basic state pension. Without any policy changes, this will rise to 50 per cent. by 2010 and over 80 per cent. by 2025. By 2025, women and men will have similar basic state pension entitlements. The average entitlement will be over 90 per cent. of a full basic state pension for both men and women.

Women's increased labour market activity also means that more women are generating their own income, which can be invested in a private pension. Future women pensioners will retire with higher state and private pension incomes in their own right. However, the main driver in the difference between women's and men's retirement incomes is the difference in women's and men's private pension provision.

The report "Women and pensions: The evidence", published by the Department on 2 November 2005, examines the evolution of women's pensions and explores the reasons for the differences between men's and women's pension entitlements. The issue of women's pensions is central to the National Pensions Debate and the report provides a firm basis on which to build consensus on the way forward to achieve fair outcomes for women. The report also raises further questions for consideration alongside the work of the Pensions Commission.

Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* children and *(b)* pensioners were living in poverty in the Vale of Clwyd in each of the last 20 years. [20321]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2003–04", available in the Library. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The data source does not allow us to provide robust estimates for Vale of Clwyd. Estimates for Wales have been provided using data from 1994–95 to 2003–04.

The number and proportion of children in households with low incomes in Wales over the period 1994–95 to 2003–04, are presented in the following table. Data on a regional level is not available prior to 1994–95.

	Three-year rolling averages							
	1994–95 to 1996–97	*1995–96 to 1997–98*	*1996–97 to 1998–99*	*1997–98 to 1999–2000*	*1998–99 to 2000–01*	*1999–2000 to 2001–02*	*2000–01 to 2002–03*	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
Before housing costs								
Number of children (million)	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.15
Percentage of all children	28	28	28	28	27	25	25	23
After housing costs								
Number of children (million)	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.20	0.19
Percentage of all children	35	36	34	35	34	33	32	29

Source:
Family Resources Survey

The number and proportion of pensioners in households with low incomes in Wales over the period 1994–95 to 2003–04, are presented in the following table:

	Three-year rolling averages							
	1994–95 to 1996–97	*1995–96 to 1997–98*	*1996–97 to 1998–99*	*1997–98 to 1999–2000*	*1998–99 to 2000–01*	*1999–2000 to 2001–02*	*2000–01 to 2002–03*	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
Before housing costs								
Number of pensioners (million)	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.13
Percentage of all pensioners	24	24	24	25	24	23	22	23
After housing costs								
Number of pensioners (million)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12
Percentage of all pensioners	24	25	25	25	24	23	21	21

Note:
1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year on year changes. Hence, figures are not consistent with previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. In circumstances such as a change in trend, rolled-averages will show less variation than single year estimates.
Source:
Family Resources Survey
2. Tables show the number of children/pensioners in millions rounded to the nearest 10 thousand, and percentages to the nearest percentage point.
3. In this answer low income is determined for individuals as living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of the GB median.

Regeneration (Burslem)

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the Department's contribution to economic regeneration in Burslem. [21834]

Margaret Hodge: Since 1997, in the Stoke-on-Trent, North constituency, the number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance has fallen by 24 per cent. and long term unemployment by 78 per cent. The New Deal has helped 2,010 people in to work, including 810 in Burslem.

Jobcentre Plus is an active member of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone working groups. The Regeneration Zone arrangement in Staffordshire is one of the delivery mechanisms funded by the regional development agency (RDA), Advantage West Midlands (AWM), through its Regional Economic Strategy. We have contributed to the Zone Implementation Plan (ZIP) on areas such as tackling worklessness, upskilling and work force development.

A range of projects, instigated by the Regeneration Zone and actively supported by Jobcentre Plus, have been designed to have a positive impact on the economic regeneration of the Burslem area:

Construction College, Burslem: This is due to open soon as a centre of excellence for construction skills. Jobcentre Plus will look to utilise the facilities to train unemployed adults in construction skills to enable them to take advantage of the new jobs arising out of the Housing Market Renewal funding, much of which is in the Burslem area;

CATU project: This is part funded by the Regeneration Zone and supported by Jobcentre Plus. This project is in place to help redundant workers, mainly from the pottery industry, back to work. The project management work closely with Jobcentre Plus to ensure redundant workers receive full support;

Early Entry to Work Based Learning: This is designed to help recently redundant workers to start up in business, supported by Jobcentre Plus and is available to residents in the Burslem area;

Enterprise Centre phase 2 in Burslem: This is a project funded by the Regeneration Zone and supported by Jobcentre Plus to encourage Small and Medium Employer (SME) development in Burslem.

LAA (Local Area Agreements): Jobcentre Plus is currently working closely with the Regeneration Zone on submitting Growth Initiative proposals around projects to help disadvantaged groups across the city of Stoke on Trent, including Burslem. This will include ideas similar to and based on the Working Neighbourhoods Project operated by Jobcentre Plus.

Neighbourhood Renewal: Jobcentre Plus has also contributed to and worked closely with a number of initiatives across Stoke on Trent that are also active in Burslem and funded by Neighbourhood Renewal monies etc. These include:

LEAP (Learning and Employment Action Plan) project: This is an initiative to support and train workless groups across the city of Stoke on Trent, concentrating in deprived wards such as Burslem, using mentors etc. to help individuals who have been out of work for many years back into the labour market. Jobcentre Plus worked on the design and is giving ongoing support to the project;

STACE (Skills, Training and Community Employment): Jobcentre Plus helped to design and develop this project that looks to help the hardest to help groups, such as clients claiming incapacity benefit, back into work. This project is a project across the city of Stoke on Trent;

Housing Market Renewal in Burslem: Jobcentre Plus is an active member of various construction skills steering groups that have a particular focus on the disadvantaged and are looking to upskill the local work force. This then enables them to take advantage of the growth in construction employment that will arise from Housing Market Renewal. As Burslem is seen as a Heritage Area, the majority of the Regeneration Zone activity relates to capital projects which will improve the area and thus encourage more inward investment that will bring employment to the area.

Connexions: There is currently an adviser based within Burslem Jobcentre at least one day each week offering help to customers with interview skills and the construction of CVs. Additionally, the Environmental Task Force option is available to New Deal customers. This is primarily placement work carrying out, for example, general repairs to canals, labouring and reclamation work. The provider is called Groundwork.

Service Efficiency Targets

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on compliance by his Department with service efficiency targets with particular reference to time taken to handle claims from jobseekers. [26818]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning compliance with service efficiency targets with particular reference to time taken to handle claims from jobseekers. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus sets internal performance measures for managing its workloads in addition to the published targets set by Ministers. These internal measures include clearance times for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

The appropriate Key Management Indicator requires new JSA claims to be processed within an average of 12 days.

The current average clearance time for JSA new claims is 13.5 days with the eleven regions ranging from 10.1 days to 17.7 days. In month average clearance times have increased from 12.4 days in April to 14.7 days in September.

Jobcentre Plus has put measures in place to address this decline in performance. This includes temporary adjustments to the claim taking process and the movement of resources to improve the rate of initial telephone contact and customer service.

We are already seeing improvements following these measures. Contact Centres are now well on their way to meeting their target of answering 90% of calls and we are confident that this improvement will have a beneficial impact on the average clearance times quoted above.

I hope this is helpful.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arms Trade

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the percentage of British *(a)* produced and *(b)* brokered arms which are used to commit human rights abuses. [28910]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has not carried out such an assessment. It would be extremely difficult and resource intensive to attempt an assessment of the origin of arms and other equipment used in the commission of human rights abuses.

In order to minimise the risk that any export might be used for internal repression, we rigorously judge each export licence application against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Where

there was a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression or human rights abuses, the FCO would recommend to the Department of Trade and Industry (as the Licensing Authority) that the application be refused.

Burma

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the Burmese Government's decision to move the seat of government from Rangoon to Pyinmana; what response he plans to make to this decision; what discussions he has had with other Governments concerning this decision; and what steps he plans to take to support human rights in Burma. [28479]

Ian Pearson: Diplomatic missions in Rangoon were formally notified of the Burmese authorities' decision to relocate the seat of administration to Pyinmana on 7 November. The State Peace and Development Council claims that moving to a more central location will enable the Government to carry out the development of the whole nation more effectively. Although it is too early to assess the full impact of the move, we are in close touch with international partners in Rangoon over these developments.

We are actively working with our European and international partners, as well as through the United Nations and its agencies, to press the Burmese authorities to end their appalling human rights violations and to engage in a genuine process of national reconciliation involving all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma.

We regularly raise our concerns over human rights with the Burmese authorities, most recently when our ambassador in Rangoon met the Burmese Foreign and Labour Ministers on 31 October.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23302]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not run any call centres which deal directly with the public. The FCO routinely uses commercial call centres for information on travel advice, UK visas and passports. Outside call centres, including police facilities, are used in consular emergencies when the number of calls or likely calls exceeds FCO staff capacity in relevant departments of the office.

China

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* occasions and *(b)* dates when he has raised the issue of human rights in (i) Tibet and (ii) China with members of the Chinese government in the last three years. [27653]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1181W.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his assessment of the degree of compliance by China with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and if he will make a statement. [28401]

Mr. Straw: We welcome China's work towards ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). We regularly encourage China to invest more effort in bringing itself into compliance with the ICCPR. The UK will host a joint EU-China ICCPR ratification seminar in December.

Farm Subsidies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether an agreement has been reached on farm subsidies in Bulgaria and Romania in anticipation of their accession to the European Union in 2007; and whether the subsidies will be funded from the existing budget. [29140]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Farm subsidy arrangements are set out in the Accession treaty between member states of the European Union (EU) and Bulgaria and Romania. In essence, the same arrangements that were applied to the 2004 Accession will apply to Bulgaria and Romania. Common Agricultural Policy direct payments will be phased in over a 10-year period, starting at 25 percent. of the level applicable to the EU 15 from the date of accession. Bulgaria and Romania have the option of making limited top-ups to phased in payments, mainly at national expense, and of adopting a simplified direct payment scheme for the first few years after accession.

The EU Commission estimate that direct payments and market measures for Bulgaria and Romania would amount to some €2.5 billion in total over the 2007–09 period (assuming that accession takes place on 1 January 2007), plus a further €3 billion for rural development. A decision on whether direct payments and market measures will be funded from within the ceilings agreed by Heads of Government in October 2002 will be taken as part of the current future financing negotiations.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27734]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office paid out the following amounts in damages in the last 12 months. The nature of each claim is indicated.

Date	*Nature of claim*	*Damages (£)*
April 2005	Work related upper limb disorder	33,500
April 2005	Personal Injury Claim	22,000
December 2004	Work related upper limb disorder	4,500

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27375]

Mr. Straw: The 10 most valuable immoveable assets are listed at table 1. All items on the list are property assets comprising land and buildings.

The 10 most valuable moveable assets are listed at table 2.

IT installations have not been included within these lists. At 31 March 2005 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had IT installations and equipment held at a written down value of £39,811,925, the bulk of which is written down over five years. This includes all capitalised IT installations and is a conglomerate of development costs, software and licences, cabling and hardware. Thus the total cost is a composite of moveable and immoveable items and does not belong to either category.

Table 1: top 10 immoveable assets—all property assets

Location	*Description of asset*	*Value (£)*
London	King Charles Street	50,000,000
Paris	35 Rue du Faubourg St	36,692,372
Moscow	Smolenskaya Compound	29,255,120
Paris	39 Rue du Faubourg St	27,735,404
Hong Kong	British Consulate	26,051,486
London	Old Admiralty Building	25,000,000
Rome	Residence	21,473,163
Rome	80 Via XX Septembre	16,641,243
Washington	3100 Massachusetts Ave	15,718,669
Tokyo	Tokyo Office	15,237,080

Notes:
1. Valuations produced by the Estates Department as at 31 March 2005.
2. Property coming within the bounds of a single compound has been treated as a single asset.

Table 2: top 10 moveable assets

Location	*Description of asset*	*Written down value (£)*	*Type of asset*	*Gross value (£)*
Hanslope Park	Generator	577,367.87	Heavy Machinery	607,755
Washington	Silver (set)	485,000.00	Antiques and Works of Art	485,000
Istanbul	2xChandeliers	350,000.00	Antiques and Works of Art	350,000
Hanslope Park	Generator	292,325.56	Heavy Machinery	307,715
Havana	Rug	130,000.00	Antiques and Works of Art	130,000
New Delhi	Jaguar XJ 4.2	120,000.00	Motor Car	120,000
Islamabad	Jaguar XJ 4.2	120,000.00	Motor Car	120,000
Cairo	Jaguar XJ 4.2	120,000.00	Motor Car	120,000
Iraq	Minibus	111,261.55	Light Commercial Vehicle	152,589
Iraq	Minibus	111,261.55	Light Commercial Vehicle	152,589

Notes:
1. Values as at 31 March 2005.
2. Antiques and works of art were professionally valued during the year. These assets are not depreciated.
3. All other assets listed in table 2 are shown at the written down (depreciated) value. The gross value (purchase cost plus indexed inflation cost) is shown for comparative purpose.
4. The high cost of the vehicles is because they are all armoured.
5. For the purpose of this exercise "moveable" has been interpreted as meaning transportable.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27439]

Mr. Straw: The 10 highest paid employees in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are all civil servants and members of the Senior Management Structure. It is not the practice to release personal information on individual remuneration, but current salary levels are as follows:

Salary range (£)	*Number of officers*
190,000 to 199,000	1
180,000 to 189,999	0
170,000 to 179,999	0
160,000 to 169,999	1
150,000 to 159,999	0
140,000 to 149,999	3
130,000 to 139,999	5

Bonus payments in addition this year for these employees have ranged from £2,000 to £20,000.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27452]

Mr. Straw: Figures for Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff numbers are notified to the Cabinet Office according to a central counting convention. The figure for full time equivalent staff is not yet available for 2005. The numbers of UK based employees (i.e. excluding contract staff employed locally at posts) for each of the previous five years, at 1 April and including the FCO's Agency, Wilton Park, were as follows:

	Number
2004	5,970
2003	5,950
2002	5,680
2001	5,500
2000	5,460

The numbers for contract and other staff are devolved and central records of the exact numbers employed are not held centrally. We estimate the total of contract and other staff to be about 700. A significant part of the increase is growth in staff working in visas/consular/security.

EU Presidency

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress he has made in achieving his aims for the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Union. [22901]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recalled to the House on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 720W, the Work Programme for the UK presidency was set out in detail in a White Paper Cmnd 6611, which was presented to the House on 30 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1450–52W.

On 1 November the Foreign Secretary also set out progress made in a number of areas so far—better regulation, the post-financial services action plan, development in Africa, sugar reform and the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia (*Official Report*, column 721W). Other areas of progress include Counter-terrorism, where we have secured renewed commitment of member states and European Union (EU) institutions to prioritise collective EU action on counter-terrorism, in the wake of the London bombings, by stepping up implementation of the EU's Counter Terrorism Action Plan and co-operating more closely to tackle international threats. And on European security and defence policy/policing missions, our presidency has seen three new missions become operational, including the first in Asia and Aceh. We expect to have a fourth, to assist to Palestinian Authority shortly. On future financing, the Government remain committed to working to try to agree a future financing deal in December.

Holy See

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the new United Kingdom Ambassador to the Holy See is a UK citizen. [29585]

Mr. Straw: The next Ambassador to the Holy See is a British citizen.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 1 November, 2005, *Official Report*, column 954W, on Holy See, what assessment was made of the readership in Scotland of the *(a)* Scotsman, *(b)* Herald, *(c)* Guardian, *(d)* Daily Telegraph, *(e)* Times and *(f)* the Independent when deciding not to advertise the post of UK Ambassador to the Holy See in either *(a)* or *(b)*; and with what comparative readership figures the Department was supplied. [29614]

Mr. Straw: In line with our policy on specialist campaigns, we took advice from the recruitment agency and advertised in those journals with the largest UK circulation and with the means to reach a wide range of potential candidates.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many applications were received for the post of UK Ambassador for the Holy See; and how many of these were from applicants with return addresses in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Northern Ireland and *(d)* overseas. [29615]

Mr. Straw: We received 122 applications for the post of HM Ambassador to the Holy See. The regional breakdown of these applications is as follows:

86 from England;

two from Wales;

four from Scotland;

five from Northern Ireland;

23 from overseas; and

two failed to complete the application form properly and we are unable to confirm where they are from.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date he was first informed that anthrax supplied to Iraq was sourced from the United States. [28482]

Ian Pearson: I assume my hon. Friend is referring to imports by Iraq of anthrax from the United States. There was widespread media coverage in 1991 of the findings of the United Nations Special Commission's (UNSCOM) first inspection of Iraq's biological weapons capability. A number of pathogens were handed over to UNSCOM inspectors which had been sourced from the American type culture collection. These included *Bacillis anthracis*.

Italy

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Government officials had *(a)* direct contact and *(b)* contact via other parties with the Italian national Rocco Marino between 1999 and September 2002; and whether Government officials (i) met and (ii) had contact via other parties with Nicolo Pollari, director of the Italian military intelligence, between 2001 and 2003. [27100]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent in each year from 1st May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27780]

Mr. Straw: Since 1999 this Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Information for 1997–98 was included in the 1999 list. The overall cost of Minister's visits for the years 1995–96 and 1996–97 was provided with the 2001 list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House.

Information on vehicular and rail transport is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within his Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if he will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27799]

Mr. Straw: Since 1999 this Government has published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Information for 1997–98 was included in the 1999 list. The overall cost of Minister's visits for the years 1995–96 and 1996–97 was provided with the 2001 list. The list shows the number of officials who accompanied me where non-scheduled travel was used. Information on those who accompanied Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers on all trips since 1995 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost was of amending his travel arrangements and returning from Moscow in order to vote in the House on 9 November; and if he will make a statement. [28565]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Peter Luff) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1267- 68W.

Nepal

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the British Ambassador to Nepal has been recalled to London. [29621]

Ian Pearson: No. The British Ambassador to Nepal has not been recalled. The Nepalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recently given agreement to the appointment of the present Ambassador's successor, in line with standard practice. The new Ambassador will take up his posting when the present Ambassador completes his tour of duty in June 2006. We will announce the name of the new Ambassador in due course.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 753–54W, on non-proliferation, what his policy is on whether future projects providing indirect support to the consolidation, secure custody and elimination of special nuclear materials should continue to be financed using Community instruments in the Financial Perspective 2007–2013. [28455]

Mr. Straw: We believe that there should be provision to fund such projects from the Community budget under the next Financial Perspective. We are currently discussing with the Commission a draft of a new Instrument for Nuclear Assistance which we would propose should provide the basis for funding such projects in the next Financial Perspective.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 753–54W, on non-proliferation, whether he expects the Nuclear Safety Instrument in the financial perspective 2007–2013 to enable all existing projects funded by the European Commission that are supportive of nuclear non-proliferation activities to continue at their current levels. [28457]

Mr. Straw: Funding for the Instrument for Nuclear Assistance will need to be agreed as part of the overall funding package agreed for the EU's next financial perspective. The UK, along with five other member states (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden), believes that the Union's priorities can be funded by a budget stabilised at one per cent. of EU Gross National Income (GNI). The instrument will be funded out of the "external actions" heading of the EC budget. We would prefer to see no growth under this heading. We will want funding for the instrument for nuclear assistance to be consistent with this, but also to provide sufficient resources to allow the commission to make a significant contribution towards achieving the EU's nuclear non-proliferation objectives, including those related to the Global Partnership.

Private Militia

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of regulation of private *(a)* military and *(b)* security companies; and if he will make a statement. [28818]

Mr. Straw: In late 2004 I requested a review by officials of the options for the regulation of the overseas operations of private military and security companies registered in or operating from the United Kingdom. The aim was to follow up on the Green Paper of 2002, "Private Military Companies: Options for Regulation", and to respond to the increase in the activities of private military and security companies in areas of conflict overseas. The review was completed in June 2005.I am currently seeking views from ministerial colleagues on the options for regulation. The Government will keep Parliament fully informed of their proposals in this area.

Retired Officers

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many retired officers were employed in overseas postings in each year since 1990; and if he will make a statement. [22619]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have a cadre of retired officers. We currently employ 66 individuals overseas in receipt of a civil service pension on a fee-paid basis, mainly to carry out specialised activities in the areas of security and visa operations. Under civil service pensions rules, such individuals have their pensions abated so that their total remuneration will not exceed their previous salary. The records of previous individual employment history are not held in a form that would provide information on

earlier years or give details of how many individuals may have taken some kind of official retirement. This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

South America

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with governments in the Andean region regarding *(a)* governance reforms and *(b)* the enhancement of democratic values. [27025]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK places great value on its relationship with the Andean region and support efforts aimed at good governance and the promotion of democratic principles, in an effort to find lasting solutions to the challenges facing the region. We regularly impress upon the governments of the Andean region, bilaterally and through our presidency of the EU, the importance we attach to these matters. We will continue to raise important issues such as these at every suitable opportunity, both here in London, through our embassies in the Andean countries and in the course of high level visits in both directions.

Sudan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in the Darfur region of Sudan. [28932]

Ian Pearson: The sixth round of Darfur peace talks, between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), adjourned on 20 October. The UK provided three experts to hold workshops on key areas, particularly security, during this round of negotiations. The parties engaged in negotiations constructively and made some progress on power sharing issues.

However, we judge that progress remains slow. We are urging the parties to make more rapid headway when talks reconvene on 21 November and stand ready to provide further experts to assist the African Union (AU) mediators.

We are concerned about continuing divisions within the SLM. United States Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick, chaired a meeting with both factions of the SLM and international partners, including the AU and UN, in Nairobi on 8–9 November. The UK participated actively in this meeting, which pressed the SLM to resolve their differences and negotiate with one voice when talks in Abuja reconvene.

We remain firmly committed to the Abuja process, and will maintain a UK presence throughout the talks, in support of the mediation and the parties.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with permanent members of the United Nations Security Council on an arms embargo on the Sudanese Government. [28934]

Ian Pearson: On 29 March United Nations Security Council Resolution 1591 imposed an arms embargo on the Darfur region of Sudan and made provisions for an assets freeze and travel ban against certain categories of individuals. We have always maintained that the arms embargo should be broadened to cover the whole country, as with the European Union Arms Embargo. We have discussed this matter on several occasions with other members of the Security Council and will continue to do so.

The UN panel of experts on the Sudan resolution will report in the coming weeks on implementation of the existing sanctions and possible further measures. We will urge the Council to follow up their recommendations quickly.

UK Ambassadors

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK ambassadors are not UK citizens; and if he will make a statement. [29590]

Mr. Straw: None.

UK Presidency

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of the cost of running the UK presidency of the EU. [29452]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey) on 9 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 660–61W.

United States (Prince of Wales's Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the duty Minister was in attendance in respect of HRH the Prince of Wales's official visit to the US. [26864]

Mr. Straw: No Minister, either from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or from another Government Department, accompanied Their Royal Highnesses to the United States.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what basis Mr. Michael Fawcett was included in the process for the selection and purchase of official gifts given by HRH the Prince of Wales during his official visit to the US; and if he will make a statement. [26865]

Mr. Straw: We have no knowledge of any involvement of Mr. Michael Fawcett. The present for the President was based on a suggestion made by the British embassy in Washington. The presents for Mrs Bush were selected by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which persons from the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment accompanied HRH Prince of Wales on his official visit to the US; whether costs relating to such persons were met from public funds; and if he will make a statement. [26869]

Mr. Straw: No-one from the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment accompanied His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales on his official visit to the US.

Zanzibar

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* transparency and *(b)* legitimacy of the recent elections in Zanzibar. [28412]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) on 15 November 2005 *Official Report*, column 1186W

NORTHERN IRELAND

11 Plus

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria were used in making the decision that no pilot tests would be carried out in connection with the removal of the 11 plus. [28763]

Angela E. Smith: Government have accepted the recommendation of the Post-Primary Review Working Group that academic selection should end, with the final Transfer Tests taking place in autumn 2008. Pilot tests will not be required, as future transfer arrangements will be based on parental choice, informed by a Pupil Profile. The Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment is developing the Pupil Profile and piloting it in a range of schools with teachers and parents involved.

Cancer Patients (Benefits)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action the Department for Social Development is taking to improve access to the statutory benefits system for patients who have been diagnosed with cancer; and if he will make a statement. [23387]

Mr. Hanson: For those suffering from cancer, the Social Security Agency's disability and carer's service contact centre assists with telephone applications for disability living allowance (DLA), attendance allowance (AA) and carer's allowance (CA). They can also avail of the special rules scheme within DLA and AA to fast track claims for terminally ill customers. Getting either benefit under special rules means the customer gets the highest rate for help with personal care.

In conjunction with Macmillan Cancer Relief, the agency has worked to identify and address the barriers facing cancer patients when accessing benefits. As a result of this there has been:

enhanced cancer awareness training for agency staff;

an information booklet "Help with the Cost of Cancer" was launched in March 2005; and

an outreach service of specialist benefit advisers for those with cancer has been piloted. The pilot is proving successful and the next phase is being considered.

Company Insolvencies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many company insolvencies there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [28860]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the number of insolvent liquidations in each of the last 10 financial years.

Year ending 31 March	*Number of compulsory liquidations*[1]	*Number of insolvent voluntary liquidations*	*Total for year*
1996	71	43	114
1997	66	49	115
1998	71	51	122
1999	62	52	114
2000	64	42	106
2001	77	46	123
2002	56	50	106
2003	67	47	114
2004	84	55	139
2005[2]	71	44	115
Total	689	479	1,168

[1] Excludes any winding-up orders which were subsequently rescinded by the court.
[2] To date.

Cormorants

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the number of cormorants in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [28850]

Angela E. Smith: A 10-year average of 2,773 cormorants are present in Northern Ireland during the winter months (November to February), when numbers are highest. Data for the past 10 years is as follows:

Winter population of Cormorants for Northern Ireland 1995–2005

	Population
2004–05	2,507
2003–04	3,613
2002–03	3,606
2001–02	1,706
2000–01	2,508
1999–2000	3,116
1998–99	3,725
1997–98	2,447
1996–97	1,978
1995–96	2,522
Average	2,773

There are around 600 breeding pairs in summer.

Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what date the railway carriages in Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin, were cut up and repositioned. [28640]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the response I gave on Thursday 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1369W.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what conditions the deposit of the railway carriages in Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin, laid down by the planning appeal tribunal in 1983 were set aside. [28641]

Angela E. Smith: I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the response I gave on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1368W.

Disabled Access

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Government buildings in Northern Ireland remain to be adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities; and when the necessary adaptations are expected to be completed in each case. [24983]

Angela E. Smith: Details of Government buildings which remain to be adapted to meet DDA requirements have been placed in the Library.

Electronic Human Resources

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in respect of the proposal to outsource the Civil Service Electronic Human Resources work; and what assessment was made of the equality issues involved. [26823]

Angela E. Smith: The proposal to outsource Human Resource work, which would be carried out in a Shared Service Centre, is being considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment of the eHR policy. Ministers have been briefed on the equality issues.

Emergency Drills

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what dates since October 2001, local authorities and emergency services in Northern Ireland have carried out emergency drills for terrorist attacks; where such drills took place; and which agencies were involved. [22764]

Mr. Woodward: Exercises carried out by Government, local authorities and the emergency services in response to the terrorist threat since October 2001 are detailed in the table:

Date of exercise	*Exercise organised by*	*Nature of Exercise/Scenario*	*Location*	*Agencies involved*
20 June 2002	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)	Terrorist Chemical Attack on Windsor Park.	Table top Exercise	NIAS, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast City Hospital
26 February 2003	Ballymena Borough Council	Chemical attack exercise	Table top Exercise Ballymena Showgrounds	NIAS, NIFRS, PSNI, Ballymena Council
25 May 2003	Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)	Cross border civilian plane crash	Live Exercise in Fermanagh	Multi Agency, local authorities, PSNI and An Garda Siochana
23 July 2003	Emergency Medical Assistance and Rescue Team (EMART)	Test of call out procedures for delivery of PODS containing equipment for dealing with a CBRN incident	Transported from storage in Belfast/Omagh areas to Tyrone County Hospital and Downe Hospital	EMART Project Manager, NIAS and NIFRS
5-6 March 2004	EMART	Chemical attack exercise	Tabletop and exercise at Stormont Hotel and NT Civil Sports Pavilion	EMART Project Manager and EMART Volunteers, PSNI, NIFRS, NIAS
8 April 2004	OFMDFM / NIO	Exercise Counterbalance—a National Programme of seminars, presentations and table top exercises to raise awareness of CBRN	Park Avenue Hotel	DHSSPS, NIFRS, NIAS, MoD, HQNI, NIO, PSNI, Metropolitan Police, Home Office, London Resilience Team, Emergency Planning College, Maritime and Coastguard Agency
26 May 2004	PSNI / NIO	Terrorist release of gas at die Odyssey Arena	New Salesman Exercise, Marine Court, Bangor	PSNI, NIO, Home Office, HQNI, MoD, NIFRS, NIAS, and various technical experts from GB
4 September 2004	EMART	Coping with a disaster where there is a lack of infrastructure	Test of EMART communications, mobilisation of 50 bed ward and staffing a casualty clearing station	University of Ulster Professional Development Unit with the Territorial Army
24 October 2004	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS)	Explosion on board a ferry. Unknown chemical involved and possibility of terrorist attack	Warrenpoint Harbour	NIFRS NIAS
17 December 2004	OFMDFM	Tabletop Exercise to test senior officials from NI Departments and NIO	Stormont	NI Departments, NIO
9 February 2005	Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH)	Nerve gas attack	Tabletop exercise carried out at RVH	RVH Personnel NIAS
13 April 2005	PSNI	NIFRS Decontamination Capability	Steeple Barracks, Antrim	NIFRS
18 May 2005	NIO	Crisis Management Workshop—A series of presentations and tabletop exercises for NIO emergency responders	Stormont	NIO, PSNI, MoD
10 June 2005	NIO	Command Post Exercise to test the Government's response to a terrorist attack on NI infrastructure	Stormont	NIO, NI Departments, PSNI, NIFRS, HSE, HQNI, Home Office, Cabinet Office

Date of exercise	Exercise organised by	Nature of Exercise/Scenario	Location	Agencies involved
7/8 July 2005	PSNI	CBRN Exercise in relation to visit to Belfast of the EU Employment Ministers	Belfast	PSNI, NIFRS, NIAS
10 September 2005	Regional Virus Laboratory	To test courier arrangements for transportation of potential smallpox clinical specimen for specialist analysis	Regional Viral Laboratories to Health Protection Agency Specialist Laboratory in GB	Laboratory personnel and courier service provider

Notes:
1. Many hospital trusts have not carried out specific exercises dealing with a terrorist attack but continue to test and review major incident plans, designed to enable Trusts to respond to any major emergency, where a large number of casualties result, including plans to deal with chemical and radioactive contamination.
2. There are no centrally held figures on specific local government exercises. Information would need to be sought from individual councils.

Grammar Schools

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with parents about the grammar school system of education in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [29350]

Angela E. Smith: During the last two months, I have had meetings with key interests to discuss new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools. This has included a meeting with two groups representing parents—the Concerned Parents for Education and the Parental Alliance for Choice in Education.

It is important to hear the full range of views on this issue before making decisions on the way forward. I want to put in place a better system that provides choice, better opportunities and flexibility to all young people to enable them to reach their full potential.

I will be publishing a summary report on the responses to the consultation on new admissions arrangements and making an announcement on the way forward shortly.

Marine Bill

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress he has made in developing proposals for a Marine Bill for Northern Ireland; and what resources have been set aside to implement the legislation. [28191]

Angela E. Smith: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has lead responsibility for taking forward work associated with the introduction of a Marine Bill. DEFRA officials have held discussions with the devolved administrations about the scope for their inclusion in the Bill.

In light of these discussions officials in the Department of the Environment are currently considering possible options taking account of the policy development work and resources which would be necessary to enable Northern Ireland to participate in the Bill in line with the DEFRA timetable.

No final decisions have yet been taken.

Parades Commission

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that parades for which no proper application has been submitted to the Parades Commission can be regulated by the Parades Commission. [558]

Mr. Hain: The current legal position in respect of giving advance notice of parades is set out in section 6 of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. A person who organises or takes part in a parade in respect of which the requirements of section 6 as to notice have not been satisfied is guilty of an offence. The investigation and prosecution of such offences is a matter for the PSNI and the Public Prosecution Service. The Government have no plans to change the legal framework regarding this matter.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to announce the appointment of the new Chairman and Members of the Parades Commission in Northern Ireland. [25494]

Mr. Woodward: The Government are committed to ensuring, so far as is practicable, that the Parades Commission is representative of the people of Northern Ireland. The current appointments expire on 31 December. A reappointments process began on 25 July and is on schedule for the new Commission to start on 1 January 2006.

We have received 94 applications for membership of the Parades Commission and 49 applications for the position of Chair. We are pleased with the volume and quality of applications received from both sides of the community.

The process is being run in close co-operation with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). An OCPA independent assessor is one of three panel members sifting and interviewing applicants for both Chair and membership.

Pensioners Parliament

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what public funding has been provided to Northern Ireland groups dealing with senior citizens' issues in Northern Ireland to attend a Pensioners Parliament in the United Kingdom in the last five years. [4887]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that Departments provide funding for some age sector organisations. However, I am not aware of any Departments having received requests for funding for individuals to attend the Pensioners Parliament.

Post Offices

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received about the proposed closure of Crown post offices in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.[28983]

Angela E. Smith: Representations have been made by the Communication Workers Union about the future of Crown post offices in Northern Ireland. Two parliamentary questions have also been answered on matters relating to the closure of post offices and the transfer of Crown post offices to private franchise in Northern Ireland. I would refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for South Antrim (Dr. McCrea) dated 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 269W-70W and 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1025W.

The Post Office, posts and the regulation of postal services are reserved matters. Decisions on individual closures and conversions of directly managed Crown post offices are operational and commercial matters for Post Office Ltd.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* 16, *(b)* 17, *(c)* 18, *(d)* 19, *(e)* 20 and *(f)* 21-year-olds were in further education in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [28863]

Angela E. Smith: The following table details the number of young people (aged 16–21) who attended a further education college in NI over the 10 year period 1995–96 to 2004–05.

Students[1] in Further Education in Northern Ireland aged between 16 and 21 years, 1995–96 to 2004–05

	Age[2]						
Academic year	*16*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20*	*21*	*Total 16 to 21-year-olds*
2004–05	9,764	9,306	7,139	4,689	3,147	2,630	36,675
2003–04	10,392	9,344	6,884	4,544	3,372	2,594	37,130
2002–03	9,657	10,036	6,728	4,341	2,759	2,095	35,616
2001–02	10,257	10,198	7,051	4,203	2,736	2,176	36,621
2000–01	10,475	10,139	7,083	4,263	2,828	2,040	36,828
1999–2000	10,673	10,302	7,548	4,526	2,893	2,072	38,014
1998–99	10,286	10,068	7,697	4,469	2,729	2,019	37,268
1997–98	10,419	10,656	7,687	4,429	2,761	2,095	38,047
1996–97	11,118	10,346	7,618	4,216	2,684	2,070	38,052
1995–96	10,417	10,137	7,177	4,086	2,648	2,028	36,493

[1] Data relates to a snapshot of students on 1 November of the relevant academic year.
[2] Age is at 1 July at the beginning of the relevant academic year.

Source:
FESR snapshot

Punishment Beatings

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list *(a)* dissident Republican and *(b)* Loyalist groups which have been linked to punishment beatings since July; [24767]

(2) when he intends to answer question 24767 tabled by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre on 2 November. [29683]

Mr. Woodward: PSNI statistics for the period in question confirm that Loyalist paramilitaries carried out 13 assaults while "dissident" Republicans were responsible for one assault.

It should be noted that PSNI do not record attribution by specific loyalist faction, In many cases victims and witnesses to paramilitary assaults are unwilling or unable to provide the police with information that could assist in identifying such groups.

Race Crimes

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many race crimes have been referred by the Police Service for Northern Ireland to the Public Prosecution Service over the past three years; how many prosecutions were brought; and how many convictions were secured. [24734]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (David Hanson) on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 110W).

Statistics relating to prosecutions for racially motivated crimes are not currently available. The table outlines the number of racially motivated crimes cleared by the police in 2004–05 (the first financial year for which data is available). A breakdown by clearance type is provided which includes the number of crimes cleared by way of a charge or summons.

Crime clearance method	*1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005*
Charge / Summons	59
Caution / informal warning (including juvenile)	11
No further police action [1]	31
Total crimes cleared	101

[1] Includes cases where the complainant declined to prosecute, and where the suspected offender is under the age of criminal responsibility or has died.

Retail Market

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment his Department has made of the extent of competition in the Northern Ireland retail market; and if he will make a statement. [28908]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has not undertaken any research into this market. Competition in the supermarket and grocery sectors is a matter for the independent competition authorities, in this instance the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research has been undertaken by his Department into the market share of each of the four largest multiple retail chains in Northern Ireland. [28909]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has not undertaken any research into this market. Competition in the supermarket and grocery sectors is a matter for the independent competition authorities, in this instance the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

Roads

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the reasons for the recent changes in funding for structural roads maintenance; what was the initial external budget for structural maintenance in each district council area in the financial year *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005–06; and what action is being taken to ensure that the allocation of funding for this purpose is sufficient to enable the targets set in the Regional Transportation Strategy to be met. [28440]

Mr. Woodward: The draft Budget provides that, by 2008, total Government spending in NI will exceed £16 billion, a jump of more than 50 per cent. since 1997. Public expenditure in NI is by far the highest figure for any region of the UK and is 29 per cent. higher than the UK average.

Notwithstanding this, there are many pressures on the Northern Ireland Budget and the roads' programme must compete for funding along with other spending programmes. The draft Priorities and Budget 2006–08 is presently out for consultation. It allocated additional resources for Health and for Education and this inevitably had some implications for other programmes including roads maintenance. It is expected that the revised Budget will be announced in December 2005.

The Regional Transportation Strategy (2002–12) identified strategic transportation investment priorities and considered potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the 10-year period. It was explained in the RTS that the level of public expenditure funding for the strategy would be determined through the normal budgetary process, which will take account of the needs of other departments and decisions on priorities.

I should explain that Roads Service's maintenance budgets are not allocated at the outset of the financial year on a district council basis. Therefore, it is not possible to give an initial budget for structural maintenance in each district council area as requested. A breakdown of structural maintenance expenditure by district council is set out as follows for 2003–04 and 2004–05. It should be noted that these figures are based on the expenditure in the previous two financial years and that they include the contribution made by the Roads Service in-house contractor.

The structural maintenance budget for the 2005–06 year is currently £60.5 million, however a breakdown of this amount at the district council level cannot be provided at this stage.

£ million

District council	*Structural maintenance*	
	2003–04 outturn	*2004–05 outturn*
Antrim	3.0	2.4
Coleraine	3.4	2.4
Limavady	2.6	2.1
Moyle	1.3	1.3
Ballymoney	2.1	1.5
Derry	3.2	2.7
Ballymena	3.3	3.0
Larne	1.6	1.4
Belfast	6.4	5.9
Castlereagh	1.4	1.2
Newtownabbey	2.0	2.2
Carrickfergus	0.9	0.8
North Down	2.6	1.3
Lisburn	4.8	4.5
Ards	2.3	2.2
Armagh	3.9	4.1
Newry and Mourne	4.4	4.9
Banbridge	2.6	2.4
Craigavon	3.2	3.4
Down	3.5	3.4
Magherafelt	2.7	2.2
Omagh	4.9	4.0
Strabane	3.4	3.9
Cookstown	2.5	2.2
Fermanagh	5.5	4.6
Dungannon	5.4	4.0
Total structural maintenance summary	82.9	73.8

Total structural maintenance—summary

£ million

	Outturn	*Budget*
2003–04	82.9	—
2004–05	73.8	—
2005–06	—	60.5

School Admissions

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to introduce legislation to change the admissions policy of schools in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [29551]

Angela E. Smith: I am considering the responses to the consultation on admissions arrangements and will announce my decisions on the way forward shortly.

School Transport

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the annual cost of school transport if the compulsory seat belt policy is implemented on school buses in Northern Ireland. [29206]

Angela E. Smith: The cost of the provision of seat belts on school buses is currently under consideration by the Department of the Environment in its assessment of the four key recommendations of the Northern Ireland Assembly's home to school transport public inquiry. It is expected that the findings of this work, which is being carried out in partnership with the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Education, will be published shortly.

DOE is currently analysing the results of school bus occupancy surveys carried out in April/May and September this year which are informing the final stages of the assessment.

Security Guards (Crown Insignia)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether security guards providing services to Northern Ireland Civil Service buildings wear Crown insignia. [619]

Angela E. Smith: The wearing of Crown insignia by support grades providing security guard services to NICS buildings is a matter for each Department to determine. Currently 67 staff are supplied with a uniform with Crown insignia. Some security guards for NICS buildings, are provided by private contractors who do not wear Crown insignia.

Sewage (Strangford)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has *(a)* to improve the sewage system at Darragh Cross and *(b)* to upgrade the system to include the villages of Raffrey and Derryboye; and if he will make a statement. [2590]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated June 2005.

You recently asked a Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to improve the sewerage system at Darragh Cross and to upgrade the system to include the villages of Raffrey and Derryboye (2590). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The existing foul sewer, sewage pumping station and associated pumping main on the Killyleagh Road, Darragh Cross were upgraded in 2004 to cater for existing and future development. Water Service plans to decommission the existing wastewater treatment works at Darragh Cross and to pump the wastewater to the Saintfield Wastewater Treatment Works, which is to be upgraded to ensure compliance with future regulatory standards and to cater for future development. The project is scheduled to commence in early 2006 and to be completed in the summer of 2007, subject to all statutory approvals being obtained.

Like many other small settlements in Northern Ireland, Derryboye and Raffrey do not presently have public sewerage facilities and properties in the areas are currently served by private septic tanks, Water Service plans to carry out a detailed investigation to determine the economic viability of providing first time sewerage facilities for both areas, following the publication of the Ards/Down Area Plan 2015.

Social Work Students

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make social work degree students from Northern Ireland studying outside Northern Ireland eligible for bursaries. [25526]

Mr. Woodward: Northern Ireland students undertaking higher education courses in social work are entitled to receive support in accordance with the Education (Student Support) Regulations. Such support comprises income-assessed grants towards tuition fees, higher education bursaries, student loans and supplementary grants.

Separately, from the mandatory arrangements described above the DHSSPS administers an incentive scheme, designed to attract Northern Ireland domiciled students to study for social work in Northern Ireland, in order to best meet the needs of the Northern Ireland social services work force. Social work students from Northern Ireland intending to study outside Northern Ireland therefore fall outside the terms of the incentive scheme, but remain able to apply for the usual student support in accordance with the Education (Student Support) Regulations.

However, in light of experience in operating the scheme, the DHSSPS is planning to review, from an equality perspective, that aspect of the scheme that precludes support funding for students from Northern Ireland, studying outside Northern Ireland.

Unauthorised Encampments

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce measures to combat unauthorised encampments. [27764]

Mr. Hanson: The Unauthorised Encampments (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 includes provisions aimed at combating unauthorised encampments. However, as indicated during the debate into the legislation, I intend to defer bringing the substantive provisions of the order into effect until I am satisfied that an adequate number of transit sites is operational in Northern Ireland, I anticipate that five sites will be operational in 2006, I am reviewing the situation with the Housing Executive with a view to enabling the necessary provisions as soon as possible once the sites are operational.

Water Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the rationalisation process in the Water Service. [1434]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 2 June 2005:

You recently tabled a Parliamentary Question asking the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the rationalisation process in the Water Service (1434). I have been asked to reply as this issue fails within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

A key part of the Government's Water Reform agenda is the need to reduce costs and improve efficiency in order to minimize charges to customers. Water Service has been set a target of £43 million reductions in operating costs by April 2009. By March 2005, £12 million of that had been delivered.

In order to meet these targets, the size of the workforce is reducing and will reduce further. To date all reductions have been made by natural wastage. The Minister has made it clear that all possible steps will be taken to avoid compulsory redundancy.

Water Service Management are looking at all areas of expenditure to reduce costs. These include examining the number of offices and depots required in future. No decisions have yet been reached in. this area. Any changes resulting from the review would

be subject to the normal requirements regarding equality, industrial relations and personnel procedures, In addition Water Service is looking at how it delivers its services in a number of areas. Among the options being considered is the centralisation of those services where quality and/or cost improvements would result. Once again, any decisions reached in these areas would require all the appropriate procedures to be followed.

Youth Funding

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* actions and *(b)* activities to be funded by the children and young people's funding package announced in Budget and Priorities 2006 to 2008, indicating (i) the amounts attached to each and (ii) the planned delivery mechanisms. [24850]

Angela E. Smith: It is intended that the package, which will initially be targeted on disadvantaged areas, will support the development of innovative approaches to delivering early years' and pre-school education and other provision for the 0–4s, After School Activities and Youth provision, strengthened child protection arrangements, development of inter-agency co-operation and collaboration and improved educational provision and support for Looked After Children and Young People. Details of the actions, activities, associated allocations and delivery mechanisms for the funding package have not yet been determined and these will be agreed by the Secretary of State before the final Budget announcement in December.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Charities

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when charities lost exemption from competition rules on exchange of information; what mechanism was used to make the change; for what reasons it was made; and how it was communicated to *(a)* Parliament, *(b)* charities and *(c)* the general public. [28556]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since coming into force in March 2000, the Competition Act 1998 has applied to all undertakings. This includes charities where they are carrying out economic activities. The Competition Act 1998 represented a major strengthening of UK competition law and was the subject of extensive public consultation. In particular the aims of the Bill were outlined in detail in the August 1997 consultation document "A prohibition approach to anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position". The draft Bill was debated fully in Parliament.

Clear Skies Programme

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of *(a)* the quality and *(b)* the number of (i) solar hot water, (ii) biomass, (iii) wind, (iv) ground source heat pump and (v) hydro projects supported by the Clear Skies grant programme since 2002; and if he will make a statement. [27461]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The information requested is as follows.

(a) The quality of projects supported under the Clear Skies programme has been maintained through establishing an approved installer and products list. Quality is also maintained by having an independent selection panel for community projects.

(b) Clear Skies has been a successful programme and has exceeded its original targets for installations.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the funding requirements of solar photovoltaics following the end of the Clear Skies scheme. [25367]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has supported photovoltaics since 2002 through the £31 million Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme. We plan to continue its support for photovoltaics and other building scale renewables through a low carbon buildings programme, which is currently under development. The new programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years. It will start in April 2006 subject to EU state aids clearance.

We have also commissioned a report to study the economic potential for the UK of microgeneration technologies and this report will be published shortly.

Coal Imports

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much coal has been imported from China in the last five years. [29730]

Malcolm Wicks: The total amount of coal imported by the UK from China over the five years from 2000 to 2004 was 1,579,000 tonnes.

A breakdown of the amounts is shown in the following table.

Thousand tonnes

	Steam coal	*Anthracite*	*Total*
2000	—	143	143
2001	295	410	705
2002	208	80	288
2003	170	40	210
2004	190	43	233
Total	863	716	1,579

Source:
HM Revenue and Customs as reported in Table G.5 of Annex G to the Digest of UK Energy Statistics in 2005 (on DTI website)

Correspondence

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Clwyd, South of 5 May 2004, 15 June 2004, 26 July 2004 and 22 March 2005 relating to his constituent Mr. Arthur Roberts. [25462]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Due to a number of administrative errors these letters were overlooked. Please accept my apologies for the very poor handling of your constituent's concerns. Your letters are now being urgently processed and you will receive a response shortly.

The Department of Trade and Industry takes seriously its responsibility for responding to Members' correspondence and has new procedures in place to avoid errors such as this in the future.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department between the end of the 2003–04 session and the end of April 2005, broken down by Act. [28471]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* There were no criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by my Department between the end of the 2003–04 session and the end of April 2005.

Departmental Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent on rebranding in his Department and related agencies in each of the last five years. [18325]

Alan Johnson: In 2002–03 the Department spent £450,000, in 2003–04 £100,000, in 2004–05 £10,000, on identity development and design guidelines towards the rationalisation around the single DTI logo.

In 2005 the proposal to change the name of the Department cost a total of £30,000.

In 2003 the rebranding of British Trade International (BTI) to UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) cost £600,000.

Letter from Jeanne Spinks to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 17 November 2005:

You have asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, how much has been spent on rebranding in his Department and related agencies in each of the last five years.

The Employment Tribunals Service (ETS) have spent £10,407 on rebranding in the last five years. This is broken down per financial year as follows:

2000–01—£5,000 for design of Corporate Identity and new ETS logo

2001–02—£4,982 for design of Corporate Identity

2002–03—£425 for design of 'DTI Service' logo and boilerplate

Letter from Desmond Flynn to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question (2005/1161) regarding expenditure in the Insolvency Service Agency on rebranding during the last five years.

The Insolvency Service has not spent anything on rebranding as such. We publish a wide variety of leaflets which are reprinted at frequent intervals and this has enabled us to take on board any DTI branding changes at no additional cost.

Letter from Martin Wyn Griffith to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 17 November 2005:

I refer to your parliamentary question tabled on 12 October asking for details of how much has been spent on rebranding in the Department for Trade and Industry and related agencies in each of the last five years. The Secretary of State has asked me to reply on behalf of the Small Business Service.

Since the setting up of the Small Business Service in 2000 there has been no rebranding but a short project was undertaken in 2003 with regard to considering the brand but this was not taken forward.

Letter from Claire Clancy to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 17 November 2005:

I am responding to your recently tabled Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on behalf of Companies House, which is an Executive Agency of the DTI.

The amount spent by Companies House on re-branding in each of the last five years is as follows:

	£
2000–01	0
2001–02	156,000
2002–03	15,000
2003–04	0
2004–05	0

Letter from Jeff Llewellyn to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 17 November 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply on behalf of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) to your question regarding the amount spent on rebranding by the Department of Trade and Industry and related Agencies in each of the last five years.

The amount spent on rebranding by the National Weights & Measures Laboratory (NWML) during the last five years has been minimal. Stocks of redundant stationery and publicity materials have been small and design work was completed mainly by DTI. NWML staff have spent a small amount of time discussing rebranding issues with HQ staff.

Departmental Sickness Absence

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidelines his Department has in place to deal with sickness absence; and what steps are being taken to reduce the rate of sickness absence. [28768]

Alan Johnson: The DTI has a range of guidelines in place to deal with sickness absence. The DTI takes the management of sickness absence very seriously and has tightened up the procedures for reporting, improving data collection and handling absences, including coaching managers to gain the knowledge and skills to manage specific cases.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23836]

Alan Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research has been undertaken by his Department into reducing electricity demand through replacement of inefficient end-use of electricity by more efficient technologies in order to reduce insecurities created by a reduced capacity margin in electricity supply. [25597]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 15 November 2005]*: DEFRA has the overall lead in Whitehall on energy efficiency, including to support relevant research both directly and via the Carbon Trust. Directly funded research by DEFRA into the potential for cost effective energy efficiency in the business, public and households sectors, primarily to establish the scope for carbon savings, is currently in the order of £200,000 per year. Carbon Trust investment in R&D into low carbon technologies and programmes to promote energy efficiency in the business and public sectors is more substantial. More information on relevant programmes can be found at: http://www.thecarbontrust.co.uk/carbontrust/

Research councils expenditure on energy efficiency research since 1999 is set out in the following table:

	Energy efficiency and low carbon innovation (£000)
1999–2000	1,694
2000–01	1,400
2001–02	1,671
2002–03	1,980
2003–04	1,212
2004–05	2,914

Energy efficiency research features as a key element of the research councils Carbon Vision Programme (funded jointly with the Carbon Trust). Details of programmes and relevant research projects funded by EPSRC can be found at the new energy programme website www.epsrc.ac.uk/energy, which has a specific page on energy efficiency (http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/researchhighlights/energy/guide/energyefficiency.htm)

Emissions Targets

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether it is a target of his Department to achieve a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010; what progress his Department has made towards achieving its public service agreement target 4; and if he will make a statement. [28510]

Alan Johnson: The Government's goal is to achieve a 20 per cent. reduction in CO_2 emissions on 1990 levels by 2010. DTI PSA 4 states that my Department will lead work to deliver the goals of energy policy, including work to move towards the 20 per cent. reduction, through measures including energy efficiency and renewables.

The Government publish annual reports of progress against the energy policy goals set out in PSA 4. The next progress report will be published in mid December and available on my Department's website.

The Government will set out both an assessment of progress against our 20 per cent. goal and further measures to contribute towards its achievement, in a revised climate change programme, which we are aiming to publish around the turn of the year.

Gender Equality

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list UK organisations in receipt of *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU funds for projects promoting gender equality, broken down by (i) project and (ii) amount; and if he will make a statement. [27971]

Alan Johnson: This answer cannot be provided as the information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what overseas visits the Chief Adviser for the Government on Science has made in the last two years; where his interests are recorded; what meetings he has had with the Prime Minister in the last two years; and which of the chief scientific advisers to Government Departments he has met in the last 12 months. [24389]

Alan Johnson: A list of the Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) international visits during the past two years is as follows.

Dates	*International visits*
November 2003	Canada
December 2003	Holland
December 2003	Japan
February 2004	Japan/Taiwan
March 2004	India
April 2004	Belgium
June 2004	France
2004	Germany
July 2004	Russia
July 2004	Korea/China
October 2004	Spain
October 2004	Rome
October 2004	Belgium
November 2004	Switzerland
December 2004	Italy
February 2005	India
March 2005	Poland
April 2005	Portugal
May 2005	South Africa/Tanzania
May 2005	Germany
June 2005	Canada
June 2005	Brazil
May 2005	Italy
September 2005	USA
October 2005	Senegal
October 2005	Australia/Singapore
October 2005	Russia

The CSA has agreed the handling of his relevant interests with the permanent secretary, DTI, in accordance with the terms and conditions of his employment.

The CSA has met my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister regularly during the past two years.

The CSA has met all the Chief Scientific Advisers to Government Departments regularly during the past year.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23490]

Alan Johnson: The majority of the Department's IT services are provided through a PFI agreement with Fujitsu Services. The Department has not been asked to make public, either in full or in part, any project requiring a Gateway Review.

Low-carbon Buildings

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his written statement on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 47WS, on low-carbon buildings, what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the arrangements for grant support he has announced on *(a)* private sector investment in the UK micro-renewables industry, and *(b)* the ability of micro-renewables to contribute to future Government energy efficiency and renewable energy targets. [27460]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Clear Skies and Solar PV Programmes have contributed to the development of the micro generation industry in the UK, including an installer base. The new low carbon buildings programme will continue to fund the installation of micro generation technologies in household, community and large-scale projects. The new programme and the wider micro generation strategy currently under development will aim to introduce further measures to help develop a sustainable market for all the buildings renewable technologies.

(b) The focus on energy efficiency and grant support for renewable technologies under the new programme will continue to make a contribution to energy efficiency and renewable energy targets.

Medical Research Council

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget of the Medical Research Council has been in each year since 1997–98; and what percentage of the budget was spent in each year. [27542]

Alan Johnson: While the Medical Research Council (MRC) has some separate external income, it derives its main funding from the Science Budget. The following table sets out MRC's allocations from the Science Budget and the proportion of that allocation spent in each year, from 1997–98. Where the proportion of expenditure exceeds 100 per cent. the excess represents the utilisation of unspent budget available from previous years.

Financial year	*Budget (allocation) £ million*	*Percentage spent*
1997–98	289.1	100.9
1998–99	290.2	98.8
1999–2000	304.5	101.2
2000–01	319.2	100.2
2001–02	349.6	96.5
2002–03	377.2	91.9
2003–04	430.6	97.1
2004–05	455.2	92.4

Notes:
1. Cash basis 1997–98 to 2000–01 RAB basis 2001–02 onwards.
2. Figures are the total of current and capital

Microgeneration

Barbara Follett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the merits of encouraging the use of microgeneration in homes and businesses. [29236]

Malcolm Wicks: A public consultation on the Government strategy to promote microgeneration was held between 23 June and 23 September this year. 200 responses were received and are being analysed. In addition a study into the costs and benefits of microgeneration was commissioned and is expected to report shortly. The findings of this study and the responses to the consultation are being fed into the process of developing the final strategy, which will be published in April 2006.

Offshore Wind Power

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contribution he expects offshore wind power to make to Government policy for tackling climate change. [29249]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have a target of 10 per cent. of electricity to come from renewables sources by 2010. This would save approximately 2.5 million tonnes of carbon per year if the equivalent amount of energy were generated from gas. Current assessments suggest that as much as 7 per cent. of electricity could be generated from onshore and offshore wind by 2010.

Four Round 1 offshore projects, totalling 400MW in generation capacity, should be operational by the end of 2005. A further eight Round 1 projects have been awarded grant support and are being progressed. Two Round 2 offshore projects have recently submitted applications for consent.

Renewable Energy

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans the Government have to power their buildings from renewable energy sources. [26637]

Alan Johnson: The Department has purchased electricity from renewable sources since 1999. The amount bought equates to average of 32.3 per cent. of the total electricity consumed on the HQ estate which compares favourably to the Sustainable Development in Government (SDIG) energy target which is to buy 10 per cent. by 2008.

The Departments strategy is to increase the percentage of renewable energy supplied to the estate as existing contracts are reviewed, if available.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much of the total expenditure in 2005 under the capital grant programme for biomass research was funded by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the National Lottery. [28569]

Malcolm Wicks: The bio-energy capital grants scheme provides support for specific projects which deploy biomass technologies. It does not support pure research into biomass.

Under the scheme, the DTI and the Big Lottery Fund both provide funding for qualifying projects but for administrative reasons, individual projects are either supported by DTI or by the lottery.

From 1 January 2005 to date, the Big Lottery Fund has provided funding for capital projects of £3,166,965 but the DTI has provided no funding as yet. The present imbalance in the drawdown of funds is due primarily to the timing of individual projects.

Skills Sector (National Co-ordination)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what formal co-ordination in respect of skills issues takes place between the regional development agencies, the Learning and Skills Councils and the sector skills councils; how frequently these agencies meet; and whether meetings take place at *(a)* board and *(b)* operational level. [28567]

Phil Hope: I have been asked to reply.

The Skills White Paper 21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential invited Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to lead the establishment of Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs). These bring together the RDA, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) with other regional partners to plan and co-ordinate the provision of skills and business support that reflects the priorities of the Regional Economic Strategy. The organisation of RSPs and the number and frequency of meetings varies regionally.

At national level the RDAs are represented on the board of the LSC. The Skills for Business Network and the LSC are involved in the governance and programme board arrangements for the Skills Strategy with meetings taking place monthly.

Solar Photovoltaics

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has commissioned on the viability of photovoltaic solar cells as a significant national renewable energy source. [26636]

Malcolm Wicks: The Renewables Innovation Review (February 2004), which looked at the viability of photovoltaics and other renewable technologies, suggested that the environmental benefits in buildings could be maximised by developing an appropriate mix of building integrated renewables and energy efficiency. It recommended taking this forward through a technology blind, capital grant based, low carbon building programme and this is what we intend to do. The new low carbon buildings programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years. It will start in April 2006 subject to EU state aids clearance.

We have also commissioned a report to study the UK potential for micro generation technologies and this report will be published shortly.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the Government's solar photovoltaics major demonstration programme on private sector investment in the UK solar industry. [29487]

Malcolm Wicks: The solar photovoltaics major demonstration and Clear Skies programmes have contributed to the development of the micro generation industry in the UK, including an installer base. The new low carbon buildings programme will continue to fund the installation of microgeneration technologies in household, community and large-scale projects. A budget of £30 million over three years for the programme was announced on 2 November. It will be launched in April 2006 subject to EU state aids clearance.

The new programme and the wider micro generation strategy currently under development will aim to introduce further measures to help develop a sustainable market for solar PV as well as all the building renewable technologies.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure levels of capital grant support to the *(a)* solar photovoltaics and *(b)* other micro-renewable industries increase during the six years of the low carbon building programme. [29488]

Malcolm Wicks: I recently announced a budget of £30 million over three years for the new low carbon buildings programme, which is due to start in April 2006 subject to EU state aids approval.

Further options and support for the micro renewable sector will be considered in the future.

Statistics of Trade Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under section 4 of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 in each year since 1984; [28271]

(2) if he will make a statement on the operation of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. [28272]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. David Amess, dated 17 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions asking how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under section 4 of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 in each year since 1984 (28271), and if I will make a statement on the operation of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. (28272).

To address your first question, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out its functions under the provision of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. Penalties are provided under section 4, that can be imposed by a Magistrates' Court in the event of failure to comply with our legal request. This response relates to summons and convictions relating to surveys conducted by ONS under the 1947 Act, and excludes any other government departments. Our understanding is that we are the main users of the 1947 Act, and to our knowledge few other government departments impose

penalties under section 4, Legal action is taken against businesses who fail to comply rather than individuals and so therefore a gender breakdown is not appropriate.

The attached table shows the figures for the period requested. I have provided the information on the basis of the number in receipt of a summons and those that then go on to be convicted. The difference is those that have been withdrawn due to their willingness to comply. Only those who remain unwilling to comply will be heard in the Magistrates' Court and ultimately convicted.

To address your second question; again, I must make it clear that the policy only relates to ONS' operation of the 1947 Act. ONS has signed up to an 'enforcement concordat' which is regulated by the Cabinet Office. Under this agreement ONS have given an undertaking to 'carry out our duties in a fair, equitable and consistent manner'.

We recognise that most businesses want to comply with the law. We will, therefore take care to help businesses and others meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense, while taking firm action, including prosecution where appropriate, against those who flout the law.

All businesses are provided with information regarding their statutory obligation to complete ONS questionnaires and they are advised on the consequences of non-compliance. We believe in, prevention being better than the cure and our role in enforcing compliance actively involves working with businesses, especially small and medium sized businesses, to advise on, and assist with compliance. We will discuss general issues, specific compliance failures or problems, with anyone experiencing difficulties, and continue to offer assistance after the receipt of the summons in order to gain compliance and prevent prosecution.

Number of summons issued, including those withdrawn and convicted, under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947, for the period 1984–2004

	Number of summons issued	*Number withdrawn because they complied before court appearance*	*Number convicted*
1984	30	2	28
1985	3	0	3
1986	9	2	7
1987	12	2	10
1988	9	2	7
1989	8	1	7
1990	9	0	9
1991	8	7	1
1992	1	0	1
1993	36	25	11
1994	16	9	7
1995	32	26	6
1996	29	25	4
1997	22	16	6
1998	17	12	5
1999	39	34	5
2000	24	22	2
2001	24	19	5
2002	25	22	3
2003	19	15	4
2004	27	20	7

Note:
From 1993 onwards, reveals the policy adopted is that every effort is made to gain compliance, prosecution is only used as a last resort.

Two Roof Strategy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress of his Department's two roof strategy. [28276]

Alan Johnson: The two roof programme is a ground breaking change programme to rationalise its central London estate and transform the way we use our workspace. This core element of the DTI's Efficiency Programme offers a new and radical approach to workspace utilisation and will allow the Department to reduce its accommodation by approximately 30 per cent. Starting in 1 Victoria Street, the accommodation is being remodelled as part of a wider change programme to support team based desking in a flexible, open plan working environment on the basis of providing on average eight desks for every 10 people to be accommodated. This has enabled us to increase the capacity of our main HQ building from 1,680 under the original, traditional approach to approximately 2,400 now and to release other buildings on the estate for reuse or disposal. This change programme will now be applied to the rest of our London accommodation.

TREASURY

Corporation Tax

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much corporation tax was raised from businesses in Wales in each year since 1997. [29746]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available to estimate the amount of corporation tax raised from businesses in Wales in each year since 1997.

Economic Productivity

Peter Law: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the relationship between primary energy use and economic productivity. [29005]

John Healey: ONS figures show that energy consumption in the UK, as measured by the consumption of primary fuels or equivalents, has risen by 8 per cent. since 1990. Over the same time period, Gross Domestic Product has increased by more than 36 per cent. in real terms, and the UK's productivity performance continues to improve.

While oil prices have increased lately, it should be noted that actual productivity (trend output per hour worked) is estimated to have grown by 2.35 per cent. over the recent past (1997H1–2005Q1)-higher than growth of 2.03 per cent. over the previous economic cycle (1986Q2–1997H1).

Hospital Births (Southampton)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many babies have been born in each hospital operated by Southampton University Hospitals Trust in each of the last five years. [29189]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Sandra Gidley, dated 17 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your request for the number of babies born in each hospital operated by Southampton University Hospitals Trust in each of the last five years. (29189)

The table below shows the number of live births occurring in the requested hospitals and birth centres.

Live births occurring in Southampton University Trust Hospitals 2000–04

Place of birth	Year of birth 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Princess Anne hospital,Southampton[1]	4319	4197	4283	4405	4459
Hythe Birth Centre	102	132	65	114	110
Lymington Birth Centre	121	105	95	85	148
Romsey Birth Centre	49	59	58	71	75

[1] Includes Broadlands Birth Centre which is co-located with Princess Anne hospital and cannot be separately identified.

Illegal Drugs (Staffordshire)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths in Staffordshire were caused by illegal drugs in each year since 1997. [29384]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Brian Jenkins, dated 17 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many deaths in Staffordshire have been caused by illegal drugs since 1997. (29384)

Figures readily available from death certification relate deaths due to drug poisoning, not the total number that were attributable to drug use. These figures are produced from a special database which contains deaths where the underlying cause was drug poisoning. Deaths that may be caused indirectly by drug use, for example HIV infection or road traffic accidents, are not included. Death registration data are not the best source of information on these "indirect" deaths, because information on the role of drug use in the death may not be provided on the death certificate.

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2003. The table below shows deaths certified as due to drug poisoning and involving drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act for each year from 1997 to 2003.

Deaths certified as due to drug poisoning[1] and involving drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act, Staffordshire,[2] 1997–2003[3]

	Number of deaths
1997	10
1998	11
1999	21
2000	11
2001	8
2002	16
2003	12

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision for 2001–2003: F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85 and the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision for 1997–2000: 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5.

[2] Usual residents of the county of Staffordshire, excluding the Unitary Authority of Stoke on Trent.

[3] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Income Tax Returns

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many fines were issued for the late return of income tax returns in each year since 2000, broken down by tax office; and how many were subsequently refunded in each year. [29049]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table sets out the numbers of first and second fixed penalty notices issued for failure to file self assessment tax returns by the due date, listed by Area for each year from 2001–02 (first year available) to 2004–05 (latest full year). Details of how many penalties were subsequently refunded each year are not held.

Total SA Penalties issued in year

Area	Total issued
2001–02	
Beds/W. Herts	11,210
Belfast 7 IRO	10
Berks.	7,963
Birm. Solhull	11,901
Bootle 01	26,761
Bootle Matme	4,221
Bootle Mview	4,124
Brad Beckside	6,628
Bris/N. Somst	9,242
Cambs.	7,854
Cardiff 3	4,258
Cent.Yorks	8,688
Centre 1	13,748
Chapel W.	31,627
Cornwll/Plym	19,078
Cumbria	2,824
Devon	7,683
Dors/S. Wilts	7,569
E. Ches/S. Lanc	10,317
E. Hamp/Wight	10,072
E. Hert/W. Ess	8,542
E. Lancs	8,348
East Kent	6,091
Edbgh Holryd	11
FICO	20,638
Foreign Ent.	137
G. Belfast	18,240
Glasgow Blyth	6,893
Glenrothes	4,459
Glos/N. Wilts	8,471
Humber	9,053
LBO	667
Leeds U/Unit	449
Leic/Northnt	16,554
Leicester 4	1,120
Leicester 7	1,817
Lincoln	4,350
London Central	4,988
London City	49
London East	3,271
London N. West	3,794
London North	282
London S. East	4,804
London S. West	4,838
London South	68
London Spec.	7
London Trust	1,934
London West	4,858
London Wmstr	192
LP Lothians	16,550
LP10	5,244
LP34	3,779
Manchester	9,555
Merseyside	11,633
Midlands W.	5,505
N. Wales	10,612
N. Yorks	5,519

Total SA Penalties issued in year

Area	*Total issued*
Norfolk	11,859
Northumbria	6,265
Nott Trusts	3,731
Notts/Derby	10,594
NW Lancs	6,829
NW Mids/Shrop	8,981
Oxon/Bucks	11,349
PD1	1,294
PD2	8,880
Ports Matime	4,421
S. Essex	7,739
S. Wales	11,901
S. Yorks	8,188
Scot Cent	8,344
Scot East	4,426
Scot North	4,849
Scot South	6,611
Scotlnd West	6,052
Somerset	4,713
Staffs.	6,962
STIU	47
Suff and N. Ex	12,224
Surr/N. Hamp	10,912
Sussex	15,191
Tees Valley	16,671
Truro Trusts	540
W. Hampshire	9,042
W. Kent	11,688
W. Lanc/W. Ches	10,309
W. Wales	7,028
W. York/Cravn	10,041
Warck/Cov	8,300
Washington	4,229
Wear/S. Tyne	6,332
Worcs/Herefd	5,737
Total	691,379
2002-03	
Beds/W. Herts	40,247
Berks	29,430
Birm. Solhull	41,843
Bris/N. Somst	34,074
Cambs.	28,180
Cent. Yorks	31,020
Chapel W.	132,513
Cornwll/Plym	75,066
Cumbria	11,262
Devon	41,845
Dors/S. Wilts	27,555
E. Ches/S. Lanc	35,164
E. Hamp/Wight	52,019
E. Hert/W.Ess	33,668
E. Lancs	28,763
East Kent	41,288
Edbgh Holryd	20
FICO	76,558
Foreign Ent.	318
G. Belfast	21,140
Glos/N.Wilts	28,209
Humber	29,813
LBO	2,372
Leic/Northnt	71,436
Lincoln	16,535
Lisburn	5,609
London Central	148
London City	60
London East	358
London N. West	693
London North	322
London S. East	269
London S. West	188
London South	706
London Spec.	8,042

Total SA Penalties issued in year

Area	*Total issued*
London West	188
London Wmstr	1,086
Lothians	74,550
Man Trusts	2,151
Manchester	33,370
Merseyside	41,004
Midlands W	20,920
N.E. Metro	60,906
N.I. Counties	40,045
N. Wales	39,528
N. Yorks	20,904
Norfolk	40,210
Northumbria	22,23
Nott Trusts	15,00
Notts/Derby	39,20
N.W. Lancs	25,13
N.W. Mids/Shrop	30,80
Oxon/Bucks	39,56
PD1	5,52
S. Essex	33,80
S. Wales	91,72
S. Yorks	33,18
Scot Cent	21,23
Scot East	15,25
Scot North	15,96
Scot SchE W	69,07
Scot South	23,09
Scotlnd West	21,67
Sefton	135,74
Somerset	17,33
Staffs.	25,505
STIU	128
Suff and N. Ex	46,178
Surr/N. Hamp	37,025
Sussex	53,275
Tees Valley	73,450
Truro Trusts	1,844
W. Hampshire	35,498
W. Kent	41,354
W. Lanc/W. Ches	38,953
W. Wales	23,599
W. York/Cravn	60,510
Warck/Cov.	31,384
Wear/S. Tyne	21,163
Worcs/Herefd	20,682
Total	2,487,706
2003-04	
Beds/W. Herts	25,957
Berks	18,715
Birm Solhull	29,872
Bris/N. Somst	38,066
Cambs.	18,682
Cent. Yorks	20,960
Chapel W.	95,841
Cornwll/Plym	49,949
Cumbria	7,048
Devon	28,401
Dors/S. Wilts	6,228
E. Ches/S. Lanc	21,373
E. Hamp/Wight	36,992
E. Hert/W. Ess	20,185
E. Lancs	18,7161
East Kent	28,697
Edbgh Holryd	13
Foreign Ent.	165
G. Belfast	13,237
Glos/N. Wilts	17,894
Humber	18,317
LBO	1,287
Leic/Northnt	48,415
Lincoln	10,774
Lisburn	3,547

Total SA Penalties issued in year

Area	*Total issued*
London N.West	509
London S.East	263
London S.West	1
London South	578
London Spec.	351
London West	94
London Wmstr	495
Lothians	43,599
Manchester	23,211
Merseyside	25,878
Midlands W	13,268
N.E. Metro	42,063
N.I. Counties	26,567
N. Wales	27,009
N. Yorks	13,881
NEMA FLM	3,916
Norfolk	25,203
Northumbria	13,854
Notts/Derby	25,269
NW Lancs	16,530
NW Mids/Shrop	18,451
Oxon/Bucks	24,839
PDI	4,095
RPO Bootle	38,784
S. Essex	21,747
S. Wales	63,252
S. Yorks	21,447
Scot Cent	14,986
Scot East	9,820
Scot North	11,011
Scot SchE W	44,366
Scot South	14,692
Scotlnd West	14,592
Sefton	87,173
Somerset	11,867
Staffs.	12,169
Suff and N. Ex	30,998
Surr/N. Hamp	24,122
Sussex	35,193
Tees Valley	45,916
Trusts	19,607
W. Hampshire	23,330
W. Kent	28,924
W. Lanc/W. Ches.	24,877
W. Wales	16,252
W. York/Cravn	38,938
Warck/Cov.	20,759
Wear/S. Tyne	11,783
Worcs/Herefd	13,701
Total	1,629,541
2004–05	
Beds/W. Herts	26,721
Berks.	18,275
Birm Solhull	30,086
Bris/N. Somst	39,150
Cambs.	19,735
Cent. Yorks	23,584
Chapel W.	124,462
Cornwll/Plym	50,190
Cumbria	7,720
Devon	30,833
Dors/S.Wilts	6,075
Ches/S.Lanc	23,347
E. Hamp/Wight	37,180
E. Hert/W.Ess	20,974
E. Lancs	20,025
East Kent	29,361
Edbgh Holryd	19
G. Belfast	12,213
Glos/N. Wilts	18,270
Humber	19,800
LBO	1,225

Total SA Penalties issued in year

Area	*Total issued*
Leic/Northnt	48,417
Lincoln	12,476
Lisburn	3,993
London N. West	24
London S. East	191
London South	715
London Spec.	237
London West	68
London Wmstr	623
Lothians	41,608
Manchester	23,699
Merseyside	27,420
Midlands W	13,936
N.E. Metro	46,152
N.I. Counties	27,514
N. Wales	25,860
N. Yorks	14,130
NEMA FLM	3,783
Norfolk	25,364
Northumbria	14,760
Notts/Derby	27,149
NW Lancs	17,939
NW Mids/Shrop	20,70
Oxon/Bucks	25,85
PDI	4,630
RPO Bootle	40,863
S. Essex	21,611
S. Wales	62,632
S. Yorks	23,729
Scot Cent	16,857
Scot East	10,327
Scot North	10,933
Scot SchE W	47,331
Scot South	15,482
Scotlnd West	15,812
Sefton	93,126
Somerset	12,492
Staffs.	17,849
Suff and N. Ex	31,149
Surr/N. Hamp	24,280
Sussex	35,055
Tees Valley	49,200
Trusts	17,993
W. Hampshire	24,621
W. Kent	28,742
W. Lanc/W. Ches	25,513
W. Wales	16,906
N .York/Cravn	40,183
Warck/Cov	20,265
Wear/S. Tyne	11,876
Worcs/Herefd	14,455
Total	1,715,775

Note:
First penalty for 2001–02 was in fact issued in 2002–03

Long-term Limiting Illness

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of 65 to 74-year-olds are recorded as having a long-term limiting illness in *(a)* Inner London local authorities, *(b)* Outer London local authorities, *(c)* English metropolitan authorities outside London, *(d)* Wigan metropolitan borough council area, *(e)* Salford city council area, *(f)* Knowsley metropolitan borough council area, *(g)* South Tyneside council area, *(h)* Leeds city council area and (i) Wolverhampton city council area. [29473]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Neil Turner, dated 17 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what percentage of 65 to 74 year olds are recorded as having a long-term limiting illness in *(a)* Inner London local authorities, *(b)* Outer London local authorities, *(c)* English metropolitan authorities outside London, *(d)* Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council area, *(e)* Salford City Council area, *(f)* Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council area, *(g)* South Tyneside Council area, *(h)* Leeds City Council area and (i) Wolverhampton City Council area. (29473)

We have interpreted "English metropolitan authorities outside London" to mean the metropolitan counties of Tyne and Wear, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and West Midlands

The table below shows the percentage of people aged between 65 and 74 in each of the requested geographies who were recorded as suffering from a limiting long-term illness on Census day (29 April 2001). The data have been taken from table S016 on the CD accompaniment to the "Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales part 1" which is available in the House of Commons Library.

England

	All people aged 65 to 74	*All people aged 65 to 74 who suffer from a limiting long-term illness*	*Percentage of people aged 65 to 74 who suffer from a limiting long-term illness*
Inner London Boroughs	151,246	66,920	44
Outer London Boroughs	311,813	119,187	38
English Metropolitan Counties	898,913	429,599	48
Wigan	23,823	12,725	53
Salford	18,320	9,264	51
Knowsley	13,548	7,762	57
South Tyneside	14,643	7,436	51
Leeds	57,254	25,028	44
Wolverhampton	21,250	10,094	48

Source:
Table S016 Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales part 1.

Network Rail

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he had with his Cabinet colleagues on the classification of Network Rail's liabilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Des Browne: Treasury ministers meet regularly with Ministerial colleagues from other departments to discuss a range of issues. It has been the practice of successive governments not to disclose the details of such meetings. To do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code.

The ONS classified Network Rail as a Private Non-financial Corporation from 1 April 2003. ONS reached its decision on using internationally recognised standards for producing economic accounts. The ONS acts as an independent agency in compiling the public sector finances.

Public Service Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the percentage of gross domestic product which would be accounted for by public service pensions before the proposed reforms to the scheme in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2013–14, *(c)* 2023–24, *(d)* 2033–34, *(e)* 2043–44 and *(f)* 2053–54. [27045]

John Healey: Figures for spending on public service pensions are being reconsidered in the light of updated assumptions and revised figures should be available at the time of the forthcoming pre-Budget report.

Solar Photovoltaics Programme

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what economic assessment he has made of the 2003 Energy White Paper's commitment to a 2002 to 2012 solar photovoltaics programme; and if he will make a statement. [29334]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has supported Photo voltaics since 2002 through the £31 million major photovoltaics demonstration programme. We plan to continue support for photovoltaics and other building scale renewables through a low carbon buildings programme, which is currently under development. The new programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years and will start in April 2006 subject to EU state aids clearance.

Torbay/Plymouth Unitary Authorities

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the letter of 14 November from the National Statistician to the hon. Member for Torbay, what the figures are for the unitary authorities of *(a)* Torbay and *(b)* Plymouth. [29586]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Adrian Sanders, dated 17 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question, pursuant to my letter of 14th November,

regarding what the figures are for the unitary authorities of *(a)* Torbay and *(b)* Plymouth. (29586)

As in our previous response we have interpreted "carer" to mean any person who provides unpaid care.

The table below shows the number of people in Torbay and in Plymouth unitary authorities on Census day (29 April 2001) who were providing unpaid care, and of those how many were providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week. The data have been taken from table KS08 in *Census 2001 Key Statistics for local authorities in England and Wales* which is available in the House of Commons Library.

All people: Plymouth and Torbay UAs

		Provision of unpaid care	
Area	*All people*	*All people who provide unpaid care*	*All people who provide unpaid care : 50 or more hours of care a week*
Plymouth UA	240,720	24,038	3,932
Torbay UA	129,706	13,881	3,582

Source:
Table KS08 Census 2001 Key Statistics for local authorities in England and Wales.

Figures are not available for subsequent years.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 21 November 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who is responsible for licensing avian quarantine centres in the UK; how long such a licence is valid; and how many have been issued for *(a)* new and *(b)* existing centres in each year since 2000. [24652]

Mr. Bradshaw: Commission Decision 2000/666 requires quarantine facilities or centres to be approved by the competent authorities. In England approval is carried out by the State Veterinary Service.

Each approval lasts for one year and is renewed only after a satisfactory re-inspection.

Further to my answer given to the hon. Member on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 6W, current records show that there are 52 bird quarantine facilities and centres in the UK that currently hold licences.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many avian quarantine centres have closed down because their licences were withdrawn in each year since 1997. [24653]

Mr. Bradshaw: Commission Decision 2000/666 requires quarantine facilities or centres to be approved by the competent authority of each member state. In England approval is carried out by the State Veterinary Service (SVS). The SVS has only ever withdrawn the approval for one avian quarantine facility or centre.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans are in place to inform hon. Members of an outbreak of H5N1 within their constituencies; and if she will make a statement. [27441]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department will inform hon. Members of an outbreak of highly pathogenic Avian influenza in their constituencies immediately a case is confirmed. This was the practice during the foot and mouth disease epidemic in 2001.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make an assessment of the incidence of avian influenza in other countries. [28154]

Mr. Bradshaw: To date, there have been incidences of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Thailand, Vietnam, China, Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Turkey and Croatia.

Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza, which generally only causes mild disease or no disease at all in birds, is found throughout the world in wild bird populations.

Defra monitors the global situation closely and undertakes a qualitative risk analysis when new disease incident in an EU member state, a country on the border of the EU or one of the UK's third country trading partners has been notified. These risk assessments are published on the Department's website: http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/monitoring/riskassess.htm.

Information on the incidence of human influenza internationally is collated and distributed through a number of systems, including the World Health Organisation Influenza Surveillance Programme and the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme. The UK contributes to and receives data from both of these systems.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's recent preparations for a possible outbreak of Avian influenza in the UK. [28264]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government already have in place an Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan, which includes a section dealing specifically with an outbreak of Avian influenza. This would be invoked immediately if the need arose.

In addition the Government has:

Laid regulations which will enable us to implement the contingency plan in an effective manner;

Worked with our European partners to halt the importation of live wild birds on a temporary basis and impose additional restrictions on pet birds;

Banned imports of poultry meat and other products from affected areas;

Put in place surveillance arrangements on certain species of migratory wild birds;

Worked to stop bird fairs, markets and shows unless an individual risk assessment deems the risk to be low;

Announced plans for a register with Defra to enable us to have a compete database of poultry holdings;

Launched a review of avian quarantine arrangements;

Issued biosecurity advice with the aid of the poultry industry and distributed it to 3,800 vet practices in Great Britain alongside adverts in trade and specialist press.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the latest outbreak of avian influenza in China. [25307]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK recognises that the situation continues to develop worldwide. We are monitoring it closely and have stepped up work on surveillance, biosecurity and emergency preparedness.

When DEFRA is officially notified of a new disease incident in an EU member state, a country on the border of the EU or one of the UK's third country trading partners, we carry out a qualitative risk analysis. These are published on our website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/riskassess.htm

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether *(a)* broiler birds are allowed to go to slaughter and *(b)* replacement chicks are allowed to enter the farm if a flock is in a movement restriction zone; [26890]

(2) whether eggs will be able to go to the usual market each day if a layer unit is placed in a movement restriction zone; [26891]

(3) whether eggs will be able to leave the farm if a breeder unit is placed in a movement restriction zone. [26892]

Mr. Bradshaw: Current legislation bans movements of poultry and hatching eggs within the infected area around an outbreak. However, in certain circumstances, movements will be permitted under license and subject to biosecurity controls. These include:

(i) broiler birds going for immediate slaughter to a designated slaughterhouse;

(ii) the movement of day old chicks to premises where there are no other poultry; and

(iii) the movement of hatching eggs to a designated hatchery, subject to the eggs and their packing being disinfected before dispatch.

The movement of table eggs from farms in the infected area would be subject to biosecurity controls but the retail trade will not be affected.

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* advice her Department has given to and *(b)* discussions her Department has had with poultry handlers to alert them to the possible dangers of an avian influenza outbreak. [27012]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has issued information regarding biosecurity advice and information on how to protect both poultry and workers from the risks of avian influenza.

We have distributed this guidance material to our partners in the industry who are helping to distribute to their members, who cover the great majority of bird keepers. In addition, the material has been mailed to 3,800 vet practices in Great Britain in order to reach the hobby keeper. We have also placed adverts in trade and specialist press to get biosecurity and surveillance messages across to this same group.

We have also had regular meetings with major stakeholders in order to keep our industry partners involved and updated with events.

Bees

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to put the supply of medicines for bees under the control of veterinary surgeons and licensed pharmacists. [29267]

Mr. Bradshaw: All authorised bee medicines in the UK are available as general sale products. There are no plans to put the supply of medicines for bees under the control of veterinary surgeons and licensed pharmacists. Changes in European legislation, implemented by the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005, require medicines for food producing animals to be POM. This change will take effect on 1 January 2007 before which the Commission are due to produce a list of exemption criteria for the POM requirement. The UK has proposed to the Commission that bee medicines should be in the exempt list.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Veterinary Medicines Directorate is taking to ensure that beekeepers can become qualified in the supply of products for the control of varroa mites. [29268]

Mr. Bradshaw: Currently there is no requirement for a retailer to have any qualifications in order to supply medicines to treat bees in respect of varroasis.

However, on 1 January 2007 the provision in the Council Directive 2001/82/EC, as amended, which requires all medicines used in the treatment of food-producing animals to be prescription only medicines will come into force. The UK has asked for bee medicines to be exempted from the POM requirement. If this is not agreed, a beekeeper will have to be registered as a suitably qualified person (SQP) if they wish to supply these products. My officials have discussed the SQP requirements with the British Beekeepers Association and are aware of their wish to progress the provision of training for beekeepers as SQPs who are able to prescribe and supply products to treat diseases in bees. The British Beekeepers Association will be meeting the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority early in 2006 to discuss this. If the exemption is agreed, the current sales arrangements for bee medicines will continue.

Birds

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether Pegasus Birds quarantine centre continues to hold a licence to quarantine birds; and when Pegasus Birds quarantine centre was last inspected. [28713]

Mr. Bradshaw: Commission Decision 2000/666 requires quarantine facilities or centres to be approved by the competent authority of each member state. In England approval is carried out by the State Veterinary Service (SVS).

Bird quarantine premises have annual approval visits by a Government Veterinary Officer. They are also visited at least three times by an approved Official Veterinarian during the quarantine period of each consignment.

The last approval visit for the quarantine premises in Essex was in December 2004. A further approval visit will be required if the owners wish to use the premises for imported birds in the future.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what checks were made on *(a)* Mr. Howard Savage and *(b)* Mr. Brett Hammond of Pegasus Birds to assess whether it would be appropriate to grant them a licence to quarantine birds. [28714]

Mr. Bradshaw: Checks are not carried out on individuals submitting applications for approval of quarantine premises.

The conditions for approving quarantine premises are laid down in Commission Decision 2000/666/EC. Approvals are based on location of premises, structural requirements, management requirements and welfare

provisions. Recommendations for approval or non-approval following a veterinary visit can include other known, relevant information.

Approvals are effective for one year and are dependent on all the laid-down conditions being met. Approvals may be withdrawn at any time should serious deficiencies occur.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the possibility that birds that had come into contact with the bird flu virus may have left Pegasus Birds quarantine centre. [28716]

Mr. Bradshaw: Essex county council is conducting an on-going investigation into the case at the Pegasus Centre. There is no evidence that we are aware of that live birds were removed from the facility during their period of quarantine.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether Pegasus Birds quarantine facility in South Fambridge meets all requirements of the licence to quarantine birds. [28720]

Mr. Bradshaw: Essex county council is conducting an on-going investigation into the Pegasus Centre.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many facilities with licences to quarantine birds operate in the UK; and if she will order immediate inspections of them. [28717]

Mr. Bradshaw: Further to the answer given to the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnorshire (Mr. Williams) on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 6W, current records show that there are 52 bird quarantine facilities and centres in the UK that hold licences.

We are currently awaiting an independent review of the avian quarantine system, which is due to report early in December.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to prevent *(a)* deliberate and *(b)* accidental failures in the implementation of the quarantine rules. [28718]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is currently an independent review of the avian quarantine system being undertaken. This is due to report early in December.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how controls on live wild bird imports at ports of entry will be increased to prevent the smuggling of such birds once a ban on live wild bird imports is in place. [27315]

Margaret Beckett: We are working closely with the responsible enforcement authorities and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on the issue of avian influenza. All enforcement authorities are on their guard for signs of illegal trade or movement of birds or poultry products that may be driven underground because of the various bans in place. The UK has asked enforcement authorities in other EU member states to be extra vigilant to protect the EU from further disease.

HMRC is responsible for action to prevent and detect illegally imported animal products from outside the EU and animals of endangered species covered by CITES (convention on international trade in endangered species). Enforcement control for other imports of animals rests with the SVS agency at the border inspection post and once inland, with the local authority.

Departmental Spending

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding was allocated by her Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23510]

Jim Knight: Expenditure information is not currently held by the Department on a constituency basis and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Chapter 8 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis shows the outturn of public expenditure by region.

Fisheries

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the EC and other EU member states are taking to monitor the level of cetacean by-catch and standings, with particular reference to that associated with the winter bass fishery. [28016]

Mr. Bradshaw: Council Regulation EC No. 812/2004 of April 2004, laying down measures concerning incidental catches of cetaceans, requires all member states to implement monitoring schemes with effect from 1 January 2005. These schemes are intended to provide representative data on by-catch in specified fisheries, including pelagic trawling in ICES sub area VII where the winter bass fishery takes place. Member states are required to provide an annual report to the Commission on the implementation of the observer schemes, with the first report due by 1 June 2006. We already have observer schemes in place to enable these requirements to be met.

In addition, we have recently published on the Defra website a report of Defra-funded research by the Sea Mammal Research Unit on by-catch observations and mitigation work in the UK bass pair trawl fishery in the 2004–05 season. A copy of this report will also be placed in the House Library.

I am not in a position to comment on the steps taken by other member states to monitor by-catch and strandings. However, Commissioner Borg has recently written to all member states on the subject of cetacean by-catch, stressing the importance of full compliance with the monitoring and reporting obligations of the Council regulation.

All cetacean species are protected against intentional killing, injury, capture or disturbance under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and since October 1994 are further protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 which implement the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (the 'Habitats Directive'—92/43/EEC). To help monitor our compliance with the

legislation we have since 1990, funded a scheme for recording incidents of stranded cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) around the British Isles.

The information collected from this project is compared to identify the number of animals stranded and causes of death. If trends are identified, mitigation measures are taken to help prevent further loss of these species. This project has also help to identify a number of new research areas in connection with cetaceans that needed further investigation.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the ability of (i) decapod crustaceans and (ii) cephalopods to experience pain; and if she will make a statement. [27997]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA has not directly commissioned any research on the ability of decapod crustaceans or cephalopods to experience pain.

However, other research evaluated by DEFRA veterinary and scientific advisers shows no evidence that crustaceans are capable of conscious awareness, a prerequisite for experiencing pain.

The current scientific evidence on the ability of cephalopods to experience pain is less clear-cut. However, the use of certain animals, including cephalopods, in research, is being carefully considered at EU level.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will list the occasions since 21 March when monitoring of *(a)* fish stocks and *(b)* other marine wildlife has been instigated following the loss of a harmful cargo into the sea, giving in each case (i) the nature of the cargo, (ii) the period of monitoring and (iii) the results of that monitoring; [27828]

(2) what monitoring of *(a)* fish stocks and *(b)* other marine wildlife occurs in parts of UK waters where harmful cargoes are known to have been lost overboard. [27829]

Mr. Bradshaw: There have been no such occasions since 21 March.

For English waters the Department assesses whether any environmental impact assessment is required following a pollution incident or loss of a hazardous cargo that may cause pollution, and makes arrangements for its preparation. The devolved Administrations make their own arrangements.

The last such assessment in the UK was requested by the Secretary of State for Wales on 27 March 1996 following the Sea Empr[illegible] Incident. The Sea Empress Environmental Evaluation Committee published its report in 1998—"The Environmental Impact of the Sea Empress Oil Spill", the Stationery Office, ISBN 0-11-702156-3.

The Department d[illegible]s carry out regular monitoring of fish stocks and marin[illegible]ldlife throughout our waters, in addition to any spec[illegible] studies required following pollution incidents. A wide variety of monitoring stations are in use to obtain a thorough overview. This may include monitoring stations in parts of UK waters where harmful cargoes are known to have been lost overboard, but they were not placed there specifically because of cargo loss. The most recent report of these regular monitoring activities is set out in "Charting progress: an integrated assessment of the state of UK seas" was published on 1 March 2005. A copy was placed in the Library of the House, and it can be downloaded from DEFRA's website:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/stateofsea/index.htm

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents in the last year for which figures are available of *(a)* marine pollution and *(b)* coastal pollution have resulted in (i) court actions and (ii) fines; and what the (A) nature and (B) level of (i) conviction and (ii) financial penalty was in each case. [27830]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information is not held in this form.

The Department's Sea Fisheries Inspectorate carried out a prosecution on behalf of DEFRA in 2004 following deposits of dredged material into the sea without the required licence under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 for the deposit of substances and articles in the sea. One of the joint defendants was fined £40,000 and the other £20,000.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) of the Department for Transport have carried out one prosecution this year following dumping of garbage including sleeping bags, polystyrene and plastic bags into the sea under the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Garbage) Regulations 1998. The defendant was fined £2,000.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency have carried out two prosecutions this year following breaches of the UK maritime pollution legislation. One defendant was fined £20,000 and £11,344 costs and the other defendant was fined £5,000 and £4,379.70 costs.

The MCA sponsor the Advisory Committee for the Protection of the Sea to produce an annual survey of reported discharges attributed to vessels and offshore oil and gas installations. The report for 2004 records 10 successful prosecutions for oil pollution offences. Total fines imposed by the competent authorities which included ports and harbours amounted to £122,200, providing a mean value of £12,200.

The Environment Agency (who have regulatory powers in coastal waters up to three miles offshore) have recorded 11 minor "marine" incidents in 2004 for which no formal enforcement action was taken.

The Department of Trade and Industry carried out a prosecution this year following an unpermitted discharge of an offshore chemical under the Offshore Chemicals Regulations 2002. The offshore platform operator was fined £3,000 in a Scottish Court.

Landfill

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many suitably engineered commercial licensed landfill sites are capable of processing a consignment of bird carcases; where they are situated; and if she will make a statement. [29324]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* In consultation with the Environment Agency, officials are currently reviewing the suitability for poultry carcase disposal of all commercial licensed landfills. Once this review is complete a list of potentially suitable sites will be made public.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many suitably engineered commercial licensed landfill sites are under construction. [29325]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* Defra and the Environment Agency will only consider commercial licensed landfills for carcase disposal that are already in operation. The review of potentially suitable sites will therefore not assess any sites that are under construction.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risk of transmission of Avian influenza by birds scavenging infected carcasses buried in suitably engineered commercial licensed landfills. [29326]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* It is acknowledged that if scavenging birds were to come into direct contact with the carcases of infected birds that had recently died or been killed for disease control purposes, there is a small risk of them becoming infected and transmitting the disease to other birds.

In the event that commercial licensed landfill was used for carcase disposal this risk would be mitigated by ensuring that carcases were immediately covered with other material to a depth of at least 1 m and that at the end of each working day, carcases were covered by at least 2 m of cover material. All sites used for carcase disposal will have Pollution, Prevention and Control (PPC) conditions in place as well as a bespoke bird deterrent/management plan drawn up and implemented by bird control experts from the Central Science Laboratory.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether there is sufficient capacity in suitably engineered commercial licensed landfills to dispose of the projected number of bird carcases infected with Avian influenza in the event of incineration capacity being fully utilised. [29386]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* Officials are working with the Environment Agency to review the capacity of suitably licensed landfills for the disposal of infected poultry carcases, in the event that there is insufficient capacity at incineration and rendering plants. Based on the capacity as assessed following the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001, officials advise that there would be more than sufficient capacity in commercial licensed landfill to dispose of the projected number of poultry carcases.

Live Animals (Transport)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the imposition of a maximum time limit on the transport of live animals. [27329]

Margaret Beckett: Representations have been made by welfare organisations and individuals to limit the length of time animals could be transported to slaughter. However, agreement on journey times could not be reached by a majority of member states in negotiations on new welfare during transport rules last year. We will continue to press for improvements in the review of these rules, which is to take place in 2011.

Ministerial Visits

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times she has visited *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire in her official capacity in the past 12 months; and what the purpose was of each visit. [29920]

Margaret Beckett: My official duties have not involved visits to either location in the past 12 months.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the special advisers in post in her Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to her Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29417]

Margaret Beckett: Since 2003, the Government has published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by the Prime Minister on Thursday 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–162WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Tidal Surges (Essex)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimates have been made of the *(a)* probabilities and *(b)* heights of tidal surges affecting the Essex coastline in each of the next five decades; and if she will make a statement. [30601]

Mr. Morley: Defra has policy responsibility for flood risk management in England. The principal authority with operational responsibility is the Environment Agency. The agency has undertaken no work to assign future probabilities to surge height estimates along the Essex coast. However, detailed studies have been completed to determine peak water levels for design and planning purposes along the Thames Estuary. These water levels are projected into the future by applying the Defra precautionary allowances for the effects of sea level rise. The Environment Agency has commissioned research to better understand future probabilities of sea levels in the Southern North Sea.

Veterinary Surgeons

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on proposals to review the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966; and what the arrangements are for public consultation on such a review. [29018]

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to bring in a bill dealing with veterinary misconduct. [30397]

Mr. Bradshaw: We issued a consultation document on the modernisation of the Veterinary Surgeons Act on 24 September 2003. The Government remain committed to introducing new proposals concerning the regulation of the veterinary profession. It is important that we reflect the way that veterinary services have changed and the need for regulatory bodies and professions as a whole to be accountable and transparent in their dealings with their customers. There is particular need for change in relation to the procedures that govern the way that complaints about the conduct of veterinary surgeons are handled.

We are developing options on which to base a draft Bill and will ensure that there is appropriate consultation of stakeholders.

Waste

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to promote waste minimisation alongside household waste recycling; and what measures are used to gauge progress. [28488]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* Waste minimisation is at the top of the waste hierarchy set out in the Government's Waste Strategy 2000. That strategy is itself currently under review, but there is no question of our downplaying the role of minimisation in future.

Currently waste minimisation is incentivised by a wide range of policy drivers, including notably the landfill tax escalator, landfill allowance trading scheme (LATS), the waste minimisation work of the Waste Resources and Action Programme (WRAP) and the tonnage recovery and recycling obligations in the packaging Regulations which encourage businesses to reduce the amount of packaging going through their companies.

A number of measures are used to gauge the success of waste minimisation policies including statistics on waste arisings and other forms of research.

Wind Farms

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the availability of the terms of consents for wind farm applications under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 in response to requests for access from local groups. [27299]

Mr. Bradshaw: In addition to a consent under the Electricity Act 1989 (or an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992), the construction of an offshore wind farm also requires a licence under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

Any such licence and the terms and conditions which it applies, are available to the public by virtue of the Deposits in the Sea (Public registers of Information) Regulations 1996 and may be inspected at the offices of the licensing authority.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether account is taken of science-based evidence provided by local groups within proceedings to consider consents for wind farms under the Food and Environment Act 1985. [27300]

Mr. Bradshaw: The construction of an offshore wind farm requires both a consent under the Electricity Act 1989 (or an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992) and a licence under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

Proposed marine wind farms are subject to environmental impact assessment by Regulators under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 (or Transport and Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 2000 (England and Wales)); the Environmental Statement being advertised for public inspection.

Comments and representations made in response to this consultation process together with any views expressed by a range of other stakeholders will be taken into account by the consenting and licensing authorities in determining whether to grant approval to the project and, if so, any terms and conditions that will apply.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Army Prosecuting Authority

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Solicitor-General what arrangements exist for independent inspection of the Army Prosecuting Authority; and if he will make a statement. [29563]

The Solicitor-General: At present no arrangements exist for an independent inspection of the Army Prosecution Authority.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23862]

The Solicitor-General: I am answering this question on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Treasury Solicitor's Department (TSol), Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office (RCPO) and HMCPS Inspectorate (HMCPSI).

The CPS, as the largest of my departments has a skills strategy, which is part of their workforce development plan. I will place a copy in the Library.

TSol addresses its skills and development needs via its annual training and development plan. This plan aims to ensure that everyone in TSol has the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to undertake their jobs effectively and to realise their potential. A copy of this plan will be placed in the Library.

SFO currently does not have a departmental skills development plan; and RCPO as a new department has yet to devise its detailed training and development plan.

HMCPSI is considering how best to take forward its skills development plan in the context of the specialist nature of inspection work, the requirements of professional skills for Government and the work of the Government legal service. Many of HMCPSI staff are on loan to the Inspectorate and will fall within the remit of their parent Department skills development plans.

Domestic Violence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions for domestic violence in the jurisdiction of London courts have *(a)* come to court and *(b)* resulted in conviction in each of the last five years. [28395]

The Solicitor-General: During the year April 2004 to March 2005, there were a total of 2,807 prosecutions for domestic violence in the jurisdiction of the London courts. Of these, 1,365 (48.6 per cent.) were convicted, 1,187 (42.3 per cent.) were dropped, and 255 (9.1 per cent.) were acquitted.

For the current year from 1 April 2005 to 9 November 2005, there were a total of 2,568 prosecutions for domestic violence. Of these 1,330 (51.8 per cent.) were convicted, 995 (38.7 per cent.) were dropped and 243 (9.5 per cent.) were acquitted.

Comparable figures are not held for previous years.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23463]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has not spent any money on the purchase of works of art in 2004–05.

Scottish Grand Committee

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many meetings of the Scottish Grand Committee there were in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* to date in 2005; where the meetings were held; and what the subject matter of debate was in each case. [29792]

David Cairns: There have been no meetings of the Scottish Grand Committee in the period stated and neither have there been any requests for meetings.

TRANSPORT

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's carbon management programme. [23718]

Ms Buck: The Department will consider joining the carbon management programme and officials have made contact with the Carbon Trust regarding this initiative. A decision will be taken in light of these discussions and after the Defra experiences have been evaluated.

The Department has already pledged to offset the carbon dioxide from DfT official air travel as part of a Government wide commitment and is leading a pan-government contract to facilitate the purchase of emission reductions generated by a Clean Development Mechanism project or portfolio of projects. This project, or projects, will need to provide Certified Emissions Reductions to offset at least 100,000t CO_2 emissions, associated with pan-government air travel, per year and provide significant and quantified sustainable development benefits.

Cargo Transfers

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what measures are in place to allow relevant local authorities a role in the supervision of ship-to-ship cargo transfer operations in estuaries around the UK coast; [19650]

(2) what account he will take of the protection of the marine environment when he decides on the application by Melbourne Marine Services for ship-to-ship cargo operations in the Firth of Forth; [19673]

(3) when he expects to make a decision on the application by Melbourne Marine Services for ship-to-ship cargo transfer operations in the Firth of Forth. [19674]

Dr. Ladyman: Local authorities do not have a role in the supervision of ship-to-ship cargo transfer operations.

The application which has been submitted to the Department's Maritime and Coastguard Agency is from Forth Ports plc, and relates to the oil spill contingency plan for Forth Ports plc's harbour authority area and its revision and amplification to address the specific risks associated with ship-to-ship transfers of oil in that harbour authority area. The Secretary of State for Transport does not decide whether a ship-to-ship transfer may or may not take place. The MCA's role is limited to approving harbour authorities' oil spill contingency plans which address the potential risks of such activities.

As the Secretary of State for Transport announced today, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is to co-ordinate a public consultation to assess the implications for relevant nature conservation sites of Forth Ports plc's revised and amplified oil spill contingency plan. The consultation will last 12 weeks, and is designed to establish whether the revised and amplified plan will adversely affect the integrity of those nature conservation sites.

At the end of this process, in the light of the consultation responses and taking into account the advice of Scottish Natural Heritage, the statutory nature conservation authority, the MCA will finalise its appropriate assessment and consider whether any amendments to the plan are needed.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for his Department and its agencies. [29061]

Ms Buck: Where a consultant incurs travel and subsistence expenses as a result of carrying out contracted service for the Department, the costs will either be included in the tendered price or recovered separately, depending on the nature of the work and the amount of travel involved.

Where expenses are included in the tendered price, the Department's conditions of contract stipulate that the rates shall not exceed the upper limit of allowances payable to departmental staff of equivalent status. Where expenses are recovered separately they are reimbursed at cost, subject the upper limit of allowances payable to departmental staff of equivalent status.

The Department's conditions of contract make it clear that any travel undertaken as a consequence of performing the contract must utilise the most effective means (taking into account the cost of travel, the cost of meals and accommodation and savings in time) for the whole journey, and that claims for travelling and subsistence must be related to the performance of the duties for the purposes of the contract, and be certified as such. Visits abroad require the prior approval of the Department.

It is the responsibility of the Department's contract manager in each case to ensure that all invoices submitted by the consultant are in accordance with the Department's terms and conditions of contract.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27378]

Ms Buck: The information is as follows:

Departments 10 highest movable and immovable assets

		£
Movable assets		
Cnis System Replacement	MCA	2,097,774
Automatic Identification Sys	MCA	1,348,547
Data Warehouse	MCA	592,655
ICCS Milford Haven Comms	MCA	460,072
Road Inspection Vehicle	HA	888,000
SAP System	DSA	1,355,000
Internet Booking System	DSA	701,000
ASR System	DSA	671,000
PCs in Test Centres Network	DSA	443,000
Scrter digital printers	DVLA	1,825,300
Immovable assets		
Channel Tunnel Rail Link Land	DfT (c)	1,554,100,000
Transport Direct Portal	DfT (c)	23,715,970
IMO Building -4 Albert Embankment	DfT (c)	21,816,387
Trunk Road Network	HA	72,144,374,000
Land at Dartford	HA	35,989,000
National Traffice Control Centre	HA	46,714,000
Directs Road User	DfT(c)	8,739,607
Cardington Training Centre (Freehold)	DSA	7,513,000
Main HQ, York	SRA	13,060,000
Kew Bridge North	SRA	9,000,000

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* mobile phones, *(b)* lap top computers and *(c)* desk top computers there are within the Department; and what their cost to the Department was in 2004–05. [26532]

Ms Buck: The information for the Department and its agencies is as follows:

DfT HQ

The requested information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The following figures are estimates based on the available information.

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	724	48,289
Lap top computers	778	151,219
Desk top computers	2,113	633,121.70

DSA

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	222	41,523.29
Lap top computers	132	[1]—
Desk top computers	1,394	[1]—

[1] Information on the costs of lap top and desk top computers in 2004–05 is not available as the period covered the transition from one managed service contract to another. Such information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

DVLA

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	452	34,521.86
Lap top computers	307	16,746.56
Desk top computers	8,668	89,863.64

Highways Agency

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	1,066	233,056.90
Lap top computers	753	78,397.18
Desk top computers	[1]2,887	530,499.64

[1] Includes 46 thin client terminals.

MCA

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	474	142,246
Lap top computers	451	42,580
Desk top computers	857	16,020

VCA

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	58	1,747
Lap top computers	54	42,000
Desk top computers	56	30,000

VOSA

	Number	*Cost in 2004–05 (£)*
Mobile phones	1,079	357,008
Lap top computers	1,010	n/a
Desk top computers	1,240	n/a

n/a = not available

Notes:

1. The numbers of lap top and desk top computers were those in use at the end of March 2005.

2. It is not possible to determine the cost of lap top and desktop computers in 2004–05 as VOSA pay Atos Origin on a managed service basis, rather than for just the supply of equipment. Therefore, the equipment costs are wrapped up into a monthly charge for service provision (including all network costs, software, hardware, the helpdesk etc.).

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many responses were received to the consultation on applications of conspicuity markings to heavy vehicles; and how many were *(a)* for and *(b)* against change. [30804]

Dr. Ladyman: We received 71 responses to the consultation, of which 55 supported the mandatory fitment of conspicuity markings. Seven responses were opposed and the remainder expressed no clear opinion.

Among those opposed were major trade bodies, who represent the views of members operating over 200,000 goods vehicles and so represent a significant level of opposition to mandatory conspicuity marking.

A note about responses to the consultation is in preparation and will be published shortly on the Department for Transport website.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 17th October 2005, *Official Report*, column 678W, on heavy goods vehicles, why the United Kingdom opposed the proposal made at the GRE Committee of the UNECE to make ECE 104 retro-reflective tape mandatory on the side and rear of heavy goods vehicles; and how many countries *(a)* supported and *(b)* opposed the United Kingdom's position. [30805]

Dr. Ladyman: We have been concerned that the mandatory use of retro-reflective marking tape will add additional burdens on the haulage industry associated with the cost of fitting and maintaining the tape. In light of this the UK proposed that fitment of the tape should be optional.

None of the other countries present at the meeting supported the UK position and in view of this the UK has agreed to the amendment of UNECE regulations to mandate the use of retro-reflective marking tape.

Hybrid Cars

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many hybrid petrol/electric cars have been sold in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years. [28848]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table shows the number of hybrid electric cars newly registered in the UK from January 2001 to September 2005 according to the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency database.

	Number of hybrid cars (petrol/electric)
2001	569
2002	283
2003	374
2004	1,569
2005 (to September)	4,061

Invalid Carriages

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the report of the Consultation on the Transport Review of Class 2 and Class 3 Powered Wheelchairs and Powered Scooters (Invalid Carriages); and if he will make a statement. [28635]

Ms Buck: The research into the use of these vehicles has been completed and we are considering the recommendations made in the final report and we hope to publish it before the end of this year.

Merseytram Services

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Merseytram Line 1 on regeneration in Merseyside. [26247]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* It is for scheme promoters to undertake a detailed assessment of the impact of their light rail scheme on regeneration, as part of their bid for major scheme funding. Merseytravel submitted its Economic Impact Report for Merseytram Line 1 in December 2004.

The Department considered that the promoters' assessment of regeneration and employment impacts had overstated the creation of additional jobs.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel arrangements, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27775]

Ms Buck: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers

costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002 and gained an additional Minister in July 2003. Travel and subsistence costs incurred by Ministers and their private office staff when travelling in the United Kingdom during each financial year are as follows:

	£
29 May 2002 to 31 March 2003	22,311
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	47,880
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	51,840

Ministers use a variety of public transport services when undertaking departmental business. However, information about the mode and class of transport used by Ministers on departmental business is not held centrally and cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) has asked Roy Burke, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the Chief Executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within his Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if he will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27811]

Ms Buck: The detailed information requested can not be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

However, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used, and shows how many Officials accompanied Ministers in those circumstances. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Motorways

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of motorway in England have been resurfaced across their entire width with a noise suppressing surface. [30084]

Dr. Ladyman: The motorway network comprises 3,593 miles of two and three lane carriageway, of which 680 miles has been resurfaced with quieter surfacing across all respective carriageway lanes.

The Highways Agency does not record motorway carriageway data on a route basis. The motorway and trunk road network is managed on the basis of the two individual carriageways that comprise a motorway route (ie one carriageway in each direction); information for a complete width of motorway along a prescribed route cannot therefore be readily reported.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many kilometres of motorway received quiet surfacing in all lanes in *(a)* 2004, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2002; and what percentage of the highway network each figure represents. [30093]

Dr. Ladyman: Motorway carriageway lengths that were resurfaced with quieter surfacing in all lanes and in both directions in each of the identified years, together with the associated percentage of the motorway network are shown in the table:

	Carriageway length (km)	*% of motorway network*
2002	146	2.5
2003	241	4.2
2004	97	1.7

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the stretches of the M40 across which all lanes have been resurfaced with a noise suppressing surface; and what the length of the stretch involved is in each case. [30083]

Dr. Ladyman: The lengths of M40 motorway that have surfacing with noise reducing properties across all running lanes (not including the hardshoulder) are as follows:

Location	*Carriageway direction*	*Length (metres)*
2,200m north of J1A to 900m north of J4	Both	17,000
5,800m north of J4 to 5,960m north of J4	Both	160
200m south of J5 to 300m north of J5	South	500
170m south of J6 to 1,050m north of J6	Both	1,220
1,100m north of J6 to 2,080m north of J6	Both	980
2,130m north of J6 to 100m north of J8	Both	8,370
400m north of J8A to 800m north of J8A	South	400
5,400m north of J8A to 5,500m north of J8A	South	100
5,700m north of J8A to 5,860m north of J8A	South	160
5,860m north of J8A to 5,880m north of J8A	Both	20
5,880m north of J8A to 5,900m north of J8A	South	20
6,800m south of J9 to 6,700m south of J9	North	100
3,830m south of J10 to 3,760m south of J10	South	70
2,600m south of J10 to 2,300m south of J10	North	300

Location	Carriageway direction	Length (metres)
2,300m south of J10 to 2,100m south of J10	Both	200
1,100m south of J10 to 1,000m south of J10	North	100
5,900m north of J10 to 5,960m north of J10	South	60
6,000m north of J10 to 6,100m north of J10	North	100
7,000m north of J10 to 7,100m north of J10	Both	100
7,500m south of J11 to 7,400m south of J11	Both	100
7,000m south of J11 to 6,900m south of J11	South	100
6,900m south of J11 to 6,800m south of J11	North	100
5,200m south of J11 to 5,100m south of J11	North	100
3,500m south of J11 to 3,300m south of J11	South	200
3,300m south of J11 to 3,200m south of J11	Both	100
2,900m south of J11 to 2,800m south of J11	Both	100
2,500m south of J11 to 2,400m south of J11	Both	100
700m north of J11 to 900m north of J11	Both	200
1,200m north of J11 to 1,300m north of J11	Both	100
1,300m north of J11 to 1,400m north of J11	South	100
1,600m north of J11 to 1,700m north of J11	Both	100
1,800m north of J11 to 1,900m north of J11	North	100
5,600m north of J11 to 5,700m north of J11	North	100
8,290m south of J12 to 8,210m south of J12	North	80
5,800m south of J12 to 5,520m south of J12	South	280
5,200m south of J12 to 5,100m south of J12	North	100
1,400m south of J12 to 1,300m south of J12	South	100
2,100m north of J12 to 2,400m north of J12	South	300
3,400m north of J12 to 3,600m north of J12	Both	200
4,600m south of J13 to 4,400m south of J13	Both	200
4,400m south of J13 to 4,100m south of J13	South	300
4,000m south of J13 to 2,800m south of J13	North	1,200
1,400m north of J13 to 900m north of J14	South	2,200
900m north of J14 to 1,000m north of J14	Both	100
1,000m north of J14 to 300m south of J15	South	800
10,800m north of J15 to 10,900m north of J15	South	100
11,220m north of J15 to 11,290m north of J15	South	70

National Port Traffic

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects consultation will begin on a national ports strategy. [28085]

Dr. Ladyman: We expect to begin consultation early next year. General discussions have been held with some major stakeholders.

Ports Policy

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what date has been set for the release of the forthcoming review of ports policy. [30431]

Dr. Ladyman: We expect to issue a discussion document early next year.

Railways

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether franchises for passenger rail services specify the proportion of standard class carriages to first class carriages that must be provided on intercity routes. [28078]

Derek Twigg: When letting new franchises, it is at a bidder's discretion to specify what proportion of standard class to first class carriages on intercity routes it will provide.

Road Accidents (Cumbria)

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* pedestrians, *(b)* cyclists, *(c)* drivers and *(d)* car occupants have been (i) injured and (ii) killed in Cumbria in each of the last six years for which figures are available. [30463]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of killed and injured pedestrian, cyclist, driver and car occupant casualties in Cumbria are given in the following table for the years 1999 to 2004.

	Pedestrians		Cyclists		Drivers[1]		Car Occupants[2]	
	Killed	Injured[3]	Killed	Injured[3]	Killed	Injured[3]	Killed	Injured[3]
1999	9	292	1	151	37	1,526	44	2,024
2000	11	252	1	135	31	1,465	34	1,914
2001	7	257	2	133	30	1,454	30	1,873
2002	10	265	3	138	27	1,547	25	1,977
2003	5	250	0	139	35	1,511	32	1,867
2004	7	291	3	118	28	1,486	37	1,853

[1] Drivers of all motor vehicles.
[2] Includes both car drivers and passengers. Car drivers have been counted in both the car occupants and drivers columns.
[3] Includes both serious and slight injuries.

Speed Limits

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the procedure for changing speed limits on A roads was last reviewed; and if he will make a statement. [28327]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The Government has no current plans to review the national speed limits for which it is responsible, namely:

70 mph for motorways and dual carriageways;

60 mph for single carriageway roads;

30 mph for urban street-lit roads ('restricted roads').

Where they feel that the national limit does not reflect local needs and considerations, traffic authorities (local highway authorities and the Highways Agency) have the powers to set local speed limits through section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This power applies to their entire road network, irrespective of the classification of roads (A, B, C and Unclassified roads).

To help ensure consistency in the setting of local speed limits, the Department has issued guidance, currently set out in Circular Roads 1/93. Many developments have taken place in speed management since 1993, and the Department consulted on draft updated guidance on setting local speed limits at the end of 2004. As well as further improving clarity and consistency, the draft seeks to re-emphasise that the function of a road should be one of the important factors in determining what an appropriate speed is. It will also incorporate important wider factors such as quality of life through, for

example, striking a more sensible balance between road safety, accessibility and environmental objectives, especially in rural areas.

The updated guidance on the setting of local speed limits will be published shortly.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Abingdon Green Ticket Booth

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what the cost of providing the ticket-booth on Abingdon Green during the summer was; and who bears the cost. [28722]

Nick Harvey: The cost of erecting and fitting out the ticket booth at the beginning of the season and taking it down at the end amounted to some £73,000. Electricity used during the summer opening is estimated to have cost some £230. 60 per cent. of these costs are borne by the House of Commons and the remainder by the House of Lords.

Cleaners' Pay

Lynne Jones: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission pursuant to the oral answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 699, on cleaners' pay and conditions, if the Commission will meet the Transport and General Workers Union and the employers of the contract cleaners employed on the Parliamentary Estate; and if he will make a statement. [30840]

Nick Harvey: The Commission has no plans for such a meeting. The current dispute is between the employers and their employees. I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1102W.

Information Office

Mr. Steen: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many enquiries the House of Commons Information Office has received in each of the past three years; how many members of staff it employs; and what the cost has been of providing the service in each of the last three years. [30166]

Nick Harvey: The following table shows the information requested:

Financial year	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Enquiries			
Number of enquiries received	75,700	64,720	58,067
Staff			
Full-time equivalents in post at year-end	12.5	12.5	12.5
Finance (£000)			
Total identifiable costs[1]	426.5	442.2	431.5
of which			
Staff costs[2]	344.9	345.0	319.7

[1] Figures exclude costs which cannot be identified separately from the Library's budget (stationery, publications, training, IT support, postage) and costs which are not included in departmental budgets (IT network, telephones, accommodation, utilities).

[2] Includes provision for pension liabilities, calculated as 17 per cent. of basic pay.

The number of enquiries received has declined over the last three years as the House of Commons Information Office has made more information generally available to the public via the Parliamentary website. This includes the Weekly Information Bulletin, factsheets about the work and history of the House, the Constituency Locata service and, most recently, Commons Knowledge, a newsletter providing information on forthcoming business, following the Commission's agreement to a recommendation made by the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Business Incentives

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the initiatives, awards and grant programmes offered by his Department for *(a)* small businesses and *(b)* all businesses. [25610]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 7 November 2005]*: The national Business Link website—www.businesslink.gov.uk—contains advice and information on support available to businesses, whether directly from the Department or via Business Link and many other sources.

Carbon Offset Scheme

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much is planned to be spent by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency of his Department in (i) the 2005–06 financial year and (ii) each of the next four financial years on the carbon offset scheme; how many flights are planned to be subject to the scheme in each case; what the distance of those flights is; and what carbon dioxide emissions are planned to be offset in each case. [21508]

Alan Johnson: The interdepartmental scheme to offset carbon emissions from UK official air travel will come into effect from April 2006. The scheme is currently being developed by an interdepartmental working group led by DEFRA but the formula for calculating the level of contributions required to be made by Departments has yet to be agreed. My Department does not yet have firm forecasts of the level of carbon dioxide emissions to be used in order to calculate the expenditure required. It is assumed that all departmental UK and overseas flights will be covered by the scheme.

Contributions to the scheme are due to start in the financial year 2006–07. The scheme is currently only focusing on core government departments and not their agencies so any figures will exclude air travel by my Department's agencies.

The scheme also covers travel and other energy usage associated with events hosted for the EU presidency and contributions to the scheme will be made in 2006–07

to cover carbon offsets; Defra are in the process of developing the formula to calculate the level of contributions required.

Company Communications

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the proportion of company shareholders who would prefer to receive company communications in electronic form. [26992]

Barry Gardiner: Consultation to the White Paper on Company Law Reform published in March this year revealed broad support for the Government's proposals to facilitate greater use of electronic communications. Initial estimates prepared with the help of interested stakeholders suggest cost-savings in the region of £47 million per annum for FTSE-listed companies and a likely take-up of hard copy information by 0.3 per cent. to 5 per cent. of shareholders.

The Government recognise that shareholders should be able to receive company communications in a form which is convenient to them. That is why the Company Law Reform Bill will enable shareholders to approve the use of electronic communications, but permit the legal titleholder of the share to receive documents in hard copy.

Company Directors

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he will take to ensure that company shareholders without access to the internet do not become disenfranchised from exercising their rights as shareholders if a company opts to communicate through electronic means. [27002]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Company Law Reform Bill will allow companies to use electronic communications with their members. This will enable companies and their members to benefit from the immediacy of electronic dialogue. However, the Government recognise that electronic communications will not suit everyone. A change to the use of electronic communications will need to be approved by a resolution of the members of the company. In addition, a member, that is the legal titleholder to shares, will have the right to require the company to send a hard copy version of documents or information.

The Bill also provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations to require companies to send documents or information to a person or persons nominated by the member. Such persons could, for example, be those investing in shares through intermediaries. The regulations may require documents or information to be supplied to nominated persons in hard copy form, if the Secretary of State is satisfied that the additional benefits to nominated persons would outweigh the likely costs resulting from such an obligation.

Contingency Planning (Power Supplies)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what range of scenarios the Government Chief Scientific Adviser is considering in terms of oil and gas reserves for contingency planning purposes. [27930]

Barry Gardiner: Currently, the Office of Science and Technology, headed by the Government Chief Scientific Adviser, is reviewing a large number of issues through its Horizon Scanning Centre and Foresight programme. Energy is one of these issues.

The selection of future Foresight projects requires that the projects must tackle issues which look ahead at least 10 years, are driven by science and technology, have outcomes that can be influenced, are not covered by work carried on elsewhere, require an inter-disciplinary approach and command support from other organisations.

It is too soon to consider the range of scenarios that might be explored in any of these future projects.

Energy contingency planning is primarily carried out by the DTI's Energy Group.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many contracts were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05 for direct mail; and what the value was in each case. [27797]

Alun Michael: The Department of Trade and Industry, through the Strategy and Communications Unit, have spent the following amounts on direct mail:

	£
2004–05	
Queens Awards	115,473
Dispute Resolution	491,655
Information and consultation	85,250
Total	692,378
2005–06	
Queens Awards	90,000
National Minimum Wage	997.53
Total	90,997.53

These figures were sourced through HM's Government Central Office of Information.

Departmental Overseas Offices

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which agencies of his Department maintain offices overseas, broken down by *(a)* country where each office is maintained, *(b)* number of staff, *(c)* agency and *(d)* cost of each office in 2004–05. [28920]

Alun Michael: None of the Department's executive agencies maintain offices overseas. Of the non-departmental bodies sponsored by the Department the only ones that maintain overseas offices are *(a)* the research councils, who collectively operate an office in Brussels which employs 10 staff costing £640,000 and *(b)* the regional development agencies for which the table gives details of the regional development agencies offices by country, the number of staff and the annual costs (where known).

UK Trade and Investment is technically neither an agency nor a sponsored body of the DTI. It brings together the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Trade and Industry in supporting companies in the UK trading internationally, and overseas enterprises seeking to locate in the UK. Its overseas resources, including staff and the premises they occupy, are provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Regional development agency	*Advantage West Midlands*		*East of England*		*East Midlands*		*North West*	
Country	*Staff*	*£000*	*Staff*	*£000*	*Staff*	*£000*	*Staff*	*£000*
Australia	2	[1]—	—	—	2	[1]—	[2]2	50
Belgium	1	170	—	[3]12	—	—	—	—
China	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
France	1	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Germany	1	100	—	—	0.5	70	—	—
India	0.5	[1]—	—	—	0.5	[1]—	—	—
Japan	2	[1]—	—	—	2	[1]—	[4]4	195
Korea	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norway	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Singapore	0.5	[1]—	—	—	0.5	[1]—	—	—
Sweden	1	60	—	—	0.5	60	—	—
Taiwan	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
USA	7	[1]—	—	—	7	[1]—	[2]12	405

Regional development agency	*One North East*		*South East England*		*South West England*		*Yorkshire Forward*	
Country	*Staff*	*£000*	*Staff*	*£000*	*Staff*	*£000*	*Staff*	*£000*
Australia	[2]2	50	0.5	50	1	[5]—	[2]2	50
Belgium	—	—	2	141	—	—	—	—
China	2	60	1	28	2	[5]—	2	180
France	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Germany	0.5	35	—	—	—	—	—	—
India	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Japan	2	210	2	85	4	[5]—	[4]4	195
Korea	0.5	70	1	44	—	—	—	—
Norway	0.5	35	—	—	—	—	—	—
Singapore	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sweden	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Taiwan	1.5	25	—	—	—	—	—	—
USA	[2]12	405	7	570	2	265	[2]12	405

[1] Collaboration between Advantage West Midlands and East Midlands Development Agency—costs not known.
[2] Collaboration between North West Development Agency, One North East and Yorkshire Forward.
[3] Contribution to East of England European Partnership office in Brussels.
[4] Collaboration between North West Development Agency and Yorkshire Forward.
[5] Total costs of South West's representation in Australia, China and Japan is £520,000.
Note:
The London Development Agency does not have any offices outside the UK.

Flexitime Rules

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements are in place to monitor the *(a)* operation of and *(b)* compliance with flexitime rules for staff in his Department. [28730]

Alan Johnson: Individual directorates operate their own flexitime arrangements within a framework set out by the Department. Directorates are advised to ensure that local managers and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities for the operation and control of the scheme and make clear to staff and new recruits who join an office flexitime scheme that disciplinary action may be taken if the scheme is abused.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the terms are of the flexitime arrangements for staff in his Department. [28732]

Alan Johnson: Individual directorates within the Department operate their own flexitime arrangements. This enables staff to vary their times of arrival and departure from work, vary the length and timing of their lunch breaks and take time off if they work extra hours. Staff are required to record the hours that they work either manually or electronically. Flexible working hours (FWH) schemes usually have four week accounting periods and within limits staff can carry over from one accounting period to the next an excess or deficit in the hours they worked compared to their conditioned hours. Credits are given for authorised absences such as visits to the doctor and to allow for the effect of exceptional transport delays.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what new companies have started up in the field of adult guidance provision since the Learning and Skills Council took over from the training and enterprise councils. [28586]

Phil Hope: I have been asked to reply.

Neither my Department nor the LSC record business start ups in adult guidance.

Management and Leadership Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress of the Management and Leadership programme of the Small Business Service; and whether complete coverage across England is expected by the end of 2005. [28919]

Phil Hope: I have been asked to reply.

At 30 September 2005 over 21,000 employers were engaged with the Leadership and Management Development Programme for Managing Directors of SMEs. Over 10,000 have had their development needs assessed and started or completed their development programme. All English regions are covered by this programme.

Packaging

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received calling for a further regulatory impact assessment on the effects of REACH EU chemicals policy on downstream users, with particular reference to packaging manufacturing; and if he will make a statement. [28491]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The Government have received a number of representations from different parts of industry, including the packaging sector, as well as from many other stakeholders on all aspects of the proposed REACH Regulation (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals). These included responses to the UK's public consultation last year.

Within the UK, REACH was subject to a regulatory impact assessment in 2004, and a further impact assessment was carried out this year, which examined the implications of the regulation for some downstream sectors, including can coatings, taking into account information supplied by metal packaging manufacturers.

Across the EU, REACH has been subject to over 50 regulatory impact assessments. This includes the European Commission's extended impact assessment of October 2003, which estimated that changes made to its draft proposals could save up to €10.6 billion. The Commission also carried out a further impact assessment this year in partnership with industry, trade union, consumer and environmental organisations. That assessment considered the impact of REACH on certain downstream users of chemical substances, including flexible packaging manufacturers.

The considerable amount of work carried out in assessing the impact of the REACH proposals has been invaluable in determining costs and benefits, and in informing the negotiations.

Palm Oil

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* UK supermarkets, *(b)* ministerial colleagues and *(c)* others about the sourcing of palm oil imported into the UK, with particular reference to the habitat of the orang-utan; [27995]

(2) what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the relationship between increased imports of palm oil into the UK and the threat to the future of the orang-utan. [27996]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

The UK Government support the conservation and sustainable management of rainforests, helping to protect forest habitats, including those of the orang-utan. The UK Government are in discussion with EU member states about the threats to these tropical rainforests caused by oil palm expansion. The UK Government are taking a number of steps to tackle these issues and these are outlined as follows.

The former Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment (appointed in 1999 by the, Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)) considered palm oil in the context of the scope for retailers and others to influence the supply chain. As part of its work, in 2001, the Committee brought together a number of UK players including several leading retailers, to discuss and identify the scope for practical action to tackle the environmental issues associated with this commodity.

Building on that experience the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) commissioned, on the Committee's behalf, a feasibility study to assess how a broader sustainable commodities initiative might work as a tool to reduce the negative impact of commodity crops. The study concluded that there was no single best way forward for an initiative to suit all commodities or supply chain actors. Instead an initiative should consist of a coherent set of different activities. The study is available on line at—http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/accpe/research/index.htm.

Based on the study, the advisory committee made a number of recommendations in its third report, "From Principles to Action", around the need for a policy framework, information, best practice guidance and sharing of experience. These recommendations are being fed into the development of the Government's Food Industry Sustainability Strategy.

Defra is commissioning some further research work into the impacts of commodities on the biodiversity in international communities. The outcomes of this work will identify the range of commodities and inform future policy development. palm oil will be one of the commodities studied in this project.

A Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil has been established, which is running a pilot programme in sustainable palm oil production in Malaysia. This is a two year scheme running from November 2005 which is subject to review at the end of this period. The programme is monitoring whether palm oil can be grown in both a legal and sustainable manner.

Post Offices

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in securing approval from the European Commission for

the proposed subsidy for the two years to March 2008 to support the rural post office network; and if he will make a statement. [28496]

Barry Gardiner: Formal notification was presented to the European Commission on 18 March 2005. Discussions at official level are ongoing.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government plan to provide on-going subsidies to support the rural post office network beyond March 2008; and if he will make a statement. [28523]

Barry Gardiner: Government has made it clear that it will make informed decisions about the longer-term future of the rural post office network in light of the Post Office Limited report into their trials of new and innovative means of delivering postal services to rural communities. The report is due to be delivered to Government by the end of this year. This will be considered alongside analysis of the network currently being conducted.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the long-term viability of the Post Office rural network in the event that on-going subsidies are not available; what estimate he has made of the number of post offices which would be at risk of closure; and if he will make a statement. [28663]

Barry Gardiner: No decision will be taken on the longer-term future of the rural post office network until Government has considered the findings of the Post Office Limited report of their pilot programme, trialling new and innovative ways of delivering postal services to rural communities. The report is due to be presented to Government at the end of the year. This will be considered alongside analysis of the network currently being conducted.

The Government's annual support of £150 million helps Post Office Limited to maintain non-commercial post offices in rural locations.

Royal Mail

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the total amount of unfunded pension liabilities from Royal Mail Group plc. [28358]

Barry Gardiner: As set out in Royal Mail's 2004–05 accounts, the deficit in the pension scheme was £3,906 million.

UK Competitiveness

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives his Department has in place to ensure that there will be progress by 2006 towards his Department's targets *(a)* to improve UK competitiveness and *(b)* narrow the productivity gap with the United States; and if he will make a statement. [28626]

Barry Gardiner: The Government's approach to raising UK competitiveness and closing the productivity gap with our main competitors, such as the USA, is based on maintaining macroeconomic stability to allow firms and individuals to invest for the future, and implementing microeconomic reforms to remove the barriers which prevent markets from functioning efficiently.

The Government has identified five drivers of productivity: investment, innovation, skills, enterprise and competition. A programme of reforms has been initiated to boost productivity through each of these drivers, along with cross-cutting policies. The DTI is pursuing these through its Five-Year Plan and PSA 1 target.

Examples of DTI policies to boost productivity include:

- reforming the competition framework in the UK. The Enterprise Act 2002 has made the UK competition authorities (Competition Commission and OFT) independent, and has given the OFT a more proactive role in investigating markets that may not be working well for consumers;
- the Technology Strategy, which supports collaborative R and D and knowledge transfer networks through strong business input. £320 million of funding is available over the period 2005 to 2008; and
- the Science Budget; the 2004 Spending Review announced additional funding for the UK's successful science base—an additional £1 billion for over the spending review period, equivalent to annual growth in funding of 5.8 per cent. in real terms.

The DTI also actively works with other Government Departments in the development of their policies which can impact on productivity—for example with DfES on Education and Skills policy.

Unum Provident

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has entered a contract with Unum Provident. [25930]

Alan Johnson: According to centrally held records, my Department has not entered into any contract with Unum Provident.

DEFENCE

A400M

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the major UK suppliers to the A400M programme. [28354]

Mr. Ingram: The major UK suppliers to the A400M programme are: Airbus UK, Rolls Royce, Messier Dowty, Goodrich Aerospace UK and Marshall Aerospace.

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his assessment is of the current level of insurgency attacks in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [27160]

Mr. Ingram: The security situation in Afghanistan is broadly stable, if sometimes fragile, with levels of insurgent attacks driven largely by seasonal factors, particularly the weather. There was an upsurge in violence around the 18 September National Assembly election, as widely anticipated, though polling day itself

was not significantly disrupted. Neither the Taliban nor other insurgent groups currently pose a credible strategic threat to the stability of Afghanistan.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what progress has been made in training the Afghan National Army; and if he will make a statement; [27166]

(2) what the target strength is for the Afghan National Army; and when it is expected to be achieved; [27165]

(3) if he will make a statement on progress made in *(a)* the training and fielding of Afghan combat troops, *(b)* the equipping of Afghan combat troops and *(c)* establishing the institutions the Afghan army needs to sustain itself. [27163]

Mr. Ingram: The training, equipping and development of sustaining institutions for the Afghan National Army (ANA) is led by the US. Other countries, including the UK, provide assistance (for example, the UK trains non-commissioned officers). The current target strength for the ANA is 70,000 by the end of 2009. Good progress towards this target is being made, with many ANA units now capable of conducting combat operations, albeit with support from international forces, in terms of both equipment and logistics. The ANA is now also well established in the regions.

The Afghan Ministry of Defence, as the key institution leading the development of the ANA, has made good progress under the leadership of Defence Minister Wardak and with the help of international partners. The UK is currently engaged in a project to build civil service capacity within the Afghan MOD, with the aim of creating a self-sustaining department.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to increase recruitment and retention of the Afghan National Police *(a)* unilaterally and *(b)* multilaterally. [29599]

Mr. Ingram: Plans for the recruitment and retention of the Afghan National Police are a matter for the Government of Afghanistan in consultation with Germany, who lead in this area, and the United States, who are providing resources in support of police reform.

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 374W, on aircraft crashes, what function *(a)* the radar altitude hold on the Chinook HC1 and *(b)* the radar altimeter hold on the Chinook HC2 performed; and if he will make a statement. [25112]

Mr. Touhig: The function of the radar altimeter hold on the Chinook HC Mk 1 and the Chinook HC Mk 2 is identical. It provides a means by which the aircraft can maintain a constant height above the surface in the hover or at low speeds.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 344W, on aircraft crashes, why the radar altimeter hold cleared for use on the Chinook HC2 was subject to restrictions; and if he will make a statement. [25114]

Mr. Touhig: The radar altimeter hold on the Chinook HC2 was cleared for use subject to restrictions put in place to ensure that the aircraft was operated safely.

Aldermaston Weapons Establishment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and what percentage of the personnel at the Aldermaston Weapons Establishment are *(a)* US citizens, *(b)* employed by US corporations and *(c)* employed by the US Government, broken down by grade. [25012]

John Reid: The Atomic Weapons Establishment is managed under Government owned contractor operated ('GOCO') arrangements. The management and operation company, AWE plc, has the following personnel working at AWE sites:

Five US citizens. This is less than 0.1 per cent. of the total number of personnel. Broken down by grade these are a managing director and four senior managers.

87 subcontractors from US corporations. This equates to approximately 1.6 per cent. of the total number of personnel.

No US Government employees.

The breakdown by grade for personnel employed by US corporations could be provided only at disproportionate cost because AWE plc does not hold the information.

Anthrax

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the *(a)* types and *(b)* amounts of anthrax which have been supplied to Iraq by the USA since 1980; and if he will make a statement. [27646]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dr. Howells) gave on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 643W.

Armed Forces

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements are in place to provide entertainment to service personnel in *(a)* Iraq, *(b)* Afghanistan and *(c)* other countries where the military serve. [29400]

Mr. Touhig: Entertainment for service personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan and in other countries is primarily delivered by the operational welfare package (OWP). The OWP provides a leisure and relaxation element that includes: British Forces Broadcast Service (BFBS) multi-television and radio; televisions, videocassette recorders, DVD players and radios; videocassettes or DVDs; live combined services' entertainment shows; newspapers, magazines, books and board games.

Eligibility for the OWP is based on the length of time overseas and by personnel numbers. Operations, exercises and deployments require an expected duration of two months or more to be eligible and containing more than 20 personnel, below which it is not cost-effective to provide OWP. In addition, OWP is not provided for locations that have a developed

infrastructure, where most elements are available already, or for personnel in receipt of local overseas allowance.

BFBS also provides television and radio services to other countries where service personnel are stationed. These include north west Europe, Ascension, Belize, Brunei (radio only), Canada, Cyprus, and the Falkland Islands, together with Her Majesty's ships.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many serving *(a)* regular *(b)* territorial and *(c)* reserve armed forces personnel were recorded as living in Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [29257]

Mr. Touhig: Historically statistics at parliamentary constituency level have not been produced.

Posted location data by local authority, for regular personnel are published in TSP 10, "UK Regular Forces Distribution Across UK", quarterly from 1 July 2004 to 1 July 2005. Copies are available in the Library of the House. There were no regular personnel posted to the borough of Kettering during this time and records show that no regular personnel have been posted to Kettering between 1997 and 2004.

Data on the residential location of armed forces personnel are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Army Tanks

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many tanks have been sold by the Government in the last five years; and to which countries. [28087]

Mr. Ingram: One surplus demilitarised Chieftain MK5/3 Main Battle Tank (MET) was sold commercially in 2004 and nine surplus Challenger 1 MET hulks were disposed of by scrap metal recovery. No surplus MBTs have been sold on a Government-to-Government basis in the last five years. However, 399 Challenger 1 MBTs have been gifted to the Jordanian armed forces under the Al Hussein Project.

British Army Training (Kenya)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether agreement has been reached with the Kenyan Government on the resumption of British Army training in Kenya. [28928]

Mr. Ingram: The British Army continues to conduct training in Kenya. However, some exercises have been constrained by a Kenyan Government decision to limit the areas where troops can train. Detailed negotiations between the Governments of Kenya and the United Kingdom about adjusting these restrictions are proceeding. In the meantime, the Memorandum of Understanding between the two Governments which expired in December 2004 has been extended.

Carrier Programme

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the status is of the process he described in Washington DC as a final perusal of UK plans to build two large aircraft carriers; what aspects of the carrier programme are being perused; and whether this constitutes a lessening of the Government's commitment to build the carriers. [27462]

John Reid *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The future aircraft carrier (CVF) project is in its assessment phase, the aim of which is to balance the key parameters of performance, cost and time. The main investment decision will be taken when we know with confidence the risks involved in building the carriers, when we have a proper understanding of the costs involved and the implications in terms of the wider interface with other projects.

The Government remains fully committed to the future carrier programme which represents a quantum step up in military capability for the UK's armed forces.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for his Department and its agencies. [29100]

Mr. Touhig: All the Ministry of Defence contracts are placed on the basis of providing best value for money. In many cases consultancy contracts are awarded through framework arrangements which have been agreed with consultancy suppliers. To get themselves onto the framework agreements the consultants will have taken part in a competitive tender and the agreed charging rates and expenses will accordingly have been subject to competitive pressure. Where MOD teams place contracts outside of the framework agreements they must be able to demonstrate value for money and that prices, including arrangements for payment of expenses, are fair and reasonable.

The MOD is actively considering, along with other parts of central government, how best to maximise public sector buying power in this market. One likely outcome of this work is a much greater use of centralised framework agreements by the MOD and across government.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29101]

Mr. Touhig: A list of projects conducted by consultants is not held centrally by the Ministry of Defence and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, summaries of MOD expenditure on external assistance, of which consultancy is a part, are available in the Library of the House for the years 1995–96 to 2005–06.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29115]

Mr. Touhig: Most consultants used by the Ministry of Defence are engaged to support projects, not to lead them. That said, the mechanisms to assess a consultant's performance will be similar whether the consultancy is acting in a lead or support role. Primarily this will focus on an assessment by the MOD project team of the consultant's performance in relation to the contracted statement of requirements, including any deliverables. In the short term we would expect any shortfalls in the performance of a consultant to be addressed through discussion with the MOD project manager. In the longer term MOD has a contractual remedy for poor performance in DEFCON 92 'Failure of Performance'.

Information on the number of projects by consultants that were assessed as unsuccessful is not held in the format requested and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Court Cases

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost to date has been of court cases involving military personnel in Iraq; and if he will list the amounts awarded to date to lawyers acting for Iraqis, broken down by firm. [27860]

Mr. Ingram: The total cost of court cases involving military personnel in Iraq is not held centrally. The Military Court Service does not hold such information by location.

The Ministry of Defence has not reimbursed any costs for lawyers acting on behalf of Iraqis.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many criminal cases in which all proceedings are complete involving military personnel on active service have been transferred from military to civil jurisdiction for trial in each of the last five years; and what the reason was in each case. [29565]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply as the responsible Minister for supervising both the Service Prosecuting Authorities and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Where an offence alleged to have been committed by servicemen is triable in England and Wales in either the court martial or the civilian courts, it is ultimately the Attorney General's decision which prosecutor will consider the allegation. The Service Prosecuting Authorities will deal with the vast majority of cases concerning servicemen. However, in exceptional cases the CPS may deal with the allegation.

Trooper Williams is the only case in the last five years when a criminal case involving military personnel on active service have been transferred from military in which all proceedings are complete to civil jurisdiction for trial.

The charge against Trooper Williams was murder. He had been charged and had the charge dismissed by his commanding officer without the independent prosecutor, the Army Prosecuting Authority considering the allegation. As a result of the charge being dismissed the provisions of the Army Act 1955 Section 134 (1) precluded him being tried by a court martial for either murder or manslaughter. As a result the Army Prosecuting Authority could not consider the allegation.

However in accordance with the Army Act 1955 Section 33(1) as Trooper Williams had not been tried for an offence by a court martial, not had an offence committed by him taken into consideration by a court martial in sentencing him nor had the charge dealt with summarily by his commanding officer, a civil court could try him. The case was therefore transferred to the civilian jurisdiction so that the Crown Prosecution Service as an independent prosecutor could consider the allegation.

Defence Logistics Savings

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will break down the £2.8 billion of savings in defence logistics by area where savings will be made; and where the savings will be reinvested. [29224]

Mr. Ingram: The £2.8 billion refers to savings from all the programmes contributing towards the Department's Spending Review 2004 efficiency target, not just to savings in the logistics function. A breakdown of how the Department intends to achieve this target can be found in the MOD Efficiency Technical Note www.mod.uk/issues/finance/efficiency.htm, which was published on the Department's website last October. These figures have subsequently been refined and an updated version of the Note will be published at the end of this month.

All savings will be re-invested in the Defence budget and will help fund the improvements in military capability set out in last year's White Paper on Future Capabilities.

Distinguished Service Order

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers awarded the Distinguished Service Order since 1980 have had it withdrawn subsequently following a court martial or conviction in a civilian court. [29401]

Mr. Touhig: Of the 37 DSOs awarded since 1980 none have been withdrawn.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many requests he has received to disclose information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and what the average time taken to make a decision on the disclosures has been. [28351]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence had received a total of 2,882 requests to disclose information under the Freedom of Information Act up to 30 June, the second quarter of 2005. We do not collect data on the average time taken to make a decision on disclosure and could provide this information only at disproportionate cost. However, during the second quarter, 80 per cent. of requests for information were answered within the 20-day deadline and 83 per cent. within the 20-day deadline or with a permitted extension. The Department for Constitutional Affairs publish these statistics on their website and will publish information for the third quarter in mid-December.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the 10 highest paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27433]

Mr. Touhig: Details of the 10 highest paid civilian employees within the Ministry of Defence are as follows:

Position	*Pay band*	*Bonus*
Permanent Secretary 2nd PUS Chief Defence Procurement Chief Scientific Adviser	Within the Permanent Secretaries' pay range of £130,350 to £264,250	Potential to earn up to 15 per cent. of salary dependent on performance
Head Defence Export Services[1] Personnel Director Deputy Chief Executive of the Defence Procurement Agency Deputy Chief of Defence Logistics	Within SCS Pay Band 3 range of £93,139 to £198,197	Potential to earn bonuses up to £12,500 in 2005 pay round, subject to relative assessment and quota
Chief Executive Army Base Repair Organisation Chief Executive Defence Aviation Repair Agency	Both fixed term appointments—salaries are within Pay Band 2 range of £75,606 to £159,659	Potential to earn up to 10 per cent. of salary depending on performance

[1] Additional funding provided by defence industry to make salary commensurate with equivalent level post in the private sector. Has potential to earn up to 10 per cent. of salary depending on performance.

Information on the salaries and other benefits of the Defence Management Board, which includes senior military appointments, is contained in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05 (HC 464).

HMS Sheffield

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will publish the contents of the typed manuscripts of evidence produced by the Board of Inquiry into the sinking of HMS Sheffield; [28338]

(2) which individuals were called to give evidence to the Board of Inquiry into the sinking of HMS Sheffield; [28341]

(3) who were the *(a)* members and *(b)* stenographer of the Board of Inquiry into the sinking of HMS Sheffield; [28342]

(4) what instructions were given to the former Commander-in-Chief, Lord Fieldhouse of Gosport, by *(a)* the First Sea Lord, *(b)* the Admiralty Board and *(c)* the Cabinet Office with regard to convening court martial proceedings relating to the loss of HMS Sheffield. [28343]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my letter to him reference D/MSU/2/5/1 dated 7 April 2005, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. I will write to the hon. Member shortly with a progress report on the departmental review that I commissioned to consider what information can be made publicly available concerning the investigation into the loss of HMS Sheffield during the Falklands conflict.

Iraq

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress made in training and equipping units and individuals of the Iraqi Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior in Multinational Division South East Iraq. [23042]

John Reid: The coalition-wide effort to train and equip the Iraqi security forces (ISF) to conduct self-sufficient security operations, border enforcement, and law and order, has, to date, trained more than 206,000 Iraqis nationally, including almost all the Iraqi Army based in MND(SE), and 62 per cent. of the Iraqi Police Service in the United Kingdom area of operations. Coalition funds have procured various vehicles, weapons, airport x-ray machines, communications equipment and infrastructure improvements. The most recent part of a continuing UK programme of assistance to the ISF will see a further £15.5 million of vehicles, communications equipment and infrastructure improvements provided to enhance this capability in MND(SE).

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what reports he has received of Mujahideen-e-Khalq offices or safe-houses being operated in Basra; [29620]

(2) what reports he has received of the continued presence of members or former members of the Mujahideen-e-Khalq at *(a)* Camp Habib near Basra and *(b)* (i) Camp Homayun and (ii) Camp Mujarmi near Amarah in Iraq. [29619]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* There is some reporting, but no evidence, of active Mujaheddin-e-Khalq in Basrah. We have received no reports of the continued presence of former Mujaheddin-e-Khalq members in these or any other Iraqi camps.

Kandahar Airport

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what improvements are being made to Kandahar airport; and what additional air capability this will enable. [29610]

Mr. Ingram: The runways, taxiways and aircraft parking areas at Kandahar airfield are currently in a poor state of repair and are thus being renovated. On completion, more aircraft types will be able to operate from the airfield than is now the case.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29578]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence does not record expenditure on external media relations in the form requested, and this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability Project

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a commitment has been made that all Royal Navy ships under the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project will be built in the UK. [26022]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 551W, to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram).

Military Police

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what independent *(a)* inspection and *(b)* supervision is undertaken of investigations by military police; and if he will make a statement. [29566]

Mr. Ingram: The service police have an internal supervision and inspection regime. All serious inquiries are supervised by trained crime managers and, in appropriate cases, a Home Office-trained senior investigating officer. The progress of such cases is also monitored by respective Provost Marshal staff and, in the case of the Royal Military Police, the Office of Standards Casework (Army).

An internal inspection system also exists which includes peer review and formal bi-annual technical inspections. In addition, the civilian police have carried out 'cold case' reviews and peer reviews on individual cases. The service police are also inspected annually by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners and the Information Services Commissioner.

We are also currently discussing with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary the possibility of some form of independent inspection of the service police, akin to that currently undertaken on the Ministry of Defence police and Home Office police forces.

Northern Ireland (Past Operations Review)

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the plans for reviewing past operations carried out by HM Armed Forces in Northern Ireland; whether the Police Service of Northern Ireland will be involved in the review; whether the Royal Military Police will play a role in the review; and what rights will be afforded to *(a)* serving and *(b)* former members of the armed forces who are subject to the review. [26995]

Mr. Ingram: The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is reviewing more than 2,000 unresolved deaths from the troubles. More than 300 of those deaths have been attributed to the security forces by the PSNI.

The Royal Military Police (RMP) is providing information to the PSNI to support the review. The Ministry of Defence will provide whatever assistance is appropriate for serving and former members of the armed forces who are required to assist the PSNI.

Nuclear Decommissioning

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the Government's projected liabilities for nuclear decommissioning are classified as off balance sheet. [28359]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) assumed responsibility for the decommissioning and clean up of the UK's civil nuclear legacy on 1 April 2005. The NDA's draft strategy estimates the civil nuclear liability at about £56 billion. This is based on each of the NDA's sites' Life Cycle Baselines for 2004—these set out the scope, schedule, and cost of work over their lifetime. The NDA have examined the liabilities and have concluded that none are classed as 'off balance sheet'. The NDA's accounts for 2005–06 will ensure transparency in respect of all their activities.

Nuclear Deterrent

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what indications he has received from the United States Department of Defense of the time scale in which Trident missiles will continue to be manufactured. [25058]

John Reid *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* It is not Ministry of Defence policy to release details about the manufacture of Trident missiles, including discussions with other Governments, as this could prejudice national security and international relations.

Radar Altimeter Hold

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the documentation covering the clearance of the Radar altimeter hold, together with any documented restrictions, for use on the HC1 and HC2 Chinook helicopters. [25492]

Mr. Touhig: I will place a copy of the trials report on the modified Chinook HC1 radar altimeter hold produced by the MOD(PE) Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment (now QinetiQ) in December 1985 in the Library of the House. The radar altimeter on the Chinook HC2 is identical to that of the modified Chinook HC1 and therefore the results of trials on the HC1 were read across to the HC2.

RAF Facilities (Scotland)

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the economic impact of *(a)* proposed closures and *(b)* reductions in provision at RAF facilities in Scotland, broken down by each RAF station affected. [27373]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is funded by the tax payer to meet Defence needs.

We are always willing to work with the Scottish Executive and relevant local authorities to consider any measures within the Defence remit that might assist the local community where decisions have local impact.

RAF Projects

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on the *(a)* F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, *(b)* Hawk 128, *(c)* Airbus A330 and *(d)* Typhoon Project; and what the estimated costs were (i) at the beginning of the project and (ii) at the most recent available date. [27624]

Mr. Ingram: We are negotiating the Joint Strike Fighter memorandum of understanding for the co-operative production, support and follow on development phase and expect to conclude these negotiations next year.

The Hawk 128 design and development contract was placed in December 2004. Negotiations with BAE Systems regarding a production contract are ongoing.

Final negotiations on the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) project are ongoing with AirTanker Ltd. on a 27-year contract for a public finance initiative service based upon Airbus A330 aircraft.

19 Typhoon production aircraft have been delivered to the RAF and over 1,900 in-service sorties have been flown. The aircraft are now engaged in pilot training and operational evaluation to enable operational deployment during the second half of this decade.

The estimated costs for these projects at (i) the beginning of the project and (ii) the most recent available data (MPR04):

£ million

	(i) Beginning of project	*(ii) Most recent available data*
Joint Strike Fighter (demonstration phase only)	2,236	2,573
Hawk 128	Up to 722	Up to 722
FSTA	Up to 13,900	Up to 13,100
Typhoon	16,671	19,014

Royal Marine Patrol Boats

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Royal Marine patrol boats held by Iran. [30343]

Mr. Ingram: Through diplomatic channels we have raised the return of the boats with the Iranian authorities on numerous occasions, at both ministerial and senior official level, in Tehran and London. We continue to press for their return.

Royal Ordnance Factory (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many meetings the Minister of State has had with *(a)* Royal Ordnance and *(b)* the Transport and General Workers Union to discuss the proposed closure of the Royal Ordnance factory at Chorley. [28010]

Mr. Ingram: None. Closure of BAEs Chorley is a matter forBAEs.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the potential military use of an airport on St. Helena by *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the US; what representations he has received on this matter from the US authorities; and if he will make a statement. [29430]

Mr. Ingram: There has been no assessment made of the potential military use of an airport on St. Helena by the UK or the US. No representations have been received by the UK Government from the US authorities on this matter.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29124]

Mr. Touhig: The following table gives details of the number of Ministry of Defence civilian employees dismissed in each of the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Civilian employee dismissals between 2000–01 and 2004–05

Financial year	*Headcount*
2000–01	160
2001–02	160
2002–03	150
2003–04	150
2004–05	190

Note:
This table uses the revised definition of civilian personnel (www.dasa.mod.uk). But auxiliary and locally engaged civilian staff for whom no information on civilian dismissals is available.

Temporary Fire-fighting Duties

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost has been of using British troops for temporary fire-fighting duties in each of the last 10 years. [27616]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has provided military assistance in the form of temporary fire-fighting duties on 16 occasions during the last 10 years. In certain cases no strikes took place and MOD incurred costs for contingency planning and preparation only; these are marked with an asterisk. Additional costs are normally recovered from the requesting Department.

£

Fire authority	*Dates*	*Approximate costs including VAT invoiced centrally by MOD*
Merseyside	1995–96	1,200,000
Essex	1996	*12,000
Derbyshire	1996	145,000
Essex	1997	65,000
Greater Manchester	1997	*3,000
London	1998	*10,000
Surrey	1998	*1,000
Essex	1998	1,772,000
West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester	1999	*175
Northern Ireland	2000	*100

£

Fire authority	Dates	Approximate costs including VAT invoiced centrally by MOD
Merseyside	2001	660,000
Cleveland	2002	*5,000
National	2002–03	88,000,000
National	2004	*707,000
Suffolk	2005	[1]—
West Midlands	2005	[1]—

[1] Costs not yet available.

Territorial Army

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the review of the Territorial Army to report. [29513]

Mr. Touhig: I expect to receive a report on the review of the Territorial Army before the end of the year.

Trident

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the process will be leading to a decision on the replacement of Trident; and in what ways he expects Parliament to be involved. [29591]

John Reid: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 619W, to the Member for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Mr. Moore).

Warrior Armoured Vehicle

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the UK's Warrior armoured vehicle fleet are unavailable for active service. [29225]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 794 Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicles in the Departmental fleet. As at 16 November 2005 164 of these are classed as not immediately available. However, 115 of these vehicles are undergoing only minor repair and they would be made available should the operational situation require it. The remaining 49 vehicles are those programmed for routine maintenance or requiring in depth repair and in this respect are classed as not being available for active service.

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1264W, on warships, what services are being provided by Swan Hunter to BAE Systems for £62 million in support of the two Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels being built; and if he will list the major items of lead yard equipment and services. [28333]

Mr. Ingram: Swan Hunter, as the Lead Yard Supplier of services and equipment provide BAE Systems with information for: Pricing and Planning; Design and Build; Trials, Test and Setting to work; Jigs and Tools; Acceptance and Approvals; Support Documentation. The company also provides Design, Technical and Management Services, and Material Ordering and Supply. The greater part of the cost is for many items of equipment.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1264W, on warships, how much of the £11 million for initial spares provisioning for the four Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels is to be paid to Swan Hunter; and what the schedule for such payments is. [28334]

Mr. Ingram: Swan Hunter is contractually responsible for the provision of all initial spares for the four Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels. Consequently all payments are made to the company upon delivery of each batch received, for which the aggregated contract value is £11 million. The majority of which have now been paid.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1264W, on warships, when he expects discussions with Swan Hunter and BAE Systems over further cost increases to the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) contract to be completed; and when he expects to be able to publish details of those further cost increases. [28336]

Mr. Ingram: Discussions with both companies are continuing with an aim to concluding them as soon as possible. I will be in a position to make a statement when they are completed.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1264W, on warships, when the decision was taken to make payments to Swan Hunter of £62 million in relation to BAE Systems' ships; and when these payments were made. [28337]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence agreed contract amendments with Swan Hunter in May 2001 and June 2001, for the provision of Lead Yard Services to support the build of a further two Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) vessels. A further contract amendment was agreed with the company in March 2002, for the provision of Lead Yard Equipment. Payments have been made on a regular basis using the milestone payment scheme.

Widescreen Televisions

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many widescreen televisions have been purchased by his Department for use in Whitehall Headquarters in each of the last five years; and at what cost in each year. [21097]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, as part of the Ministry of Defence Head Office building refurbishment, five widescreen televisions were purchased in financial year 2001–02 at a total cost of £12,500, and 134 at a total cost of £348,000 in financial year 2003–04.

TREASURY

Capital Gains Tax Relief (Retired Tenants)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent consideration has been given to proposals to use capital gains tax relief to encourage landlords to offer alternative accommodation to their retiring farm tenants. [29732]

Dawn Primarolo: The whole tax system, including CGT, is kept under review by the Government.

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27406]

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29091]

John Healey: The Treasury does not record centrally numbers of consultants. For the cost of consultants, I refer to the answers given to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 281W, and to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) on 25 March 2002, *Official Report*, column 733W. Details of the individual projects conducted are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The number and cost of special advisers employed by the Government is reported annually by the Prime Minister, most recently on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 160WS.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27374]

John Healey: HM Treasury's only immovable assets are:

1. the land and building at 1 Horse Guards Road
2. surplus freehold property at Honeypot Lane, Stanmore (OGC)
3. freehold premises at Thistle Street, Edinburgh (OGC)
4. leasehold improvements to premises at Philpot Lane (DMO)

The 10 most valuable movable assets are:

1. Records Management system (Jigsaw)
2. Government Financial Management system (Coins)
3. HM Treasury internal accounts production system (Abacus)
4. Market risk system (DMO)
5. Exchequer Funds and Accounts treasury accounting system (Tripp)
6. Silver ink stand (1 of set of 3)
7. Silver ink stand (1 of set of 3)
8. Silver ink stand (1 of set of 3)
9. E-learning database
10. Cashflow forecasting software (DMO)

The Treasury's silver is either on display at 10 Downing street, the Cabinet Office, or stored for safekeeping at the Bank of England.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the 10 highest paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27438]

John Healey: Details on salaries for Treasury employees are set out in the Treasury's Resource Accounts 2004–05, copies of which are available in the Library or accessible via the Treasury's public website: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/3A6/1E/resource_accounts_2004–5.pdf

The Treasury uses contractors from time to time but they are not members of the staff of the Department.

Departmental Underspending

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value was of public underspending by each Government Department in financial year *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [29397]

Mr. Des Browne: Provisional outturn against departmental expenditure limits in 2003–04 and 2004–05 is published in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (PEOWP) for the relevant years (Cm. 6293 and Cm. 6639 respectively), copies of which have been laid before the House and placed in the Library. Changes between provisional and final outturn in 2003–04 have been reflected in the end year flexibility amounts presented in PEOWP 2004–05.

Direct Mail Contracts

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05 and what the value was in each case. [27681]

John Healey: None.

ECOFIN Meeting

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what main agenda items are to be discussed at the ECOFIN meeting on 24 November; and whether they will include the United Kingdom's EU budget rebate. [30565]

John Healey: There are three main agenda items for ECOFIN on 24 November. First, the Court of Auditors will present the Annual Report for 2004; second the council will consider Preliminary Draft Amending Budget No. 8 for 2005; and third the council will conclude its second reading of the Draft Budget for 2006. The UK abatement is not on the agenda.

EU Budget

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the Government's key objectives are in the negotiations regarding the UK rebate from the EU budget; and if he will make a statement. [30562]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's statement to the House on 20 June 2005.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the UK's VAT contribution to the EU Budget was in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005; and what he expects it to be in 2006. [30563]

John Healey: The UK's VAT-based contributions to the EC Budget in the years 2003–04 and 2004–05, and the latest estimates of these for 2005–06 and 2006–07, are as follows:

	£ billion
2003–04	2.6
2004–05	1.9
2005–06	1.9
2006–07	2.0

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been saved to UK public funds as a result of the UK rebate from the EU budget since 1984. [30564]

John Healey: From 1985–86, when the UK abatement came into effect, to the end of 2004–05, the value totalled £44.2 billion.

Excess Winter Deaths

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many excess winter deaths there were in London, broken down by each London borough, in each of the last five years. [29555]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 21 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many excess winter deaths there were in London, broken down by each London Borough, in each of the last five years. (29555)

The latest available figures on excess winter deaths (the excess number of deaths each winter compared to the average during other months of the year) for local authorities are for 2003/4. Figures for London and its constituent boroughs are given in the attached table.

Excess winter deaths[1] for London and London boroughs[2], 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	1999–2000		2000–01		2001–02		2002–03		2003–04	
	EWD	EWD Index[3]	EWD	EWD Index[3]	EWD	EWD Index[3]	EWD	EWD Index[3]	EWD	EWD Index[3]
London	5,880	31.4	2,780	15.0	2,750	15.1	2,810	15.5	2,030	11.3
City of London	10	93.1	10	52.4	0	15.4	0	-5.9	-10	-27.8
Barking and Dagenham	200	38.3	120	22.4	90	17.1	100	18.1	90	17.0
Barnet	290	30.8	60	6.0	240	29.1	130	15.6	110	13.1
Bexley	190	29.3	140	21.3	10	0.9	150	22.8	70	10.8
Brent	180	33.1	70	11.8	70	13.2	70	11.4	100	19.9
Bromley	260	28.3	190	21.5	50	5.2	150	16.8	120	13.2
Camden	120	23.4	70	15.2	50	9.6	60	14.1	70	15.0
Croydon	320	37.4	160	19.5	190	22.5	100	11.7	100	11.3
Ealing	210	27.9	50	6.5	120	17.6	120	17.3	70	10.5
Enfield	260	33.9	40	4.7	120	16.2	180	24.0	70	9.0
Greenwich	190	30.3	110	16.8	60	9.7	70	11.7	70	11.6
Hackney	120	26.3	60	15.2	40	10.6	90	21.7	0	0.2
Hammersmith and Fulham	120	33.0	80	24.0	60	18.6	100	29.4	0	0.9
Haringey	100	21.1	50	9.8	70	15.6	110	23.5	60	12.6
Harrow	150	27.5	100	20.1	80	16.0	60	10.8	80	14.7
Havering	290	39.4	50	7.1	150	19.9	180	22.8	170	23.2
Hillingdon	240	36.9	110	16.9	120	18.9	100	14.8	70	10.7
Hounslow	180	33.4	100	19.5	110	19.8	80	14.8	60	11.5
Islington	80	17.4	20	5.1	70	17.4	40	9.4	40	10.2
Kensington and Chelsea	80	22.5	30	10.2	40	11.3	40	14.5	50	16.8
Kingston upon Thames	150	38.8	70	15.0	110	27.8	40	10.0	40	8.8
Lambeth	180	29.9	80	12.6	30	4.4	90	16.8	70	12.7
Lewisham	210	29.7	120	18.5	110	17.8	140	22.6	40	6.2
Merton	140	29.7	90	18.7	20	4.8	60	14.3	40	8.1
Newham	280	53.6	110	21.4	100	18.9	100	20.1	40	8.5
Redbridge	220	35.3	80	11.4	140	21.4	60	8.9	80	11.6
Richmond upon Thames	160	32.2	20	4.9	60	14.0	100	22.5	70	15.6
Southwark	210	36.7	110	18.1	60	11.1	40	7.7	50	8.0
Sutton	150	27.0	110	20.3	80	15.5	10	2.2	50	10.1
Tower Hamlets	110	25.0	80	19.8	50	10.4	30	6.1	10	2.8
Waltham Forest	190	31.1	120	19.2	60	10.1	100	15.9	30	6.0
Wandsworth	180	27.6	90	13.9	110	17.3	80	12.9	60	10.4
Westminster	130	29.3	100	22.8	70	16.5	40	10.4	60	13.3

[1] Excess winter deaths (EWD) are defined by the Office for National Statistics as the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter months (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the preceding four months (August to November) and the following four months (April to July). Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

[2] The figures provided relate to residents of these areas.

[3] The excess winter deaths index is calculated as the excess number of winter deaths divided by the average number of non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.

Financial Ombudsman Service

Justine Greening: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what percentage of complaints submitted to the Financial Ombudsman Service resolved *(a)* after investigation by an adjudicator and *(b)* by final decision of an ombudsman the complaint was (i) found to be outside the FOS jurisdiction, (ii) withdrawn by the customer, (iii) not treated fairly by the firm concerned, (iv) treated fairly by the firm concerned, (v) treated generally fairly but the firm had agreed a goodwill payment and (vi) been subject to an offer from the firm but the FOS negotiated an improved amount, broken down by stage at which the complaint was resolved. [29875]

John Healey: In the year ending 31 March 2005, the Financial Ombudsman Service received 110,963 cases and resolved 90,908 cases.

The following table provides a breakdown of the outcome of cases in the categories asked for.

Cases to year ended 31 March 2005

	Percentage of cases resolved by an adjudicator	*Percentage of cases resolved by an ombudsman*
Cases found to be outside jurisdiction	9	11
Cases withdrawn by the customer	5	1
Cases where the customer had not been treated fairly by the firm concerned	36	32
Cases where the customer had been treated fairly by the firm concerned	45	48
Cases where the customer had been treated fairly but the firm concerned had agreed a goodwill payment	2	2
Cases where the customer had received an offer from the firm concerned but the FOS negotiated an improved settlement	3	6

Government Balance Sheets

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what pension fund deficits of former nationalised industries are on the Government Balance Sheet. [27042]

Mr. Des Browne: Government Departments report all assets and liabilities in an open and transparent way in accordance with independently set accounting standards, which are based on those used in the private sector, and are subject to independent audit. Any government liabilities in respect of private sector pension funds are shown in individual departmental accounts but data is not held centrally on this.

HM Revenue and Customs

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether HM Revenue and Customs is proposing to change the facilities which they offer to taxpayers who call at their inquiry offices; [29827]

(2) if HM Revenue and Customs will take steps to ensure that any taxpayer who is disabled is always able to meet staff face-to-face when attending an inquiry office. [29828]

Dawn Primarolo: There are no proposals to change the facilities offered at inquiry centres.

HMRC will continue to offer a face to face service to those who need it. All inquiry centres are disability discrimination compliant and have a range of special services including induction loops and crystal listening devices for those who are hard of hearing.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what public consultations his Department has undertaken in the last five years on changes to services provided to taxpayers who attend inquiry offices. [30538]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC has undertaken no such public consultations in the last five years. No changes have been made in that period to the services provided in inquiry centres other than to extend those services to new products (such as tax credits).

Ministerial Travel

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the cost was to public funds of his return from Israel on 9 November; [29104]

(2) what was the total cost of his two visits to Israel in the week beginning 7 November. [29105]

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the additional cost was to public funds of his return from Israel on 9 November 2005. [30170]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave on 15 November 2005.

National Minimum Wage

Margaret Moran: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies in Luton have been *(a)* fined and *(b)* forced to cease trading for non-compliance with the national minimum wage since it was introduced. [30637]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Near Cash Resources

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the maximum amount of near cash resources is that *(a)* Government Departments as a whole and *(b)* each Government Department can use in 2005–06 drawn from public underspending in financial year 2004–05. [29396]

Mr. Des Browne: The amount Departments can draw-down and use from underspending in previous years, known as end year flexibility (EYF), is not calculated on the basis of underspending in 2004–05 only but on

cumulative underspends since the EYF scheme began. Resource EYF stocks carried into 2005–06 by Departments and in total were published in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (PEOWP) 2004–05 (Cm. 6639), copies of which were laid before the House and placed in the Library. Departmental drawdown of end-year flexibility entitlement is scrutinised by HM Treasury for tautness and realism and resulting budgetary limits are agreed and published in supplementary estimates in November and February.

PAC Report (Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster)

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when he expects to reply to the Public Accounts Committee Report, "The Accounts of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster", published on 28 July; [30088]

(2) what assessment he has made of the Public Accounts Committee Report, "The Accounts of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster", which was published on 28 July; and if he will seek to vary the method of accountability which applies to the Duchies. [30165]

John Healey: The Treasury Minute dated 7 November 2005 on the Nineteenth Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, Session 2004–05 (Cm 6682), gave the Government's response to the recommendations made direct to HM Treasury. The opportunity was also taken to publish the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster's responses to the recommendations made direct to them, within the same document as the Treasury Minute.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases where tax credit overpayments have been disputed *(a)* they have been written off, *(b)* additional tax credits have been awarded to deal with hardship and *(c)* have claimants in receipt of additional tax credits due to hardship, also (i) disputed their overpayment and (ii) had it written off in (A) 2003–04, (B) 2004–05 and (C) 2005–06 to date. [23679]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) wrote off around 150,000 disputed overpayment requests up to 30 September 2005.

For numbers of additional tax credits payments I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my right hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 331W. HMRC does not hold information on the number of additional tax credits payments made to claimants who have disputed an overpayment or subsequently go on to dispute an overpayment.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether new members of staff in tax credit call centres have given advice to helpline callers before beginning training. [25247]

Dawn Primarolo: All new members of staff in the tax credit call centres receive the required training before giving advice to helpline callers. This training covers information on tax credits, relating to eligibility, entitlement, claiming and payment. In addition the training covers use of the computer system used within tax credits and also teaches them call handling skills/techniques. No adviser is able to give advice to a member of the public until this training has been completed.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will allow overpayments through the tax credit system to be repaid to the Exchequer in one lump sum rather than in instalments. [29159]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer to the reply to the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1103–04W.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will recommence interrupted payments in respect of tax credit case no. JA 24 43 02 C (2005/09 012378); and if he will cease sending letters demanding repayment of sums allegedly overpaid. [29315]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 November 2005]*: HM Revenue and Customs is statutorily debarred from disclosing information relating to the tax credits affairs of individuals. I have asked the Tax Credit Office to write to the hon. Gentleman about his constituent's case.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many awards of tax credits have been wrongly made to people subject to immigration control in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and what the estimated value is of these overpayments. [29707]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available except at disproportionate costs.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many tax credit cases from 2003–04 an overpayment was identified where there was no ongoing award. [30007]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested can be found in table 2 of 'Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics—Supplement on Payments in 2003–04'. The publication can be found on the HMRC website from the following link: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-quarterly-stats.htm.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many child tax credit awards ended in 2003–04 because *(a)* a couple split up and the joint award ended and *(b)* a household went from being a lone parent to a couple household. [30010]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available and can be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many working tax credit overpayments have resulted in weekly repayments in excess of £50 in Redcar and Cleveland in the last 12 months. [30430]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit underpayments resulted from an error in which a child or children were no longer shown on an award notice. [30679]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Tsunami Appeal

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what tax arrangements were made by the Treasury regarding the proceeds of the Tsunami appeal in the UK. [29981]

Dawn Primarolo: Charities raising money for the Tsunami benefit from the same tax reliefs available to all UK charities.

Vehicle Taxation

Tom Brake: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of changing the system of taxation of vehicles at point of sale to promote the use of fuel-efficient vehicles. [28239]

John Healey: The Chancellor keeps all taxation policy under review giving consideration to all relevant economic, social and environmental factors in the context of the Budget process.

World GDP

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what forecasts he has made of the proportionate share of world gross domestic product in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2025 and *(c)* 2050 which can be expected to be won by (i) the EU, (ii) the US, (iii) China and (iv) India. [30496]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Treasury does not forecast shares of world GDP. However, HMT published estimated shares of world GDP (at purchasing power parity) for selected countries in 2015, in the paper "Long term economic challenges and opportunities for the UK", which accompanied the 2004 pre-Budget report (see chart 3.2, p23).

Updated information is set out in the following table. HMT estimates do not extend beyond 2015, nor do they provide a figure for the EU.

World GDP shares—percentage (in purchasing power parity)

Country	*2004*	*2010*[1]
US	20.9	20.0
China	13.2	16.5
India	5.9	6.9

[1] Estimates.

Note:

These estimates are subject to considerable uncertainties and do not constitute formal HMT forecasts.

Source:

IMF, Consensus forecasts, HMT

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money was disbursed to Afghan farmers as compensation for the destruction of poppies in 2003; and how much remains to be paid. [28208]

Dr. Howells: In 2003, the Afghan Transitional Authority ran a non-compensated eradication programme through the provincial governors. No compensation, therefore, was disbursed to Afghan farmers during this year.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the UK Government's attempts to tackle poppy production in the Nangarhar area of Afghanistan. [28209]

Dr. Howells: The UK, as lead nation on counter narcotics (CN), remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive 2005 CN Implementation Plan and in updating their National Drug Control Strategy. We continue to work with the Afghan Government and others to increase activity in all areas of their strategy. As well as co-ordinating the activity of international partners, we are providing substantial financial and practical support—more than £270 million over the next three years. I refer to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 235W, on the counter narcotics programme in Afghanistan which includes support to Nangarhar.

In August, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) announced provisional cultivation figures for 2004–05 from their annual poppy survey, which showed that cultivation had dropped by 21 per cent. to 104,000 hectares in Afghanistan. Nangarhar saw the greatest decrease, with opium poppy cultivation dropping by 96 per cent. to 1,093 hectares. Success can be partly attributed to an effective Government of Afghanistan communications campaign in late 2004–05, which we supported, alongside Governor-led eradication initiatives and a market adjustment to high levels of cultivation in 2004. UNODC are due to publish their final report in the next few weeks, but these figures are unlikely to change.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many countries are being invited to the forthcoming London conference on the future of Afghanistan; and whether Iran is included. [29601]

Dr. Howells: While the conference has not yet been formally announced, planning is now under way. The finalised invitation list will closely follow that for the Berlin Conference in 2004. Iran will be invited.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what grounds candidates were disqualified from standing in the recent Afghan elections; and if he will make a statement. [29602]

Dr. Howells: A full list of disqualified candidates, with reasons, is available on the Electoral Complaints Commission website at www.ecc.org.af.

Ambassadors (Honours)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many serving United Kingdom ambassadors have *(a)* received and *(b)* not received honours. [29722]

Mr. Straw: Of the current 147 ambassadors (which includes heads of delegation/permanent representatives to international organisations who hold the personal rank of ambassador) and high commissioners, 58 have received honours during their careers and 89 have not.

Arms Trade

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the percentage of British *(a)* produced and *(b)* brokered arms whose end users are embargoed. [28911]

Dr. Howells: The Government take the enforcement of UN and other arms embargoes seriously, and is proud of the UK's robust and transparent system of export controls. The UK therefore issues licences for the export or brokering of military goods to destinations and end users covered by an arms embargo only where supply would be consistent with exemptions to the embargo concerned, for example, for humanitarian end-use. We do not issue licenses for destinations where there is a clear risk that exported items might be diverted to embargoed states. Any potential breach of UN and other arms embargoes is investigated thoroughly.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to support an international arms trade treaty. [28912]

Dr. Howells: The Government have been pursuing the initiative for an international Arms Trade Treaty during the UK's presidencies of the G8 and of the EU. At Gleneagles in July, Heads of State of the G8 agreed that the

> "development of international standards in arms transfers . . . would be an important step toward tackling the undesirable proliferation of conventional arms".

On 3 October EU Foreign Ministers added the EU's voice to the growing support for an international treaty to establish common standards for the global trade in conventional arms, and called for the start of a formal negotiation process at the UN at the earliest opportunity. The Government will continue to work to build the broad consensus needed to secure the start to negotiations in the UN.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of a legally binding treaty on marking and tracing small arms. [28913]

Dr. Howells: The Open Ended Working Group that ended in New York on 17 June 2005 reached a consensus on a politically binding document. This is a first and important step in the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons demonstrates acceptance of the principle that such weapons should be marked and traced in an agreed manner. The UK believes that implementation will be more effective if an agreement is legally binding. The UK would welcome further discussion at the June 2006 Review Conference on this issue as well as on transfer controls. We hope that discussions on the establishment of a Group of Government Experts to look at all aspects of illicit brokering, will lead in due course to a new legally binding instrument.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to increase the *(a)* resources and *(b)* capacity available to enforce arms controls. [28914]

Dr. Howells: Advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to the Department of Trade and Industry on the majority of export licence applications is carried out by the 15 member Export Licensing Team (ELT) in Counter Proliferation Department. At the beginning of 2005, the FCO began to centralise the FCO's export licensing work in the ELT, in order to improve efficiency. FCO performance for Standard Individual Export Licences currently exceeds targets (e.g. 93 per cent. of FCO recommendations are made within 10 working days, against a target of 70 per cent.). Audits of recommendations confirm that they are fully consistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. The FCO is continuing to improve processing to ensure that performance for all licence types remains high.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to assert full extra-territorial controls on arms brokering, including small arms. [28915]

Dr. Howells: The Export Control Act (2002) introduced comprehensive controls on the brokering of all equipment on the UK's Military List where any part of the activity takes place in the UK. In addition, where a UN or full-scope EU, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe or UK national arms embargo is in place, these controls extend extra-territorially to UK nationals wherever they are.

The Government continues to believe that, given the very real concerns about conflict of jurisdiction, and over administration and enforcement, extra-territorial controls should only be applied to the most sensitive transfers. The Government believes that, in most cases, multilateral action remains the most effective way to combat the illicit and irresponsible trade in small arms and light weapons. This approach is at the heart of our support for the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, and for a treaty on the international arms trade.

BBC World Service

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the possible impact of cuts to the BBC World Service radio provision upon *(a)* the UK's international standing and reputation and *(b)* the success of British foreign policy. [26988]

Mr. Straw: The BBC World Service (BBCWS) contributes to Britain's international standing and reputation by being the world's best-known and most respected voice in international broadcasting. To maintain its position, BBCWS must continually take into account shifting global priorities, new technologies and changing audience preferences. Failure to do so would inevitably reduce the impact and value for money.

While continuing to provide global services in English, the BBCWS, in response to the Government's Green Paper, has reprioritised its vernacular services to focus on the countries where they can have most impact and where there is the greatest need. It was right to do so. Further reprioritisation will be necessary in the future. The closure of low impact services has released resources for investment in new media services, including the launch of a 12-hour Arabic TV service.

Bulgaria

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the EU's Comprehensive Monitoring Report's findings in relation to the justice system in Bulgaria. [29282]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Commission states in its Comprehensive Monitoring Report of 25 October that Bulgaria should continue with its efforts to reform the pre-trial phase and improve the accountability of the justice system. We support its assessment.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed. [29074]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) assesses the effectiveness of consultant-led projects through defined project management processes based on the Office of Government Commerce good practice. Evaluation of success or otherwise is carried out through review processes both at the end of stages within a project, drawing out lessons learned that can be immediately incorporated into later stages of the same project, and through final evaluation in project evaluation reports and post implementation reviews.

FCO contracts do not include penalty clauses as these are not enforceable in English law. The FCO seeks to reach agreement at the outset on the genuine losses that would be incurred by the FCO in the event of a failure to deliver. These then form the basis of any damages payable to the FCO and are included in the contract as liquidated damages. The FCO also makes wide use of service credit regimes where performance failures lead to pre-agreed reductions in payments to the contractor.

The FCO does not hold a centralised record of projects conducted by consultants that have been assessed as unsuccessful and the sanctions imposed. This information could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for his Department and its agencies. [29075]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office agrees the level of expenses that may be claimed by consultancies through a fully itemised pricing schedule in each contract. This includes travel, travel time, subsistence/expenses, leave and leave relief.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 7 December 2004 regarding the Middle East peace process (acknowledgement reference 1 84476/04). [29148]

Dr. Howells: I apologise for the delay. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will reply to my right hon. Friend shortly.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 9 May 2005 on behalf of a constituent, Carol Parsons, (acknowledgement reference 1 88801/05). [29153]

Ian Pearson: According to Foreign and Commonwealth Office records my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend on 11 May 2005.1 will ensure that a copy of the letter is sent to my right hon. Friend for information.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27781]

Mr. Straw: No contracts have been signed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the financial year 2005–06 to date.

In the financial year 2004–05 one contract was signed with the Central Office of Information. This was for the distribution of EU guides to organisations on the Benefits Agency publicity register (including Citizens Advice Bureaux, doctors surgeries, Post Offices etc). The contract was worth £38,859.68 inclusive of VAT.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23471]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office spent a total of £3,658 on the purchase of works of art in the financial year 2004–05. This was all spent as part of the restoration of the Consulate in Istanbul.

As far as renovation and restoration etc. of works of art is concerned, records of this are not kept centrally.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent activity by his Department's *(a)* Gender

Advisory Group and *(b)* Disability Action Group, with particular reference to official meetings with outside bodies. [27742]

Mr. Straw: The Gender Advisory Group, a group of staff from all grades and departments around the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), chaired by the board champion on gender, Mr. Martin Donnelly, has met three times this year. The meetings have included discussions on a wide range of gender issues, including role models, an internal study on career progression for women, and the FCO nursery. Alison Platt, non-executive member of the FCO board and a member of Opportunity Now's leadership team, attended June's meeting. There have also been targeted meetings for women intending to attend internal assessment and development centres. The group has been consulted about the FCO's targets for women in the senior management structure and feeder grades, and on the streamlining of the FCO's human resources operation. The FCO hosted an Opportunity Now seminar in May and members have attended other gender-related seminars. The group's chair has called on Waqar Azmi, the civil service diversity adviser.

The Disability Action Group, a group of staff from all grades and departments around the FCO, including the board champion on disability, Mr. Dickie Stagg, has met three times this year. The meetings have included discussions on a wide range of disability issues, in particular for staff overseas, support and training for managers of disabled staff, disabled access at overseas posts, accessibility of FCO literature and websites, the FCO's disability policy and disability training. The group has been consulted about the FCO's targets for disabled officers in the senior management structure and feeder grades, and on the streamlining of the FCO's human resources operation. The group completed the Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD) Benchmark for the FCO and members of the group have attended EFD breakfast briefings. A personal development programme, run by Disability Matters, was held for disabled staff in April and May this year. Members of the group have met their counterparts in the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ethiopian Government concerning the recent violence in Ethiopia, with particular reference to relations between the Ethiopian People's Democratic Front and the opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party; and if he will make a statement. [27599]

Ian Pearson: We are gravely concerned about the outbreak of violence in Ethiopia since 1 November which has resulted in a number of deaths and injuries and a large number of detentions, including of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy leadership and civil society and media leaders.

On 6 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) spoke to Prime Minister Meles. This followed action by my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) who summoned the Ethiopian Chargé d'Affaires on 1 November to register our concerns. Our ambassador in Ethiopia has also raised our concerns with both Prime Minister Meles and with the Ethiopian Foreign Minister.

In our capacity as presidency of the European Union, our ambassador to Ethiopia held a press conference in Addis Ababa with the United States ambassador on 6 November, where we called for the Government to restore peace and confidence in the democracy building process by ensuring due process of law and respect for human rights.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of Ethiopia and *(b)* the Government of Eritrea regarding the escalation of tensions along the Ethiopia-Eritrea border. [26989]

Ian Pearson: We are working within the United Nations Security Council to ensure that the matter is urgently addressed. A UN resolution on this issue is currently being discussed. We are also working with European Union (EU) partners to urge the Eritreans to lift the restrictions put on UN helicopter flights and vehicle movements. As EU presidency, our ambassador to Ethiopia also raised this issue with Prime Minister Meles and urged continuing restraint. My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) made this clear to the Eritrean ambassador on 28 July and again on 18 October.

Foreign Decorations

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether a previous decision by the Government to award a campaign service medal or clasp is a relevant factor in decisions taken subsequently to grant or refuse permission for a medal offered by a foreign government in respect of the same campaign to be *(a)* accepted and *(b)* worn. [30620]

Mr. Straw: Yes, I am informed that such decisions have been seen as relevant factors in decisions relating to the subsequent accepting and wearing of non-British awards.

G8 Global Partnership

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 753–54W, on non-proliferation, what assessment he has made of whether instruments being defined for the next Financial Perspective 2007 to 2013 will allow community financing to support projects being implemented through legal and administrative frameworks created by countries participating in the G8 Global Partnership. [28483]

Mr. Straw: We believe that only those measures to support the G8 Global Partnership that fall within Community competence should be financed by Community instruments. This means that not all projects to support the G8 Global Partnership can be funded by Community Instruments. However, there are also proposals on the table for a Joint Action in support of specific Global Partnership projects, to be funded from the Common Foreign and Security Policy budget.

As I said in my answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 753–54W, on non-proliferation, we want to ensure that the overall package agreed for the EU's next Financial Perspective provides sufficient resources to allow the Community to contribute to the EU's non proliferation objectives, including those under the Global Partnership, within an overall budget of no more than 1 per cent. of EU Gross National Income.

Holy See

Mr. Mackay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who has been appointed as the UK's Ambassador to the Holy See; when the announcement was made public; how it was publicised; what the new Ambassador's *(a)* background and *(b)* experience is; and if he will make a statement. [29794]

Mr. Straw: Mr. Francis Campbell has been appointed as the next British Ambassador to the Holy See. The appointment was announced, in the usual way, in an FCO press notice on 15 November 2005. The Permanent Under Secretary also wrote to the Foreign Affairs Committee to inform them of the appointment. I have arranged for copies of the press notice, which includes Mr. Campbell's CV, to be placed in the Library of the House.

Iran

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Iran has imposed restrictions on UK imports; and if he will make a statement. [26996]

Dr. Howells: We have received a number of reports about recent restrictions on the import into Iran of goods of UK origin. The Iranian authorities have not confirmed that restrictions are in place. UK Trade and Investment and the British embassy in Tehran are advising British companies in response to individual inquiries and via their websites. We continue to monitor the situation.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funds from the Development Fund for Iraq are not accounted for. [28404]

Mr. Straw: The Government are not aware that there are any funds from the Development Fund for Iraq unaccounted for. Although the audit of the Development Fund for Iraq's financial management under the Coalition Provisional Authority between May 2003 and June 2004, carried out by the US Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction and the external auditor KPMG, found $8.8 billion of funds to have less than adequate financial controls, the audit did not assert that this money could not be accounted for.

The UK, alongside the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other donors, continues to work with the Iraqi Government to improve accountability and transparency in Iraq's public finances.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Carmarthen, East and Dinefwr (Adam Price) of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 949–50W, on Iraq, if he will place in the Library a copy of the survey to which he refers; and whether he has any plans to fund further such surveys. [26787]

Dr. Howells: A copy of the public opinion survey will be placed in the Library of the House. There are no plans to carry out any further similar surveys.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 174W, on the Iraq-Niger uranium deal, if he will ascertain from Senator Rockefeller's office when the Senator expects his investigation to report; and if he will place the information he receives in the Library. [28820]

Dr. Howells: We have asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation when their investigation will be completed, but they are not yet in a position to give any indication.

Ivory Coast

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the enforcement of the arms embargo imposed upon the Ivory Coast. [27023]

Ian Pearson: The Government's assessment of the effectiveness of the arms embargo on Cote d'Ivoire is based on the reports of the UN group of experts, set up by the UN Security Council to monitor the arms embargo. In its latest report, the group of experts stated that, since the imposition of the arms embargo on Cote d'Ivoire the Government of Cote d'Ivoire has restrained procurement of weapons and munitions. The group found no evidence of recent deliveries of weapons and ammunition to the most prominent militias. However, the group of experts did highlight some cases where the embargo may have been breached. The UN Security Council is now carefully considering these cases. The UK continues, through its membership of the UN Security Council and relevant UN Sanctions Committee, to press for robust enforcement of the UN arms embargo.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of rearranging his flight from Moscow on 9 November; and whether the cost was met by public funds. [28887]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Peter Luff) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1267–68W.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many

employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28979]

Mr. Straw: None.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 753–54W, on non-proliferation, whether he expects the Stability Instrument in the Financial Perspective 2007–13 to enable the financing of programmes that *(a)* provide support to chemical weapon destruction facilities and *(b)* relate to bio-safety. [28458]

Mr. Straw: The current draft of the Stability Instrument under discussion in Brussels does not provide for funding to finance programmes that provide support for chemical weapon destruction facilities or that relate to bio-safety. This instrument is intended to finance assistance to help establish, re-establish or maintain the essential conditions necessary to permit the effective implementation of the European Community's development assistance and co-operation policies and to contribute to the reinforcement of stability, in particular in a situation of crisis or emerging crisis.

Public Service Agreement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which data sources he will use to measure progress against 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 2. [29944]

Mr. Straw: The 2004 Public Service Agreement (PSA) target number 2 covers Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) work on reducing the "risk from international terrorism".

The FCO will use a variety of data sources including the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre's assessments of international terrorist threats and of terrorism trends, networks and capabilities; reporting from our diplomatic posts on trends in other governments' will and capacity to counter terrorism, and their success, or otherwise, in doing so; evaluations of our counter-terrorism capacity-building programmes in priority countries; and reports from government experts on the enhancement of protective security measures which reduce the vulnerability of UK citizens and UK interests overseas.

As with other Government Departments, the FCO publishes an Autumn Performance Report containing progress against our PSA targets. The 2005 report will be published by early December and will be available in the Library of the House. It will contain information on the data sources used to generate performance assessments.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which data sources he will use to measure progress against 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 4. [29945]

Mr. Straw: The 2004 Public Service Agreement (PSA) target number 4 covers Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) work on promoting a "reformed and effective EU", ranging from future financing to the Common Foreign and Security Policy. As this target touches on a wide variety of FCO activity, we draw on many data sources to measure progress across the target.

These sources include: internal judgments made by the FCO and other Departments, based on feedback inter alia from other member states and the EU institutions; the outcome of Council and other EU-level meetings; political reporting from our Diplomatic Posts; and media commentary in the UK and across the rest of Europe. We use the Eurobarometer opinion poll to measure public awareness of the EU.

As with other Government Departments, the FCO publishes an Autumn Performance Report containing progress against our PSA targets. The 2005 report will be published by early December and will be available in the Library of the House. It will contain information on the data sources used to generate performance assessments.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which data sources he will use to measure progress against 2004 public service agreement target number 7. [29946]

Mr. Straw: The 2004 public service agreement (PSA) target number 7 covers Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) work on increasing

> "understanding of and engagement with, Islamic countries and communities",

and promoting political and socio-economic reform.

Our data sources for measuring progress against this target will include Freedom House, EU Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans, World Bank regional studies, United Nations Development Programme—Human Development Reports, Pew Global Attitudes Surveys and other surveys.

As with other Government Departments, the FCO publishes an autumn performance report containing progress against our PSA targets. The 2005 report will be published by early December and will be available in the Library of the House. It will contain information on the data sources used to generate performance assessments.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the 2004 public service agreement target number 9 applies to each year within the target period. [29947]

Mr. Straw: Yes.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which data sources he will use to measure progress against 2004 public service agreement target number 8. [29948]

Mr. Straw: The 2004 public service agreement (PSA) target number 8 covers Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) work on promoting

> "sustainable development, underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights".

Details of the data sources we use to assess performance across this target are contained in the FCO's PSA 'Technical Note'. This document is available on the FCO website. Pages 33 to 36 relate to PSA 8:
http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/KFile/SR04PSATechnicalNote.0.pdf.

Delivery of the PSA is also supported by the Global Opportunities Fund Sustainable Development Programme, which provides £5 million per year for sustainable development and human rights projects in priority countries. Progress is measured individually for each project.

Specific aims, targets and objectives on the issues covered by PSA 8 are set out in our Sustainable Development Strategy and our Strategy on Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance, both available at www.fco.gov.uk.

As with other Government Departments, the FCO publishes an autumn performance report (APR) containing progress against our PSA targets. The 2005 report will be published by early December and will be available in the Library of the House. It will contain information on the data sources used to generate performance assessments.

Recruitment Practices

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in reforming recruitment practices within his Department. [29604]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is constantly striving to improve its recruitment practices. For instance, in order to improve our diversity and bring in expertise from the private sector, we are opening up more senior jobs to open competition. These include the Ambassador to the Holy See, the Director of UKVisas, the Legal Adviser and the Head of Science and Innovation.

In addition, we are streamlining our recruitment processes at administrative, operational and policy entry levels by using the latest on-line application and sifting packages and following a proactive diversity advertising policy.

All of this is considered with the fundamental principle of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, which states that selection for appointment should be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

Russia

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the additional cost was to public funds of his return from Moscow on 9 November. [30168]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Peter Luff) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1267–68.

Senegal

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of Senegal, *(b)* other Governments in Africa and *(c)* his EU counterparts regarding the extradition of Hissene Habre to Belgium. [27029]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1270W. In addition I can confirm that we have not had any discussions concerning the extradition of Hissene Habre with other Governments in Africa. This issue was briefly discussed in the EU Africa Working Group on 12 October 2005.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department has provided to Mr. Andrew Gaudyn, whose daughter was abducted to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [30751]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The British High Commission in Nicosia and Child Abduction Section (CAS) at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been in regular contact with Mr. Gaudyn and will continue to provide appropriate consular assistance. An official from CAS attended a meeting with Mr. Gaudyn's solicitor, the Crown Prosecution Service, Gwent Police and the National Criminal Intelligence Service to discuss the case on 20 October.

US Detention Centres

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have received of detention centres operated by the United States Administration situated in (i) European Union states and (ii) other European states. [28403]

Mr. Straw: None.

CABINET OFFICE

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29086]

Mr. Jim Murphy: All projects in the Department are conducted by senior responsible owners who are civil servants; they may engage consultants to provide advice and assistance with the delivery of a project.

Information about the involvement of consultants in individual projects, and the cost of these, is not held centrally and may not be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs.

The total expenditure on the use of consultants since 2000 is shown in the table.

	£ million
2000–01	10.93
2001–02	16.88
2002–03	13.39
2003–04	15.93
2004–05	12.70

Note:

Figures relating to financial years prior to 2001–02 include Centre for Management and Policy Studies, Regional Co-ordination Unit, Government Car and Despatch Agency and Central Office of Information. Figures from 2002–03 include 'core' Cabinet Office only.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies. [29087]

Mr. Jim Murphy: When engaging consultancies the Department would include, as part of its contract, terms and conditions which would provide for reasonable expenses to be reimbursed against receipts. That, in conjunction with appropriately robust contract management arrangements, ensures that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29122]

Mr. Jim Murphy: All projects in the Department are led by senior responsible owners who are civil servants; they may engage consultants to provide advice and assistance with the delivery of a project.

When engaging consultants the Department would include, as part of the contract, terms and conditions that would provide sanctions should they fail to meet contractual obligations. That, in conjunction with appropriately robust contract management arrangements ensures consultants deliver work within the terms and conditions of their contract. If they were to breach their contract we would exercise our right to invoke our legal rights under the terms and conditions of the contract.

Public Service Agreement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what data sources he will use for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target number 3. [29862]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Data sources for measuring performance against public service agreement (PSA) targets can be found in the technical notes which are in the public domain and are available on the Cabinet Office website at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/service-delivery/2005/index.asp.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Leader of the House (1) what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Office; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case; [29119]

(2) if he will list projects conducted for his Office by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year; [29093]

(3) what steps his Office takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses. [29092]

Mr. Hoon: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons has employed consultants on only one occasion since 2000, and this was successful.

	Details of consultants employed
Date	August 2005
Project	Review of database technical applications
Cost	£3,760
Total costs	£3,760

No provision was made to enable them to claim expenses.

When letting consultancy projects, we follow the principles and practices set out in the Office of Government Commerce's best practice guidance, "Delivering world-class consultancy services in the public sector".

Modernisation

Ben Chapman: To ask the Leader of the House what assessment he has made of the new working hours of the House. [29757]

Mr. Hoon: I have made no formal assessment of the new arrangements.

The new working hours were agreed following a debate on 26 January this year. Given the recent history on this subject, it seems reasonable to allow time for the new hours to be tested. I do not plan to revisit this issue in the immediate future, but I remain open to representations.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

New Churches

26. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will make a statement on the Church Commissioners' policy on encouraging the establishment of churches in new residential areas. [29662]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Church Commissioners do not have a policy on the establishment of churches in new residential areas, an initiative which lies with individual dioceses. They do however make available over £4 million p.a. to support dioceses' mission initiatives.

Zurbaran Paintings

27. **Helen Goodman:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will make a statement on the future of the Zubarán paintings owned by the Commissioners, which hang in Auckland Castle. [29663]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners' Board of Governors recently agreed to retain ownership of the paintings and to re-examine their future, along with the suitability of Auckland Castle, in five years.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money was disbursed to Afghan farmers as compensation for the destruction of poppies in 2003; and how much remains to be paid. [26827]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

In 2003, the Afghan Transitional Authority ran a non-compensated eradication programme through the provincial governors. No compensation, therefore, was disbursed to Afghan farmers during this year.

Climate Change

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the implications of climate change for humanitarian response; and if he will make a statement. [20931]

Hilary Benn: Disaster risk reduction is a key part of adaptation to climate change. The UK is working with the international community to help developing countries improve climate information and manage climate risks.

DFID is part of an informal donors' group on climate change called the Vulnerability and Adaptation Resource Group (VARG). Through VARG, DFID has been involved in the production of a paper entitled "Poverty and Climate Change" (2003) which highlighted the growing significance of climate change on development and called for action to manage related risks. We are now working with other donors on a second paper on disaster risk reduction and climate change. This paper will seek to identify links between disaster prevention and climate change adaptation and to highlight any potential conflicts in current approaches.

DFID is also working with the UN, World Bank and developing countries, particularly the most disaster prone, to help them tackle disaster risk more effectively. We plan to publish a policy and implementation plan on our approach to disaster risk reduction later this year. This will include ways in which we aim to integrate climate change adaptation into disaster risk reduction work.

At Gleneagles, G8 Heads invited the World Bank to develop and implement "best practice" guidelines for screening investments in climate sensitive sectors. The aim would be to determine how impacts related to climate change might affect the performance of such investments. For example, investments in long-life infrastructure, such as housing, roads, bridges and industry, could be at increased risk of flooding or hurricanes. G8 Heads further encouraged all major bilateral and multilateral development organisations to follow suit. DFID is working to begin implementation of such arrangements by 2008. This is in line with the Commission for Africa recommendation.

Correspondence

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when his Department will respond to the letter of 24 August 2004 sent by Mrs. Susie Howard with regard to the SAT rural education programme in Honduras (JFS 1353). [23172]

Mr. Thomas: DFID offers its sincere apologies for the delay in responding to the letter from Mrs. Susie Howard.

The letter was addressed to a senior education adviser, but unfortunately at that time he had left that position, having been posted to Thailand.

A DFID official spoke with Mrs. Susie Howard explaining the delay and apologies were offered together with assurances that her letter would be answered by the end of November 2005.

The letter from DFID will respond to the suggestions made by Mrs. Susie Howard regarding the SAT rural programme in Honduras.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many personnel were employed in his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff. [27569]

Hilary Benn: Details of DFID home civil service (HCS) staff numbers are published in Civil Service Statistics which are available in the Library of the House of Commons and on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

For ease of reference, these figures since 1997 are detailed in the following table:

	(a) DFID HCS number
1997	1,000
1998	1,050
1999	1,160
2000	1,210
2001	1,260
2002	1,520
2003	1,600
2004	1,780
2005	1,880

No historical records are available of the number of contractors engaged by the organisation that would enable us to provide the information requested.

In addition to our home civil service personnel, DFID employs staff in country in our overseas offices. Historically we have also employed staff on fixed-term technical co-operation contracts (TCOs), although these arrangements were discontinued in July 2002. The numbers of personnel in each of these categories are as follows:

	Staff appointed in country (SAIC), i.e. locally engaged staff overseas	*Fixed-term contract staff serving on development projects overseas*
1997	330	621
1998	356	537
1999	280	490
2000	404	666
2001	424	575
2002	739	436
2003	874	333
2004	914	182
2005	989	[1]28

[1] Still serving on contracts started before July 2002.

Details of our casual and agency temporary staff numbers are not held centrally within DFID and could be obtained only by incurring a disproportionate cost to the organisation.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29130]

Mr. Thomas: Over the last five years, the number of staff who have been dismissed by DFID, are shown in the table:

Year of dismissal (1 April to 30 March)	*Total*
2000-01	0
2001-02	1
2002-03	7
2003-04	5
2004-05	8
2005-06 (To date)	5

This data includes all dismissals in our Headquarter offices in the UK and our offices overseas, where we employ both UK-based staff and staff appointed in country.

International Monetary Fund/World Bank

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the *(a)* International Monetary Fund and *(b)* World Bank is more transparent and accountable in its operations. [29392]

Hilary Benn: The UK has consistently pushed for improvements in transparency and accountability at both the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Both organisations now make a large proportion of their information public.

In the IMF, all major policy documents, summaries of board discussions and country documents are made publicly available with the consent of the country authorities. The Independent Evaluation Office provides comprehensive independent scrutiny of the IMF's work and we are currently contributing to an external evaluation of its effectiveness.

Nearly all World Bank documents are made public. The World Bank has also established approximately 65 Public Information Centres around the world, which provide the general public with copies of its publications and access to its website.

The UK has consistently pressed the World Bank to publish more information, for example, board minutes, executive directors' statements, and country policy and institutional assessment (CPIA) scores. CPIA scores play a significant role in determining how the World Bank allocates its concessional resources.

Partly as a result of our efforts, a revised World Bank disclosure policy was approved in March 2005. Board minutes will now be made public. All country assistance strategies will be made public as a rule. There will also be a pilot programme of publishing some board documents at the same time as they are sent to the board. In addition, this year, it was agreed that the World Bank would disclose CPIA scores, starting with the 2005 CPIA exercise. We regard these recent moves as significant steps in the right direction. However, we will continue to press for further improvements to transparency and accountability in the World Bank and IMF.

Pakistan

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he is making funds available to charter helicopters in Pakistan to take relief aid to remote communities in Kashmir; and if he will make a statement. [29399]

Hilary Benn: DFID's contributions to the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) includes support for the provision of helicopters to deliver relief supplies and undertake medical evacuations. Two Puma helicopters for the ICRC were transported to Pakistan by the Ministry of Defence from Spain. We have also funded the marginal costs of three British military heavy-lift CH-47 Chinook helicopters that have been carrying out humanitarian assistance flights since 28 October. In addition, DFID has channelled more than £2.2 million through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) for helicopter provision.

On 17 November, the United Nations reported a total of 98 helicopters in operation and another eight due to arrive in the area, though the number of helicopters flying on any one day can vary due to weather conditions and maintenance. It is important that the helicopter operation is maintained while relief needs remain. Therefore, the British Government has been actively urging donors to ensure sufficient funding to maintain the United Nations helicopter fleet and we are also considering further support to UNHAS.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the special advisers in post in his Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29407]

Hilary Benn: Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–162WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development why contractors were appointed in respect of the proposed airport on St. Helena before an environmental impact assessment had been carried out. [29424]

Mr. Thomas: Contractors have not yet been appointed. An independent team is currently in St. Helena, carrying out an environmental impact assessment. Prequalification of potentially suitable contractors for the airport construction is being undertaken in parallel with this work; and a notice seeking capability statements was issued last month in the *Official Journal* of the European Union. The invitation to tender for the airport construction contract will be issued only once the outcome of the environmental impact assessment has been incorporated into the tender documents.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the planning inquiry process followed in respect of the proposed airport on St. Helena. [29425]

Mr. Thomas: The St. Helena Government are fully involved in planning for the airport. A planning application will be submitted in accordance with prevailing local legislation, prior to issue of an invitation to tender for design, construction and operation of the airport. Independent expertise will be provided to assist in reviewing the application.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what statutory controls are in place to protect the environment on St. Helena, with particular reference to *(a)* the feeding ground of the St. Helena firebird and *(b)* the native Giant Earwig; and what steps the Joint Nature Conservancy Council has taken on this issue. [29427]

Mr. Thomas: So far as we know, there is not a bird species known as 'the firebird' in St. Helena. But there is a 'Wirebird' (*Charadrius sanctaehelenae*), that is endemic to the island. It is currently protected under St. Helena's Endangered Species Protection Ordinance 1996 (as revised in 2001) and is specifically listed in the schedule to the ordinance.

The Giant Earwig (*Labidura herculeana*) is believed to be extinct. We understand live specimens were last seen in the late 1960s. Subsequent attempts to find it, including by the Zoological Society of London, have failed. Were it to be rediscovered, it would be eligible for protection under the same ordinance. It is not currently listed in the schedule.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee, although not directly involved in matters relating to these two species, is aware of their conservation status through contacts with Government Departments and the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development why members of the Planning and Development Board on St. Helena have been required to sign the Official Secrets Acts. [29429]

Mr. Thomas: The St. Helena Development Board, which provides policy advice to the St. Helena Executive Council, includes representatives of the island community who are not employed as public servants. Although its work is conducted as openly as possible, with summaries of its discussions made available, the board occasionally considers material which is commercially or otherwise sensitive. All board members, therefore, have been required to make the same commitment to confidentiality as is normally required of public servants.

United States

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on what grounds the US blocked packaged meals donated by the UK for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. [27082]

Hilary Benn: The United Kingdom delivered around 475,000 operational ration packs in response to a specific and urgent request from the United States' authorities following Hurricane Katrina. Some of the packs were distributed to the disaster area but the majority were impounded because they did not comply with US regulations concerning the import of processed meat products from the rest of the world. They also fell foul of a ban on the import of ruminant products from the EU. The UK was not aware that there was a danger of the packs being impounded until after a majority of the ration packs had been sent to the US. Once informed of the problem, the UK stopped the despatch of any further packs from the UK.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to encourage the US authorities to accept British beef when offered as humanitarian aid. [27083]

Hilary Benn: I have not made any representations to the US authorities about accepting British beef when offered as humanitarian aid. The humanitarian circumstances were exceptional and I would not expect the situation to arise again.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Dual Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what research the Electoral Commission has undertaken into the number of electors who have dual registration in each constituency in the UK; and what measures are in place to prevent double voting. [26421]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that it has undertaken no specific research into the number of electors in each constituency in the United Kingdom who are also on the electoral roll in another constituency. However, in the course of its policy review of the electoral registration process in the United Kingdom, the Commission received a number of submissions raising the issue of dual registration. These submissions informed the Commission's recommendations for reform of the registration process, first published in 2003.

Although it is possible to be registered at more than one address, it is an offence for an elector to vote more than once in any particular election, as set out in Section 61 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. Although it may be possible to detect instances of unlawful double voting by comparison of marked registers after the election, in the absence of a national electronic register there are no mechanisms in place specifically designed to prevent such conduct, or unlawful registration in more than one place.

Electoral Commission

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the budget for the Electoral Commission was in each of the past five years; and how many staff were employed in each year. [26410]

Peter Viggers: The estimates provision made in respect of each of the years concerned, and the average full-time equivalent staff employed by the Commission, is set out in the following table.

	Estimates provision (£ million)	*Staff (average full-time equivalent)*
2001–02	7.516	39
2002–03	20.284	102
2003–04	25.708	132
2004–05	38.356	150
2005–06	24.101	[1]155

[1] Estimated.

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission if he will list the main areas of activity of the Electoral Commission in each of the last five years. [26411]

Peter Viggers: The Electoral Commission has advised me that its main areas of activity in each of the last five years have been: the regulation of political party finances; promoting public awareness of our electoral systems; reporting on the conduct of elections; reviewing electoral law and procedures; and advising Government and Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers.

The Commission has also completed a Periodic Electoral Review of local government boundaries in England, having taken over the functions of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in April 2002. It also discharged a range of statutory responsibilities in relation to the regional referendum held in the north-east in November 2004.

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how much the Commission spent on *(a)* salaries, *(b)* publications, *(c)* advertising and *(d)* other major items in each of the past five years. [26417]

Peter Viggers: Details of expenditure on salaries, publications, and advertising in each of the years concerned, supplied by the Electoral Commission, is set out in the following table.

£ million

	Salaries	*Publications*	*Advertising*
2001–02	[1]800	0.443	0.228
2002–03	2.060	0.542	4.721
2003–04	3.270	0.503	4.238
2004–05	4.697	0.412	4.937
2005–06	4.750	0.452	5.328

[1] Estimated

The Electoral Commission has advised me that other major items of expenditure in this period have included: Training for the European Parliamentary elections (2003–04 to 2004–05—£2.52 million); and the north-east regional referendum (2004–05 £4.00 million).

Further detailed information in respect of the years 2001–02 to 2003–04 is available in the Commission's Annual Reports and Accounts. These are available in the Library of the House. The Commission's Report and Accounts for 2004–05 have been laid before the House and will be published shortly.

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the salaries of the board members of the Commission were in each of the past five years. [26418]

Peter Viggers: Information on the emoluments of board members of the Electoral Commission before 2004–05 is given in the Commission's Reports and Accounts for the years in question, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. The Commission's Report and Accounts for 2004–05 have been laid before the House and will be published shortly.

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the expenditure of the Commission was over the past five years. [26419]

Peter Viggers: The outturn expenditure of the Electoral Commission in each of the years concerned is set out in the following table.

Outturn expenditure

	£ million
2001–02	6.066
2002–03	18.160
2003–04	18.635
2004–05	24.824
2005–06	[1]23.974

[1] Estimated

Local Government Databases

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what research the Commission has undertaken on recent changes in the law that allow local authority electoral registration officers to consult local government databases. [28160]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that it has undertaken no specific research into the impact of the changes introduced by the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 that allow local authority electoral registration officers to consult local government databases.

Polling Cards/Postal Ballots

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what advice the Commission gives to local authorities on the timing of the issuing of *(a)* polling cards and *(b)* postal ballots. [26415]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that its guidance urges returning officers to issue poll cards as soon as practicable. This is in line with the law relating to parliamentary elections, which requires returning officers to send poll cards to electors and their proxies as soon as practicable after the election has been called.

The Commission's guidance advises that it is good practice to issue postal votes to all who have applied as soon as practicable after the relevant deadline to allow a maximum amount of time for ballot papers to be dispatched and for the voter to return them. For continuing postal voters, returning officers cannot, by law, despatch postal ballot packs until after the deadline for changes to existing absent vote arrangements, which is currently 11 days before polling day. For people who apply after this time, postal votes are required to be issued as soon as practicable after the application has been granted.

Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission when the Commission last reviewed the guidelines for procedures used by Electoral Registration Officers for individuals who have failed to register; and what system is in place to monitor compliance to these guidelines. [26413]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that it last reviewed its guidance on the conduct of the electoral registration canvass in the summer of 2005. This guidance is advisory, and as such the Commission has no system in place to monitor compliance with it.

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what representations the Commission has received on Electoral Registration Officers using central government databases to improve the electoral registers. [26414]

Peter Viggers: The Commission has informed me that it has received a number of representations on a range of electoral registration issues.

In 2002, the Commission specifically sought views on whether better data-sharing between local and central government databases would help Electoral Registration Officers improve the accuracy of electoral registers. The Commission received 32 representations addressing this issue, from Electoral Registration Officers, political parties and other organisations. While a significant majority supported improved data sharing, some of the specific suggestions made could not be implemented under existing electoral and data protection law.

Research Funding

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what resource allocation the Electoral Commission has made for research into *(a)* under-registration and *(b)* postal vote fraud in each of the last five years. [28159]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that expenditure on dedicated research on registration issues in Great Britain and Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is as set out in the following table:

£

	Great Britain	Northern Ireland
2001–02[2]	—	—
2002–03[1]	—	39,405
2003–04[1]	—	40,185
2004–05[1]	106,750	39,314
2005–06[2]	—	29,500

[1] Actual
[2] Provision

In addition the Commission has regularly conducted research into public opinion about electoral issues generally, including registration and the security of postal voting. The following table sets out the overall expenditure on such public opinion research projects in each of the last five years that have addressed one or both of these subjects:

£

2001–02[1]	60,000
2002–03[1]	89,065
2003–04[1]	346,332
2004–05[1]	343,706
2005–06[2]	218,305

[1] Actual
[2] Provision

In addition to research projects, the Commission invests significant resources in identifying and analysing the scale and frequency of postal voting fraud, through

monitoring electoral petitions and fraud prosecutions and liaison with the police, prosecuting authorities, and Electoral Registration and Returning Officers.

Under-registration/Postal Fraud

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what assessment the Commission has made of the likely impact under-registration may have on the size of the electorates in new constituencies proposed by the Boundaries Commission. [26420]

Peter Viggers: The Commission advises me that it has made no such assessment. Its recently published report "Understanding electoral registration" includes a detailed analysis of the extent and reasons for non-registration in Great Britain.

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what representations the Electoral Commission has received on *(a)* under-registration and *(b)* postal fraud in each of the last five years. [26408]

Peter Viggers: The Electoral Commission has advised me that it has received a number of representations about registration rates and postal voting fraud. In the last five years, it has conducted comprehensive policy reviews of the registration process and the law on postal voting. In both cases, it sought and received the views of a wide range of organisations and individuals on the existing arrangements and possible changes to them.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Licensing Act

11. **Mr. Bone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on levels of crime and disorder. [29645]

James Purnell: The Licensing Act 2003 does not come into effect until 24 November, so the Government cannot yet assess its impact. However, the introduction of effective measures to tackle crime and disorder by licence holders is one of the main features of the new licensing framework. These measures include closed circuit television, door security, and Pubwatch schemes.

19. **Stephen Hammond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 distinguish between sports clubs and commercial pubs; and if she will make a statement. [29653]

James Purnell: The Licensing Act 2003 distinguishes between amateur sports clubs which qualify as members' clubs, and commercial premises including public houses. The former require only Club Premises Certificates for the supply of alcohol. The latter also require personal licences and designated premises supervisors.

Amusement Arcades

12. **Mr. Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's policy on small stakes and low value prizes in amusement arcades. [29646]

Mr. Lammy: The maximum stakes and prizes that will apply to gaming machines in arcades once the Gambling Act 2005 is implemented were published alongside the draft Bill.

Olympic Games

13. **Mark Pritchard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the role of provincial sports training facilities for the 2012 Olympics. [29647]

Tessa Jowell: We expect a number of visiting teams to want to undertake pre-Games training in the UK.

The London Organising Committee, in partnership with the British Olympic Association, will produce a pre-Games Training Camp guide that will comprehensively detail the facilities and services that the UK can offer visiting teams.

This guide will be the primary means of informing National Olympic Committees when choosing where to stage their pre-Games preparation camps for 2012. I am sure that the first class sporting facilities at the National Sports Centre at Lilleshall will prove attractive to visiting teams.

15. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what financial commitments she has entered into in respect of cost overruns for the London Olympics. [29649]

Tessa Jowell: We will make every effort to avoid cost overruns. But, just in case this is not possible our Memorandum of Understanding with the Mayor of London provides for an agreement to share the costs between him and the National Lottery.

Slave Trade (Abolition Anniversary)

14. **Ms Diana R. Johnson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on plans to celebrate in 2007 the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. [29648]

Mr. Lammy: The 200th anniversary of Parliament's abolition of the slave trade is an important opportunity to mark a crucial turning point in this country's history. Many cities, museums, churches and others are already planning to mark the anniversary, with exhibitions, the opening of new galleries, and community-led events. I am working closely with colleagues to ensure that the Government play their part in 2007.

BBC

16. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will discuss the BBC's parliamentary and political coverage with the Chairman and Director General as part of the Charter renewal process. [29650]

Tessa Jowell: The Green Paper, "A Strong BBC, independent of Government", proposes that 'sustaining citizenship' should be one of the BBC's core public purposes in the next Charter period. It makes clear that high quality news and current affairs, and coverage of Parliament, are central to this purpose.

17. **Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what account her Department is taking in the charter renewal process of the decision to open up 25 per cent. of BBC production to independent companies. [29651]

Tessa Jowell: We will assess the BBC's proposals against the goal of delivering the best possible programmes for licence fee payers, and respond in the White Paper. We believe that goal will be met by balancing competition from independent producers with a thriving base of in-house production.

Music Teaching

18. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to increase the playing of musical instruments by young people. [29652]

Mr. Lammy: Responsibility for music within schools falls with the Department for Education and Skills.

My Department continues to work very closely with Education and Skills colleagues on the Music Manifesto, which celebrated its first anniversary in July. This sets out a series of shared aims for music education over the next three to five years.

Last week I jointly announced with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools a £2 million investment in three new Music Manifesto pathfinder centres at The Sage Gateshead, the Roundhouse in London and the Hallé in Manchester. Over the next two and a half years these pathfinders will benefit over 100,000 young people and more than 500 music teachers and leaders.

Commonwealth Institute Building

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received concerning the condition of the Commonwealth Institute building; and if she will make a statement. [28339]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State received a number of representations on the condition of the Commonwealth Institute building. These were fully considered as part of the decision not to de-list the building.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood of 19 September on behalf of a constituent, Nigel Clarke. [29150]

James Purnell: I wrote to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on the 16 November 2005.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27728]

Mr. Lammy: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by her Department. [27382]

Mr. Lammy: The 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by the Department are as follows:

(a) movable assets

The 10 most valuable movable assets owned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are works of art within the Government Art Collection.

It is not possible to give an accurate estimate of the value of the Government Art Collection, which has no current market valuation. The current monetary value of a work of art can be accurately assessed only at the time of purchase or sale or by professional valuation. In the former case, the collection is not actively traded; in the latter, it would not be justified expenditure of public funds to have the whole collection valued professionally.

(b) immovable assets

The Department owns the freehold of a site to the north of the British Library at St. Pancras. This was professionally re-valued at 31 March 2005 at £18,980,000. This valuation reflects the current block on use of the site while it is required for construction of the channel tunnel rail link terminus at St. Pancras.

The nine next most valuable immovable assets are all managed by the Department's agency, The Royal Parks, and are as follows.

	£
Serpentine Gallery (Kensington Gardens)	3,878,000
Inn the Park (St James's Park)	2,873,395
The Old Police House (Hyde Park)	1,619,000
Nursery Site (Hyde Park)	1,348,000
The Lido (Hyde Park)	1,177,000
Storey's Gate Lodge (St James's Park)	916,000
Nursery (Regent's Park)	866,000
Pembroke Lodge (Richmond Park)	770,000
Storeyard Complex (Hyde Park)	696,000

The freehold of Blythe House at Olympia, London W14 is owned by the Department, and it was last valued for DCMS as at 31 March 2004 at a depreciated replacement cost of £21,800,000.

Blythe House is not carried on the Department's balance sheet as the risks and rewards of ownership are considered to lie with the three museums occupying the building for storage, each of which disclose the value of their share in their balance sheet, and has therefore been excluded from this list.

The National Asset Register also includes the freeholds of properties occupied by DCMS sponsored NDPBs. These have been excluded from this table as the freeholds are vested in the Boards of Trustees of the national museums and galleries and the British Library, each of which is an exempt charity.

Departmental Estates

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who is responsible for managing the estates of her Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26312]

Mr. Lammy: John Belza is the Department's Head of Procurement and Property Services. He has an MSc in Procurement, City and Guilds in Mechanical Engineering and Building Maintenance; is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, a Member of the Institute of Leadership and Management, and is a PRINCE 2 practitioner. Since leaving the Life Guards in 1993, John has worked in the private, voluntary and public sectors in facilities management, purchasing and procurement roles, before joining DCMS in 2005.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the Head of the Finance and Planning Division is in her Department; what specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26313]

Mr. Lammy: The current Head of Finance and Planning Division in DCMS does not hold a specialist finance qualification but has held a number of relevant posts in Finance Divisions in other Government Departments. He reports to the Department's Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director who is responsible for finance issues at board level and does hold a specialist qualification.

The current holders of these posts are set out in the Civil Service Yearbook.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the Head of Personnel and Central Services is in her Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26314]

Mr. Lammy: Shaun Cove is the Department's Head of Human and Business Resources. He has recently completed studying for an MA in Human Resource Strategy and Change and has eight years' experience in human resources practice, both in DCMS and what is now the Office for National Statistics, where he worked from 1985 to 1994. Since joining DCMS and prior to his roles in human resources, Shaun worked in museums and galleries sponsorship, international tourism policy, as secretary to the DCMS Board and as a Bill team leader.

Disability Discrimination Act

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department has made of the progress of leisure and tourism facilities towards complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. [29274]

James Purnell: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the member for West Lancashire (Rosie Cooper) on 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 2-3, by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Sport.

English Heritage

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many English Heritage sites she has visited in the last 12 months. [25874]

Tessa Jowell: I have been a member of both English Heritage and The National Trust for many years. Both organisations provide excellent value for money and make an important contribution to the nation's tourism and leisure industries. This year I have been to a number of heritage and cultural sites and events, both privately and in my official capacity as Secretary of State.

Essex

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the top 10 tourist attractions in Essex in terms of numbers visiting or attending in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [30072]

James Purnell: My Department does not keep a central record of the tourist attractions throughout the United Kingdom. VisitBritain who promote tourism in England and overseas carry out an annual survey of visitor attractions, and from this the visitor numbers to the top 10 tourist attractions in Essex in each of the last three years are as follows:

Tourist attraction	*2004*	*2003*	*2002*
Weald Country Park	[1]500,000	[1]500,000	[1]500,000
Colchester Zoo	469,928	541,628	—
Hadleigh Castle Country Park	[1]200,000	[1]200,000	—
Marsh Farm Country Park	147,346	146,992	132,161
High Woods Country Park	[1]140,000	[1]130,000	[1]125,000
Audley End House	108,002	116,839	105,215
Dedham Art and Craft Centre	80,000	75,000	75,000
Chelmsford Museum	44,721	38,969	43,837
Audley End Miniature Railway	42,175	42,509	41,786
Great Notley Country Park and Discovery Centre	[1]42,000	[1]45,000	[1]40,000

[1] Estimated

Gambling Commission

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the funding of the Gambling Commission's new headquarters in Birmingham. [30299]

Mr. Caborn: In line with the recommendations of the Lyons Review that more public bodies should be located outside London, the Gambling Commission has acquired new headquarters in Birmingham. Funding for this will come from the grant provided by my Department.

The Commission has secured a competitive rent for their new property with a significant rent-free period at a rate which compares very favourably with the rent for

their current premises in London. It followed Office of Government Commerce recommended procedures in selecting the property, including completion of internal gateway reviews. The acquisition of new headquarters in Birmingham is part of the transition project to establish by September 2007 a fully operational Gambling Commission under the new regulatory system introduced by the Gambling Act 2005. The move will be completed by summer 2006.

Licensing Applications

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance the Government have provided to local authorities on informing local residents of a premises licence application made under the Licensing Act 2003. [24969]

James Purnell: The burden of advertising applications for premises licences falls on the applicants, rather than on local authorities. Articles 25 and 26 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005 include detailed provisions covering the form and nature of advertisements required of applicants.

Should local authorities wish, additionally, to undertake any further advertisement of applications, it is a matter for them.

London Olympics

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has made to the Secretary of State for Transport on ensuring that train services to the South West are ready to meet the transport requirements of the 2012 Olympics. [30349]

Mr. Caborn: There has been regular communication between the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Department for Transport regarding the Olympic Transport Proposals that were set out in the Candidature File submitted to the International Olympic Committee in November 2004. The Government is confident that these proposals will be sufficient to meet the transport needs of the 2012 Games.

Public Libraries

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of loaned items were accounted for by the borrowing of *(a)* books, *(b)* videos, *(c)* DVDs and *(d)* CDs from libraries in (i) Brent and (ii) each borough in London in each year since 1997. [30112]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally. However, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave her on 29 June 2005 on book loans by London libraries and on 3 November about the loan of audio-visual items by Brent libraries and London libraries. The following table shows the number of book and total loans by Brent from 1997–98 and 2003–04 and total loans by London libraries as a whole for the same period. These figures are drawn from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's annual Public Library Statistics (Actuals) which also contain figures for individual library authorities. Copies are kept in the House of Commons Library.

	Brent		*Greater London*
	Book loans	*All loans*	*All loans*
1997–98	1,419,752	[1]1,419,752	61,908,130
1998–99	1,216,032	[1]1,216,032	59,372,374
1999–2000	1,094,504	1,254,051	54,700,891
2000–01	1,055,862	1,247,619	52,949,785
2001–02	1,098,832	1,308,111	50,836,822
2002–03	1,139,873	1,381,696	49,390,102
2003–04	1,148,616	1,374,667	46,867,270

[1] No "Total Audio-visual, electronic and other issues" figure shown by Brent for this year.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what total stock of *(a)* DVDs, *(b)* videos and *(c)* CDs was owned by libraries in (i) Brent and (ii) each borough in London in each year since 1997. [30169]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally. However, the following table shows the numbers of sound recordings (encompassing talking books and music) and videos/DVDs held by (i) Brent and (ii) all inner and outer London libraries (including Brent) from 1997–98 to 2003–04. These figures are drawn from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) annual Public Library Statistics (Actuals) which also contain figures for London's 33 individual library authorities. Copies are kept in the House of Commons Library.

	Brent		*Greater London*	
	Sound Recordings	*Video/ DVD*	*Sound Recordings*	*Video/ DVD*
1997–98	[1]26,042	9,608	[2]874,174	260,857
1998–99	41,779	15,659	1,141,705	296,693
1999–2000	27,325	16,687	1,127,467	332,299
2000–01	21,161	13,955	1,122,182	363,675
2001–02	19,228	14,805	1,088,827	368,480
2002–03	18,455	20,028	1,422,612	437,779
2003–04	15,906	20,104	1,048,091	442,305

[1] Music only. Brent entered their audiobook holdings within their overall bookstock figure for this year.
[2] Music only for parity.
Note:
The above table includes loan items only. It does not take account of any materials held in this media for reference purposes. These are not easily identifiable within the CIPFA statistics.

Youth Shelters

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many council-funded youth shelters have opened in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [29914]

Mr. Lammy: Information is not held centrally on the number of council-funded youth shelters.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she plans to fund the expansion of youth shelters in England. [29915]

Mr. Lammy: I have no plans to fund the expansion of youth shelters in England. However, my Department is working closely with the Department for Education and Skills on the implementation of "Youth Matters", the youth Green Paper which was published in July this year.

A key strand in Youth Matters is the provision of more "things to do and places to go" for young people in their local area and more choice and influence over what is available.

Youth Matters proposes the establishment of an "Opportunity Fund" in each local authority to be spent at young people's discretion on projects they want to do to improve things to do and places to go in their area. This could include the provision of youth shelters.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

"Youth Matters"

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she plans to make of the implications of Youth Matters for black and minority ethnic young people and organisations. [26643]

Maria Eagle: The proposals in Youth Matters will improve the lives of all young people, including those from black and minority ethnic groups. In preparing the Government's response to the consultation we are considering carefully the views from black and minority ethnic organisations and young people.

0870 Numbers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the revenue raised from her Department's 0870 prefix contact telephone number is spent. [26438]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills does not participate in revenue share schemes associated with 0870 numbers and therefore derives no revenue from the use of these numbers.

Adult Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of colleges are charging fees to adults for level two education. [27955]

Bill Rammell: On the 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. Our priorities include helping disadvantaged adults gain basic and Level 2 skills for employability and progression to Level 3. From 2005/06 all Further Education colleges are offering free tuition to learners undertaking a first full level 2 qualification.

Colleges will continue to collect fees from other adult learners unless they are exempt from tuition fees because they are receiving an income based benefit; the pension guarantee credit; or higher rates of the working tax credit. Adults studying literacy and numeracy, Skills for Life programmes, are exempt from all fees.

Adult Guidance Provision

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what adult guidance provision there is in each local authority area. [28573]

Phil Hope: The Department's policy on information, advice and guidance services on learning and work for adults is delivered by the Learning and Skills Council primarily through an integrated information and advice service. This service comprises the national learndirect telephone and on-line advice service, and a network of 47 local nextstep information and advice providers, and is available to adults in each local authority area. In addition, adults participating in any LSC funded learning can access information and advice services through their learning provider.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is on adult guidance provision. [28578]

Phil Hope: The Department's policy is that every adult in England should have access to a free, integrated information and advice service on learning and work delivered through the national learndirect telephone and on-line advice service and local nextstep information and advice services. Priority is given within this service to those adults who do not have a qualification at Level 2, since they are more likely to lack the skills foundation for employability and lifelong learning, and are less likely to get a secure, well paid job. In addition, adults participating in any LSC funded learning can also access information and advice services through their learning provider.

The White Paper "Skills: getting on in business, getting on at work" sets out a long-term ambition: that everyone should be able to get help if and when they want it to take stock of where they are in their lives and their careers; to review where they would like to get to; and assess what steps they can take to get there. We are jointly conducting a review with the Department for Work and Pensions, the DTI, the LSC, Ufi learndirect, Jobcentre Plus, and the Sector Skills Development Agency to help determine how best to achieve this goal, which will be concluded by the end of 2006. We are extending the learndirect telephone service on a trial basis from January 2006 to provide more intensive personal guidance to inform the review. Adults throughout England seeking to progress in their careers; wanting to gain the skills for jobs typically requiring a Level 3 qualification; and returning to work from career breaks, will benefit from the new service.

Autism

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government is taking to ensure all staff working in *(a)* schools and *(b)* other children's services receive sufficient and suitable training to equip them to work with children with autism. [29258]

Jacqui Smith: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1309W, in response to her earlier question on minimum training standards for people who work with autistic children.

Once qualified, all teachers are expected to identify their development needs through performance management arrangements, and to address identified needs by undertaking appropriate professional development. This includes strengthening knowledge of special educational

needs. All schools receive a School Development Grant which they are able to use to support improvements in any aspect of teaching and learning. Local authorities may retain a proportion of this grant, under certain conditions, to provide specific training and development of SEN.

The Department's published SEN Strategy, "Removing Barriers to Achievement" recognised the importance of training and committed us to work closely with the Training and Development Agency for Schools to ensure that initial teacher training and programmes of continuing professional development provide a good grounding in core skills and knowledge of SEN, which of course covers a wide range of conditions, including autism.

We have commissioned the IDA to carry forward a range of initiatives designed to improve and strengthen the SEN skills and confidence of trainees, newly qualified and established teachers. These initiatives will be implemented over the period 2005—2008 at a cost of approximately £1.1 million. The TDA will be reviewing its Standards, as part of its new responsibilities for the school work force, and the Department will feed in to that process.

On the wider children's services front, we have developed the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge to support and focus professional development in the children's work force, including those working for private and voluntary sector. It also covers those working with disadvantaged children as well as those with a disability. The Common Core sets out the areas of expertise that everyone working with children, young people and families (including those who work as volunteers) should be able to demonstrate. It sets out the skills and knowledge that, if accredited, could form the basis of a minimum competence for working with children, young people and their families.

There is funding available under the National Training Strategy Grant and Human Resources Development Strategy through local authorities and other organisations, for a number of initiatives to support social work, education and training, provide financial support to students and strengthen the social work and social care work force (with children and adults). It would be appropriate for some of this to be used for training for those in children's services working with children with autism, but the Government does not specify a proportion that has to be used in this way.

Basic Skills Agency

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the performance of the Basic Skills Agency; what funding it has received since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [28302]

Phil Hope: The Basic Skills Agency (BSA) has received a total of £52 million in core grant funding since the 1996–97 financial year. The agency has also received additional funding for fixed term initiatives and contracts.

The BSA as a 'near to Government body', was subject to a quinquennial review in 2001. The review reported positively that BSA was making

> "a valuable contribution across the breadth of its activities"

and that there was

> "a very strong case for retention of the Agency as an independent body at arms length to the Department, with a remit which continues to cover basic skills both for pupils and adults".

The Department for Education and Skills regularly reviews the Agency's performance and is responsible for approving the BSA's strategic plan and annual delivery plan. DfES continues to work closely with the BSA on the delivery of its current three-year strategic plan and annual delivery plan, which is supported by DfES core funding. BSA's performance is reviewed each month against their delivery plan and their core grant is paid on the basis of this assessment.

Children's Organisations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which children's organisations the Minister for Children has met since May. [28250]

Beverley Hughes: In my ministerial capacity, I have met a wide range of organisations which represent the interests of children, young peoples and families, and have also visited a large number of local projects and spoken at a wide range of events. My colleague, Maria Eagle, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Children, Young People and Families, has also met a wide range of organisations. National level organisations that have been represented at meetings with me, since May, include:

4Children
AFRUCA (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse)
Asian Families Counselling Service
Barnardo's
CAFCASS
Children and Youth Board
Children's Commissioner
Children's Right's Alliance for England
Children's Workforce Development Council
The Children's Society
Churches Child Protection Advisory Service
Continyou
Coram Family
Council for Disabled Children
Daycare Trust
Early Childhood Forum
Family Links
Father's Direct
Forum for Rural Children and Young People
National Childbirth Trust
National Childminding Association
National Children's Bureau
National Children's Homes
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services
National Council of Voluntary Childcare Organisations
National Day Nurseries Association
National Family and Parenting Institute
National Youth Agency
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
One Plus One
Parentline Plus

Pre-School Learning Alliance
Refugee Council
REU
Special Education Consortium
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Independent Advisory Group

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for her Department and its agencies. [29102]

Bill Rammell: My Department has effective financial controls in place, and follows HM Treasury "Government Accounting 2000" guidelines on the responsibilities of Accounting Officers.

My Department also uses 'model' contracts for Consultancy which contain specific clauses and guidance to ensure that Departmental limits are applied to consultancy expenses claims. In addition to this the Departments policy is to ensure that invoices are thoroughly checked for propriety and value for money.

Departmental Engagements

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Minister for Children's departmental engagements have been since 1 September. [28251]

Beverley Hughes: My external departmental engagements from 1 September to 11 November are listed as follows:

	Engagement
1 September 2005	Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Command, London
2 September 2005	Parent Partnership, Beechwood Family Support, Watford
7 September 2005	Michael SIEFF Foundation Conference "Every Young Person Matters"
8 September 2005	Milton Keynes, Round Table discussion with Children's services partners
	Galley Hill Education Centre, Milton Keynes
9 September 2005	Health Inequalities Conference, Manchester
	Benchill Play centre, Manchester
21 September 2005	Early Childhood Forum, London Children's Workforce Network, London
23 September 2005	Chester Youth Forum, Chester
27 September 2005	RU-OK? (Young people' substance abuse project), Brighton
30 September 2005	Brook Advisory Centre, Manchester
3 October 2005	Harpurhey Centre, North Manchester Sixth Form College, Manchester
	Grange Community Resource Centre, Manchester
	URBIS—Museum of Urban life, Manchester
	Manchester Town Hall, Manchester
4 October 2005	Saltash college, Cornwall
	Estover Community College
	Devon Children's Trust—Roundtable discussion with Children's Services partners, Exeter
5 October 2005	Bideford Sure Start Children's Centre, Cornwall
	Flashpoint Life Skills Centre, Cornwall
	Bodmin SHARE information and advice service, Cornwall
7 October 2005	Bridehill Sure Start Children's Centre, Stockport
	Stepping Hill Hospital Birth Centre, Stockport
10 October 2005	Roundtable discussion with Children's Services partners, Hull
11 October 2005	Coram Family, London
	Local Government Association Youth Matters conference
	Reception for childminders and pre-school teachers in Enfield, House of Commons
12 October 2005	Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel, Holborn
13 October 2005	ACPO Youth Justice Conference, Belfast
19 October 2005	Paediatrics and Child Health Conference, London
	IPPR Active Fatherhood project launch, London
20 October 2005	DfES Social Enterprise Seminar, London
21 October 2005	LGA/ADSS Conference, Birmingham
	NFPI Parents Consultation event, Old Trafford
25 October 2005	NPQICL Graduation Ceremony
26 October 2005	BAAF Private Fostering Reception, House of Commons
31 October 2005	Whitby High Schools, Ellesmere Port
1 November 2005	Daycare Trust Annual Conference, London
	Ormiston Children and Families Trust Launch event, House of Commons
	Connexions Youth Green Paper Event, London
8 November 2005	Gospel Oak Children's Centre, London
	"Brake" launch of Road Safety Week Campaign; London
	NSPCC Reception, London
	DfES Board of Children, Young People and Families Stakeholders, London
9 November 2005	West London Centre of Vocational Excellence Centre
10 November 2005	Continyou Extra Community Conference, Coventry

Educational Attainment

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the percentage of working-age adults with no qualifications is in each constituency; and if she will make a statement. [28936]

Phil Hope: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Family Law Cases (Perjury)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to ensure that evidence given in family law cases is subject to the law on perjury. [28650]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

The current law on perjury already applies to evidence given in family proceedings.

Further Education

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to review the levels of funding allocated to further education in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* England. [26163]

Bill Rammell: Our 14 to 19 and Skills White Papers clearly articulate our priorities for post-14 education and training. Higher participation among young people must have the highest priority, alongside helping disadvantaged adults gain basic and Level 2 skills for employability and progression to Level 3. Starting from these strategic objectives we have reviewed the SR2004 settlement announced in April 2004 and we have agreed a funding strategy with the LSC for the next two years that is driven by policy priorities and the successes of the sector.

On 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published 'Priorities for Success'—a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14 to 19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult work force. This will mean that less provision outside these priority areas can be supported at previous levels, and that there has to be a new balance of responsibilities between Government, employers and learners to achieve this.

We confirmed our overall funding to the LSC for 2006–07 in our grant letter of 30 October 2005. The LSC will now allocate resources to regions, and local LSCs will make initial allocations to colleges in January 2006 for 2006/07.

Higher Education

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding the Government has provided for higher education in each of the last five years. [29266]

Bill Rammell: The total funding for higher education in England in the last five years is shown in the following table.

£ million

	HE funding
2001–02	6,048
2002–03	6,354
2003–04	6,807
2004–05	7,201
2005–06	7,631

Source:
DfES Departmental Report 2005, Annex B.

Funding for HE in the devolved Administrations and in Northern Ireland is provided separately.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in her Department. [26618]

Bill Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children Young People and Families on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1314W.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 961W, on the Learning and Skills Council, when she expects learner numbers for 2004/05 to be available. [28603]

Bill Rammell: Learner numbers for the full year 2004/05 funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in further education (FE), work based learning (WBL) and adult and community learning (ACL) will be published on 8 December 2005. The format will be a statistical first release (SFR) posted on both the Department's and LSC's websites:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/index.shtml

http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/Data/Statistics/LearnerStatistics/StatisticalFirstReleases/StatisticalFirstRelease200405.htm

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 961W, on the Learning and Skills Council and of 8 November 2005 to question 19348, what the funding per learner was for those *(a)* studying levels four and five and *(b)* in higher education. [28651]

Bill Rammell: HEFCE funds all prescribed courses of higher education as defined by the Education Prescribed Courses of Higher Education Regulations 1998 and can also fund "non-prescribed" higher education courses. Prescribed higher education courses represents the vast majority of publicly funded higher education courses.

The LSC funds a proportion of "non-prescribed" vocational and professional courses at levels 4 and 5. In 2003/04 there were 72,000 learners studying non-prescribed higher education courses in FECs and a further 70,000 learners studying prescribed higher education in FECs. The LSC funding per learner for non-prescribed higher education in 2003/04 was £600. This is the level of annual funding from the LSC rather than the funding for the whole qualification and does not take into account contributions from individuals or employers.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27790]

Maria Eagle: The information on the cost of ministerial travel could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of ministerial cars provided by the Government Car and Despatch Service, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow), dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within her Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if she will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27802]

Maria Eagle: The information on the number of flights taken could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government has published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used, and shows how many officials accompanied Ministers in those circumstances. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Nutritional Standards

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations her Department has received regarding extending the introduction of minimum nutritional standards in schools to children's homes and other accommodation for looked-after children; and what representations her Department has made to the Commission for Social Care Inspection in relation to nutritional standards regarding the planned review of national minimum standards for children's services. [29538]

Maria Eagle: My Department has received no representations regarding extending the introduction of minimum nutritional standards in schools to children's homes and other placement settings for looked after children, nor has it made any representations about nutritional standards to the Commission for Social Inspection (CSCI).

The review of all national minimum standards for children's social services is being taken forward as a joint project involving the Department for Education Skills, Department of Health and CSCI. The review will consider what changes are needed to ensure that children's social services are regulated and inspected in line with the Government's 10 principles for inspection. Nutrition for looked after children who are living in regulated settings, including children's homes, will be considered as a part the review. A full public consultation will be held on all key proposals.

Offender Learning

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the re-apportionment of funds as laid out in "Priorities for Success" will affect offender learning. [28572]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council's document "Priorities for Success" and the Secretary of State's grant letter to the LSC for 2006–07 both stress the importance of learning and skills for offenders as the LSC moves to take full responsibility for planning and funding this group of learners from 31 July 2006. The resources transferring from the Department to the LSC to fund these new responsibilities will be ring-fenced for offender learning.

Engagement of offender learning with mainstream provision is a key benefit of the LSC taking up its new responsibilities. "Priorities for Success" will mean mainstream providers are encouraged to focus on the needs of offender learners, especially those who continue courses of study that were started while in custody, with a consequent focusing of the public funds already in the system onto this priority group.

Offender Learning Schemes

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 124–25W, on offender learning schemes, whether she expects the proposals to be published before Christmas. [28942]

Phil Hope: Yes, it is our intention to publish the proposals prior to Christmas.

Post-16 Funding

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Worcester of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 478W, on post-16 funding, when she expects to make an announcement on the action she plans to take. [30717]

Bill Rammell: The Secretary of State announced on 16 November 2005 our plans for narrowing the funding gap between school sixth forms and Further Education (FE) colleges for like-for-like 16–19 provision. We recognise that the funding gap will not be easy to close but we have taken some important steps in the funding package we announced on 21 October 2005. We have confirmed that for young people in FE in 2006/07 we will match the Schools' Minimum Funding Guarantee, which will be announced later this year. We estimate that this, together with other measures to correct technical anomalies, will reduce the gap from 13 per cent. to 8 per cent. by 2006/07. From 2008 we will look to bring consistency to the treatment of student retention and achievement across school sixth forms and colleges which we expect to narrow the gap by a further 3 per cent. Beyond that we will work to establish a common funding approach across the two sectors as part of the Learning and Skills Council's Agenda for Change.

Private Sector Training Expenditure

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much *(a)* manufacturing, *(b)* construction, *(c)* food and drink and *(d)* financial services industries have spent on education and training in each of the last five years. [24996]

Phil Hope: Analysis of the National Employers Skills Survey (2004) indicates that the estimated annual employer expenditure on training by sector was as follows: Manufacturing—£440 million; Construction—£240 million; Food and Drink—£80 million; and Financial services—£280 million.

This is the expenditure that employers reported as their "(out of pocket)" expenses only, and does not take into account internal training costs nor the cost of employees being away from their workplaces. The National Employers Skills Survey (2005) will address these issues and provide a more accurate reflection of the actual employer expenditure on Education and Training.

Comparable data for previous years is not available.

Protection of Children

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* referrals, *(b)* Provisional Listings and *(c)* Confirmed Listings have been made to the Protection of Children Act List since it was established; and if she will make a statement. [29349]

Maria Eagle: Since the establishment of the Protection of Children Act List in October 2000 there have been:

(a) 1,063 referrals to the List

(b) 776 Provisional Listings

(c) 461 Confirmed Listings

Additionally there have been 791 Provisional Listings and 81 Confirmed Listings as a result of cross referral from the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Scheme.

There are currently 1,276 people on the Protection of Children Act List. This is made up from the figures above and individuals whose names were transferred from the Consultancy Service Index, which was maintained by the Department of Health prior to the introduction of the Protection of Children Act.

Pupil Statistics

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children aged between five and 11 years are in full-time state education; and what estimate she has made of the figure for 2010. [27769]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, pupil referral units, city technology colleges and academies: number (headcount) of pupils aged 5 to 11[1]

England

	Pupils aged 5 to 11	
	January 2005[2,3]	*Projections for January 2010*[4,5]
Full-time pupils	4,054,630	3,864,910
Part-time pupils	380	330
Total pupils	4,055,010	3,865,240

[1] Includes solely and dually registered pupils.
[2] Age as at 31 August 2004.
[3] Source: Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Age as at 31 August 2009.
[5] Source: DfES.
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Schools

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital funding her Department *(a)* provides and *(b)* facilitates for rural schools for premises expansion. [29593]

Jacqui Smith: The Department provides capital investment that can be used for premises expansion, including at rural schools, through the following programmes. We cannot break this down for just rural schools.

£ million

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Schools Devolved Funding	805	1,000	1,050
LEA Delegated funding			
Modernisation	602	602	602
Basic Need	590	400	400
School Access Initiative	84	84	84
BSF Programme	2,118	2,177	[1]2,240
Academies	207	365	467
VA Schools	352	444	473
LSC Single Budget	0	70	100
Targeted Capital Fund	200	300	500

Note:
[1] Includes £1.2/£1.25/£1.3 billion of PFI credits

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Westmorland and Lonsdale are expected to have a budget deficit in the 2005–06 financial year. [30462]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not yet available. The Department is due to collect the section 52 outturn data relating to the 2005–06 financial year from October 2006.

Sector Skills Council

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the establishment of a sector skills council for government, with particular reference to arrangements for *(a)* licensing and monitoring and *(b)* governance. [29529]

Phil Hope: The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) will convene a Licence Assessment Panel (LAP) to take place on 18 November to assess the business case for the Government Skills Sector Skills Council (SSC). The outcome will be that the LAP will either recommend that the Secretary of State licenses the SSC, requires further work on the business case to be addressed, or rejects the proposal outright. The LAP will need to be satisfied that the proposed governance arrangements for the SSC comply with the standard required of all SSCs. The SSDA would be responsible for monitoring the performance of Government Skills, as for all SSCs, through a three year funding arrangement.

Self-governing Trusts

Mr. David Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps schools will be required to take to become self-governing trusts. [29729]

Jacqui Smith: Where the governing body of an existing school proposes to acquire a trust, it will consult and publish statutory proposals, setting out details of the proposed trust and the rationale for acquiring it. It will normally be for individual governing bodies to decide such proposals, but where the governing body has failed to take proper account of the views of a majority of parents or there are serious concerns about the impact of the acquisition of the trust on school standards, the local authority may refer the proposals to the Schools Adjudicator whose decision on them will be final.

Skills for Life Courses

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answers of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 130W, on Skills for Life courses, if she will place in the Library the evidence referred to in her answer to question 24962. [28941]

Phil Hope: It has been drawn to my attention that while the answer I made to question 24962 was done so in good faith and was based upon information passed to me by officials, it was inaccurate in its interpretation of the evidence referred to. I very much regret this.

The Department is currently undertaking a longitudinal study of literacy and numeracy learners in FE colleges—a subset of Skills for Life learners. Reports on both the first and second stages of the survey will be published at the end of November 2005. The study found that 25 per cent. of this learner group had no qualifications and 86 per cent. had neither English nor Maths at Level 2 [a good GCSE A*-C]. In addition, 32 per cent. of this learner group were continuing with their full time education while 68 per cent. of learners had left. Among those who had left, 70 per cent. had left at age 16 or under. However, this does not rule out the possibility that these learners will have undertaken any post-16 education.

There is further published evidence that also suggests a large proportion of participants on Skills for Life courses may have left school at or before the minimum age and may have no formal educational qualifications. I have placed in the Library of the House copies of two published DfES research reports which contain this evidence: "Evaluation of Adult Basic Skills Pathfinder Extension Activities: An Overview" by Michael White of the Policy Studies Institute; and "Evaluation Outcomes for Learners in Pathfinder Areas", which the company Taylor Nelson Sofres were commissioned to conduct.

Teachers

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary school teachers in West Lancashire have a *(a)* first class degree, *(b)* upper second degree, *(c)* lower second degree, *(d)* third class degree and *(e)* no degree. [27848]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not available in the requested form.

The following table provides degree class information for full-time regular teachers in service in maintained secondary schools in Lancashire local authority in 2003, the latest information available. For comparison, the degree class of those teachers qualifying during 2002 is also provided.

Percentage of full-time teachers in secondary school service in Lancashire local authority 2003 by class of degree held and year of qualification

Class of degree	Year of qualification: All years	2002
1st Honours	4.4	7.3
2nd Honours[1]	76.6	78.6
3rd and unclassified honours	6.3	4.2
Pass/Other[2]	11.4	9.4
No degree recorded[3]	1.3	0.5
Total	100	100

[1] Information for 2nd class honours degrees cannot be split into 2:1 or 2:2 categories.
[2] Includes degrees obtained outside of the UK, teachers whose class of degree is not recorded and a small number of teachers with higher degrees where the class of their first degree is not known.
[3] Includes teachers with a Certificate of Education. Some of these teachers may have gained degree level qualifications after entering teaching. No details of these qualifications are available.
Source:
Database of Teachers Records

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost of conducting the numeracy, literacy and ICT skills tests prior to entering teaching *(a)* has been since their introduction and *(b)* was in 2004–05; and what the planned expenditure on the tests is in 2005–06. [29301]

Jacqui Smith: Over the whole period since introduction, up to and including the financial year 2003–04, the cost to the Teacher Training Agency of developing and then running the QTS skills tests was approximately £19.5 million. The Teacher Training Agency spent £4.1 million on all three Skills Tests in 2004–05, and the Training and Development Agency for Schools is planning to spend £3.75 million on them in 2005–06.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the initial teacher training skills tests on *(a)* standards of teaching and learning and *(b)* the efficacy of teachers in the discharge of their responsibilities since their introduction. [29308]

Jacqui Smith: The skills tests help to safeguard the quality of teaching and learning provided by schools by preventing people without the necessary basic skills in ICT, numeracy and literacy—which are needed as part of teachers day-to-day work—from qualifying as teachers. The cost of providing these tests represents less than 0.5 per cent. of the total cost of initial teacher training.

The future role and purpose of the skills tests is included in the current review by the Training and Development Agency of the requirements and standards for the award of qualified teacher status.

Train2Gain Programme

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a cost benefit analysis has been undertaken of the role of training brokers in the Train2Gain programme. [25074]

Phil Hope: The White Paper "Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work" published in March this year made it clear that the lessons learnt from the Employer Training Pilots (ETP) will influence the development of a quality National Employer Training Programme.

The evidence from the pilots shows that the skills brokers are a tried and tested method of engaging employers in the development of their businesses and employees and is a key element of the success of the pilots. For example, the ETP Year 2 Evaluation carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies and published alongside the White Paper, shows that brokers have been very successful in helping to engage hard to reach employers. The evaluation showed these employers found the role of brokers in carrying out a training needs analysis a major attraction. 63 per cent. of hard to reach employers cited the help of brokers linking training to business needs as an attraction of ETP (as did 55 per cent. of easy to reach employers) and thus helping to maximise the added value of the programme. Employers saw the support given to help them access flexible and responsive provision that meets their needs as a major attraction of the pilots (76 per cent. of employers cited flexibly delivered training as an attraction of ETP and 19 per cent. said it was the most attractive feature). Helping to broker the right learning for the employers and learners helps to reduce dropout and ensure high success rates.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what is the role of a training broker in the Train2Gain programme. [25088]

Phil Hope: The White Paper "Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work" published in March this year clearly states that "at the heart of the National Employer Training Programme is a brokerage service that will work on behalf of the employer." Skills brokers will provide independent and impartial advice to employers on the best type of training available and then source its delivery, to meet employer needs. Brokers will help employers find their way through the often complex world of skills training and help them develop relationships with training providers which will give them the best return on their investment. Brokers are there to make the employer's search for suitable training simpler and cost-effective. Once a training relationship to meet employer's needs is in place, it is for the employer and training provider to work directly together. So long as the employer is satisfied with the quality of training they are getting, the training provider can carry on supplying it.

Brokers will particularly focus on reaching employers who may otherwise not invest in training, particularly small and medium-sized employers. The White Paper clearly states that raising the skill levels of this group is a fundamental aim.

Training

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information she collates on the provision of training by employers in the *(a)* private sector and *(b)* public sector, according to the age of employee receiving that training. [28668]

Phil Hope: The Labour Force Survey collects data on a quarterly basis from a representative sample of adults in the UK. It can identify employees in receipt of job-related education or training in the last three months

and in the last four weeks. The age of the employees and whether they work in the public or private sector are also identified.

Vocational Education

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effects of vocational education on industry in Coventry. [29330]

Phil Hope: My Department is committed to ensuring that everyone has the skills he or she needs to be employable and personally fulfilled. Our 14–19 and Skills White Papers set out our strategies for ensuring that education and training meets the needs of employers.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for the effective planning and funding of learning to raise the skills of the workforce and the potential workforce. It engages through the year with providers and employers to ensure that provision matches employer skills demands.

In order to assess its effectiveness, the local LSC carries out an annual national employer skills survey. Employers are asked about their skills shortages and their satisfaction with local further education provision. Key findings include:

Skills gaps (existing gaps in the workforce) as a percentage of employment have reduced by 8.2 per cent. between 2003 and 2005 and skills shortage vacancies (employers reporting recruitment difficulties) as a percentage of vacancies have reduced from 15.9 per cent. in 2003 to 11.7 per cent. in 2005.

The number of individuals in the adult workforce with no qualifications has reduced by 8 per cent. between 2000 and 2004 and those with only Level 1 has reduced by 2 per cent.

68 per cent. of 19-year-olds have reached Level 2 attainment, which is 1 per cent. above the national average.

86 per cent. of employers were reporting satisfaction with the services provided by further education establishments.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Assets Recovery Agency

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the work of the Assets Recovery Agency since its establishment; and if he will take steps to provide the money recovered as a result of its work to Government Departments in Northern Ireland. [29479]

Mr. Woodward: The Assets Recovery Agency has had a significant impact on organised criminals in Northern Ireland. During 2004–05 the Agency in Northern Ireland disrupted eight criminal gangs, restrained £3.7 million, obtained recovery orders and tax assessments to the value of almost £1.5 million and realised receipts to the value of £780,000.

The Agency is making good progress against the targets set in this year's business plan.

A new assets recovery incentive scheme, to commence in 2006–07, will enable all law enforcement agencies to receive a 50 per cent. share of the receipts from confiscations. In addition, the Organised Crime Task Force plans to develop an assets recovery strategy in consultation with Task Force partner agencies, including the NI Departments.

Barron Inquiry

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has asked the security services to provide the Irish Government with the information they are seeking as a result of the Barron Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings. [28366]

Mr. Hain: I am aware that these terrible tragedies continue to be painful for the victims and for their relatives. The British Government welcomed the establishment of the Barron Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, and co-operated with it as fully as possible.

As Justice Barron recognised, we have a responsibility to ensure the personal safety of individuals, and this was a factor in the way in which the material he requested on the Dublin and Monaghan bombings was passed to the inquiry. For that reason we did not provide Justice Barron with original documents. However, the information passed to his inquiry accurately reflects all the relevant information on the Dublin/Monaghan bombings uncovered by the Government's trawl of its files.

This information has also recently been made available by the British Government to Patrick MacEntee, sole member of the new Commission of Investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings of 1974. In addition to this, we have provided Mr. MacEntee with further information which he has requested in relation to his specific terms of reference.

Big Lottery Fund

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultations he has had on the composition of the Committee to advise on devolved expenditure under the Big Lottery Fund. [7096]

Mr. Hanson: Legislation is not yet in place for the establishment of a committee to advise on devolved expenditure under the Big Lottery Fund, Northern Ireland will be consulted on arrangements for the establishment of the committee in due course.

Cancer Campaigning Group

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has received a copy of the Call for Action document published in 2004 by the Cancer Campaigning Group; and whether he has received an invitation to attend the group's reception on 30 November. [30148]

Mr. Woodward: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not received a copy of the 2004 Call for Action document or an invitation to attend the Cancer Campaigning Group's reception on 30 November

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his

Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed. [29066]

Mr. Woodward: The information following refers to the Northern Ireland Office and its Agencies. It does not include information for its NDPBs or the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Any consultancy-led project, in the Department and its agencies, is carried out on the basis of a detailed work package description. The outputs of the consultancy project are compared against the quality defined in the work package. Should the outputs of the project not meet the quality criteria, then the consultancy is required to remedy the deficiencies.

None of the projects conducted by consultants since 2000 have been adjudged unsuccessful.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for his Department and its agencies. [29067]

Mr. Woodward: The following information refers to the Northern Ireland Office and its agencies. It does not include information for its NDPBs or the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

The Department's Central Procurement Unit facilitates the tender process and they state in tender documentation that mileage rates will be paid in accordance with civil service rates. They also ask firms to either give an estimated figure for travel expenditure or state that their daily rate includes all expenses. Before approving payment to firms, staff within the Department are responsible for ensuring that the amount of expenses claimed is not excessive.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available; and what the nature of the claim was in each case. [27737]

Mr. Woodward: The following information refers to all damages paid out in the last year by the Northern Ireland Office (five in total). It does not include information for its agencies, NDPBs or the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Date damages were awarded	*Amount of damages paid out by NIO (£)*	*Nature of claim*
July 2005	30,000	Member of staff fell on steps leading to Civil Service building. The full amount awarded (£60,000) was equally apportioned between NIO and DFP.
September 2004	26,000	Alleged discrimination/victimisation case.
October 2004	15,000	Member of staff broke wrist at sports day.
October 2005	6,000	Alleged breach of contract.
January 2005	750	Back injury incurred in the workplace.

Dentistry

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dentists were operating under the NHS in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 2004. [29882]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of general practitioner, hospital based and community based NHS dentists as at 31 March 1994 and 31 March 2004

	NHS dentists (headcount)	
	1994	*2004*
General practitioner	570	720
Hospital based	78	71
Community based	76	94
Total	724	885

Source:
General practitioner figures—Central Services Agency Hospital and Community Based—HRMS

Departmental Sickness Absences

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many working days were lost due to sickness absence in the Department of Health and Personal Social Services in each of the last five years. [30767]

Mr. Woodward: The number of working days lost in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety as a result of sickness absence in the last five years is detailed as follows.

Financial year	*Number of days lost*
2000–01	11,043
2001–02	13,313
2002–03	12,637
2003–04	12,128
2004–05	9,584

District Policing Partnership

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money each district policing partnership received in each year for which figures are available. [28871]

Mr. Woodward: All DPPs, except Dungannon and South Tyrone which was established in December 2004, were established on 1 March 2003. Under schedule 3 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 the board is required to fund 75 per cent. of the expenses reasonably incurred by the council in that year in connection with the establishment of, or the exercise of functions by, a DPP. The council funds the remaining 25 per cent. The

Policing Board has advised me that the following figures represent 100 per cent. cost of each DPP for the complete financial years.

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Antrim	20,371	149,966	104,480
Ards	13,801	165,114	144,297
Armagh	27,381	169,333	124,888
Ballymena	17,188	154,711	116,569
Ballymoney	20,821	143,604	124,908
Banbridge	30,727	157,631	130,332
Belfast	56,387	468,453	278,591
Carrickfergus	29,057	130,167	108,729
Castlereagh	14,963	164,879	128,713
Coleraine	15,784	155,052	129,626
Cookstown	13,233	127,349	117,608
Craigavon	12,918	153,310	128,876
Derry	8,750	197,649	155,865
Down	16,491	160,345	124,394
Dungannon and South Tyrone	8,691	81,791	105,951
Fermanagh	25,121	155,156	130,444
Lame	17,838	127,043	126,055
Limavady	26,512	148,906	126,801
Lisburn	55,282	216,995	158,293
Magherafelt	11,261	119,447	94,605
Moyle	20,866	128,734	118,092
Newry and Mourne	16,230	185,071	138,768
Newtownabbey	18,313	184,407	147,441
North Down	17,286	180,574	129,190
Omagh	14,349	137,296	125,448
Strabane	15,900	127,114	118,350
Total	545,521	4,290,097	3,437,314

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* publishing in each year for which figures are available by each district policing partnership. [28872]

Mr. Woodward: The Policing Board has advised me that the following figures show the expenditure on advertising and publishing in each year since the establishment of each respective DPP.

Costs for publishing are not collected separately, but expenditure details are available under the heading 'PR and publications' and these are shown in the table. Expenditure in this heading may include publicity materials, PR events and other expenditure relating to advertising and 'gaining the co-operation of the public in preventing crime'.

	2002–03		2003–04	
	Advertising	Publishing/ PR	Advertising	Publishing/ PR
Antrim	45	—	1,830	2,264
Ards	—	—	2,720	1,424
Armagh	—	—	3,017	1,370
Ballymena	—	—	1,073	1,268
Ballymoney	—	265	2,725	1,975
Banbridge	3,800	—	3,065	4,000
Belfast	—	73	20,362	28
Carrickfergus	—	—	1,328	1,275
Castlereagh	705	—	7,448	500
Coleraine	—	—	5,032	3,241
Cookstown	—	—	2,966	801
Craigavon	—	—	3,431	—
Derry	332	—	4,942	2,442
Down	—	—	8,648	—
Dungannon and South Tyrone	—	—	—	25
Fermanagh	1,815	—	1,921	20
Larne	—	—	1,435	1,150
Limavady	—	—	2,219	965
Lisburn	2,800	—	9,573	—
Magherafelt	—	—	2,037	70
Moyle	1,185	—	2,807	1,745
Newry and Mourne	—	—	5,337	3,663
Newtownabbey	2,434	—	4,687	4,019
North Down	—	57	6,244	5,616
Omagh	—	—	2,723	2,790
Strabane	—	—	3,130	—
	13,116	395	110,700	40,651

	2003–04	
	Advertising	Publishing/PR
Antrim	3,033	280
Ards	2,152	0
Armagh	1,783	1,117
Ballymena	1,788	275
Ballymoney	3,786	1,780
Banbridge	4,330	2,400
Belfast	21,876	3,257
Carrickfergus	1,705	500
Castlereagh	6,215	1,849
Coleraine	5,036	584
Cookstown	2,728	2,908
Craigavon	4,127	1,486
Derry	3,362	1,141
Down	8,873	356
Dungannon and South Tyrone	797	1,055
Fermanagh	1,171	145
Larne	1,804	—
Limavady	169	5,707
Lisburn	1,147	9,045
Magherafelt	2,499	—
Moyle	2,432	939
Newry and Mourne	5,297	100
Newtownabbey	5,865	6,443
North Down	3,807	4,176
Omagh	1,972	1,763
Strabane	1,785	—
	99,539	47,206

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members each district policing partnership has, broken down by *(a)* independent members and *(b)* elected members. [28873]

Mr. Woodward: Under schedule 3 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 a DPP may consist of 15, 17, or 19 members. The Policing Board has advised me of the following number of members in each current DPP.

DPP	Independent	Political
Antrim	9	10
Ards	9	10
Armagh	9	10
Ballymena	9	10
Bally money	9	10
Banbridge	8	9
Belfast	9	10
Carrickfergus	7	8
Castlereagh	8	9
Coleraine	9	10
Cookstown	7	8
Craigavon	9	10
Deny	9	10
Down	8	9
Dungannon	8	9
Fermanagh	9	10

DPP	Independent	Political
Larne	7	8
Limavady	7	8
Lisburn	9	10
Magherafelt	8	9
Moyle	7	8
Newry and Mourne	9	10
Newtownabbey	9	10
North Down	9	10
Omagh	7	8
Strabane	7	8
Total	215	241

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of policing each district policing partnership public meeting in each year since their formation. [28874]

Mr. Woodward: The PSNI has advised me that it does not hold the cost of policing each DPP on a central financial record. To gather this information would incur disproportionate cost.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of recruiting independent members in each district policing partnership in each year since their formation. [28875]

Mr. Woodward: Under schedule 3 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 the Board is required to fund 75 per cent. of the expenses reasonably incurred by the council in that year in connection with the establishment of, or the exercise of functions by, a DPP. The council funds the remaining 25 per cent. The Policing Board has advised me that the figures represent the expenditure apportioned to each DPP.

	First recruitment campaign 2003–04	Supplementary competition 2004–05	Advertising stage of current recruitment campaign[1] 2005–06
Antrim	26,144	—	4,375
Ards	30,752	—	4,375
Armagh	22,916	—	4,375
Ballymena	28,896	—	4,375
Ballymoney	10,336	—	4,375
Banbridge	17,044	—	4,375
Belfast	201,604	—	4,375
Carrickfergus	16,996	—	4,375
Castlereagh	31,260	—	4,375
Coleraine	27,976	—	4,375
Cookstown	14,020	—	4,375
Craigavon	37,928	—	4,375
Down	25,072	—	4,375
Dungannon and South Tyrone	47,995	16,480	4,375
Fermanagh	21,492	—	4,375
Larne	13,536	—	4,375
Limavady	32,316	—	4,375
Lisburn	54,244	—	4,375
Magherafelt	15,788	—	4,375
Moyle	6,304	—	4,375
Newtownabbey	38,900	—	4,375
Newry and Mourne	39,376	—	4,375
North Down	37,216	—	4,375
Omagh	22,008	—	4,375
Strabane	15,448	—	4,375
Total Expenditure	872,767	16,480	[2]113,750

[1] The current campaign has just been completed and final costs are not yet available for the selection and interviewing stage of the recruitment process.
[2] A business case has been approved for this exercise at a total cost of £449,000.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* private and *(b)* public district policing partnership meetings were held by each District Policing Partnership in each year for which figures are available. [28876]

Mr. Woodward: The Policing Board has informed me that it does not monitor private meetings of the DPP and no record is maintained of the number of private meetings held. The Policing Board has confirmed the following number of public meetings.

Meetings held in public

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06 to date
Antrim	4	6	1
Ards	6	7	4
Armagh	6	5	3
Ballymena	4	6	5
Ballymoney	5	5	4
Banbridge	6	6	4
Belfast	17	19	10
Carrickfergus	6	5	4
Castlereagh	6	6	6
Coleraine	6	6	4
Cookstown	5	4	2
Craigavon	4	7	2
Derry	3	3	2
Down	6	7	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone	[1]0	[1]0	4
Fermanagh	5	7	5
Larne	5	5	2
Limavady	4	6	5
Lisburn	7	5	6
Magherafelt	5	5	4
Moyle	5	6	5
Newry and Mourne	4	5	3
Newtownabbey	5	6	2
North Down	6	7	4
Omagh	5	4	6
Strabane	3	6	3

[1] The DPP in Dungannon and South Tyrone was not established until December 2004.

Driving Offences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were stopped for not wearing their seatbelts in each of the last five years, broken down by Police Service of Northern Ireland district; and what type of fine was imposed upon each individual. [28869]

Mr. Woodward: An overall figure for the number of people stopped is not available as the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not maintain a record of those who were warned or given advice. Enforcement activity in respect of failure to wear seatbelts is largely by way of non-endorsable fixed penalty notices and figures in relation to this have been placed in the Library. Figures relating to prosecutions for failure to wear a seatbelt are not available for 2000–03, however I can confirm that the number of prosecutions in 2004 was 1,756.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were fined for using mobile phones while driving in each year for which records are held, broken down by Police Service of Northern Ireland district. [28870]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides details of the number of fixed penalty notices issued for the use of a mobile phone while driving.

FPNs issued for mobile phone offences—1 March 2004 to 31 October 2005

DCU area	*FPNs issued*
PSNI Rural Region	
Armagh DCU	892
Ballymena DCU	1,742
Ballymoney DCU	204
Banbridge DCU	447
Coleraine DCU	520
Cookstown DCU	534
Craigavon DCU	1,750
Down DCU	697
Dungannon DCU	985
Fermanagh DCU	551
Foyle DCU	1,275
Limavady DCU	450
Magherafelt DCU	441
Moyle DCU	64
Newry and Mourne DCU	937
Omagh DCU	691
Strabane DCU	339
Total	12,519
PSNI Urban Region	
Antrim DCU	623
Belfast, East DCU	971
Belfast, North DCU	419
Belfast, South DCU	1,245
Belfast, West DCU	321
Carrickfergus DCU	131
Castlereagh DCU	792
Larne DCU	517
Lisburn DCU	1,053
Newtownabbey DCU	486
Newtownards DCU	491
North Down DCU	549
Total	7,598
Total	20,117

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been charged with offences in relation to the use of mobile phones while driving since the new measures were introduced, broken down by district command unit. [24143]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides details of the number of fixed penalty notices issued for the use of a mobile phone while driving.

FPNs issued for 'Misuse of mobile phones'—1 March 2004 to 30 September 2005

	Number
Urban region	
Antrim DCU	569
Belfast East DCU	901
Belfast North DCU	368
Belfast South DCU	1,084
Belfast West DCU	285
Carrickfergus DCU	125
Castlereagh DCU	701
Larne DCU	481
Lisburn DCU	985
Newtownabbey DCU	427
Newtownards DCU	449
North Down DCU	497
Total	6,872

FPNs issued for 'Misuse of mobile phones'—1 March 2004 to 30 September 2005

	Number
Rural region	
Armagh DCU	852
Ballymena DCU	1,617
Ballymoney DCU	190
Banbridge DCU	421
Coleraine DCU	481
Cookstown DCU	512
Craigavon DCU	1,636
Down DCU	662
Dungannon DCU	899
Fermanagh DCU	491
Foyle DCU	1,199
Limavady DCU	431
Magherafelt DCU	417
Moyle DCU	61
Newry and Mourne DCU	908
Omagh DCU	642
Strabane DCU	313
Total	11,732
Overall total	18,604

Hospital Staff (Attacks)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many working hours have been lost at each accident and emergency hospital in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years due to staff being injured or suffering stress following attacks by members of the public. [30286]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Hospitals (Bed Occupancy)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average percentage occupancy of beds at the *(a)* Antrim Area Hospital, *(b)* Whiteabbey Hospital, *(c)* Mid-Ulster Hospital and *(d)* Craigavon Area Hospital was over the last 12 months. [30216]

Mr. Woodward: Percentage bed occupancy rates during 2004–05 for Antrim Area Hospital, Whiteabbey Hospital, Mid-Ulster Hospital and Craigavon Area Hospital are shown in the following table.

Bed occupancy by hospital for 2004–05

Hospital	*Percentage*
Antrim Area Hospital	76.4
Whiteabbey Hospital	94.4
Mid-Ulster Hospital	74.5
Craigavon Area Hospital	79.9

Note:
Day case admissions are excluded from the calculation for bed occupancy.
Source:
Departmental Information Return KH03a

Junk Food Advertising

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government plans to restrict the advertising of crisps and cola drinks in Northern Ireland. [30219]

Mr. Woodward: Advertising is regulated throughout the UK by the Advertising Standards Authority. The UK Government, in the public health White Paper, "Choosing Health", committed itself to securing, by 2007, a comprehensive and effective strategy for action to restrict the advertising and promotion to children of foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar. The Office of Communications (Ofcom) will, therefore, in the early part of 2006, be issuing a public consultation on broadcast advertising and promotion of food to children. As broadcast advertising is not a devolved matter, the consultation will be carried out on a UK-wide basis.

Knife Crime

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what measures are in place to tackle knife crime in Northern Ireland; [28774]

(2) what consultations he has held on stronger measures to deal with knife crime in Northern Ireland; [28775]

(3) what plans he has to prevent the sale of knives to people under 18 in Northern Ireland; [28776]

(4) what steps he has taken to prevent the carrying of knives in public by *(a)* people under 18 and *(b)* others in Northern Ireland; [28777]

(5) whether he has plans to introduce powers to give schools means to stop pupils from bringing knives into schools in Northern Ireland; [28778]

(6) how many crimes occurred in *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* Northern Ireland where knives were used in each year between 1997 and 2001–02; [28779]

(7) what plans he has to amend the powers of the police in Northern Ireland in relation to the stop and search of people suspected of carrying knives. [28780]

Mr. Hanson: Figures relating to knife crime are as follows:

Crimes recorded where a knife was involved in the incident

Financial year	*Northern Ireland*	*North Belfast District Command Unit*
1998–99	770	76
1999–2000	713	76
2000–01	700	65
2001–02	1,016	118
2002–03	986	135
2003–04	985	112
2004–05	1,000	141

Notes:
1. Figures relate to offences where a knife was involved in the incident—it is not known how the knife was actually used.
2. Figures prior to 1998 were collected on different counting rules and are not directly comparable.
3. Figures from 2001–02 onwards are based on the computerised crime recording system ICIS and comparisons with previous years are not appropriate.
4. Figures for 2002–03 to 2004–05 are provided for completeness.
5. Figures for 2004–05 are provisional and may be subject to revision.

Source:
Central Statistics Unit, Police Service of Northern Ireland.

It is a criminal offence to have a knife in public without good reason or lawful authority and it is an offence to manufacture, sell or lend an offensive weapon or, for example, a flick knife. The police have a number of stop-and-search powers do deal with persons suspected of carrying knives. Under the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (PACE) police have powers to stop and search a person or vehicle where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that they will find any article in relation to an offence of having an article with a blade or sharp point—with the exception of certain folding pocket knives—in a public place. The Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 allows police to stop and search any person or vehicle for offensive weapons or dangerous instruments whether or not they have reasonable grounds for suspicion in order to prevent serious violence in a locality. It is also an offence to have a knife or offensive weapon in a school, and the police may enter a school to search for such items. My Officials have been in contact with the Police Service of Northern Ireland in relation to knife crime and legislation and following consultation with the Home Office I have decided to extend to Northern Ireland those provisions in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which will raise the age at which a person may lawfully be sold a knife from 16 to 18 years of age. I have no immediate plans for further change but I will keep the law in this sensitive and difficult area under review.

Libraries

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department expects the new library to be built in Antrim town. [30127]

Mr. Hanson: I cannot say when a new library will be built in Antrim, but I can confirm that the need for the new library for Antrim has already been established.

Officials in the NEELB and DCAL are working closely to finalise an economic appraisal of the Board's proposed replacement and the Department should be able to support the proposal as soon as the necessary approvals have been given.

It will be important for Antrim to have a new purpose built library as part of the Board's proposals for better service delivery.

Live Cattle Exports

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of policing animal welfare demonstrations during the export of live cattle from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [28317]

Mr. Woodward: The PSNI finance department does not hold such information on a central financial record/database or at local DCU level. Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Looked-after Children

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in Northern Ireland are *(a)* in public care, *(b)* living with foster carers and *(c)* waiting for adoptive families. [30539]

Mr. Woodward: At 31 March 2004 (the latest date for which such information is available centrally), there were 2,510 children looked after in public care in Northern Ireland, and 1,529 of these children were living with foster carers. Information on the number of children waiting for adoptive families is not available centrally.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in Northern Ireland for whom adoption was planned have not been adopted in each of the last five years. [30540]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the numbers of children in Northern Ireland for whom adoption was the plan that were not adopted is not available centrally.

Loughall Police Station Shootings

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what instructions he has given to the Police Service of Northern Ireland to re-open the investigation into the shooting incident at Loughall Police Station on 8 May 1987 when eight terrorists of the Provisional IRA's East Tyrone Brigade were killed by the SAS. [27356]

Mr. Woodward: Decisions regarding the re-opening of police investigations are operational matters for the Chief Constable. However the PSNI has advised us that this incident will be looked at by the Historical Enquiry Team in due course. Its remit is to re-examine all deaths attributable to the security situation in Northern Ireland between 1969 and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Magilligan Prison

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the performance of the Foyleview sub-unit at Magilligan prison since its opening in dealing with those prisoners eligible to be housed there. [30092]

Mr. Woodward: There has been no formal evaluation of the work of the Foyleview Unit at Magilligan prison. However, based on experience it does prove beneficial to reducing re-offending.

Since the unit opened in 1994, 889 inmates have been housed there. Of that number, 208 were de-selected for breaches of the contract entered into with the governor as a condition of placement in the unit. A further six inmates self de-selected.

Of the remaining 675 inmates, at least 29 are known to have re-offended since their release and subsequently been given a further custodial sentence by the courts.

Foyleview makes a positive contribution to the local community with the inmates involved in numerous work projects throughout the area. Their efforts in working in the community have met with widespread approval.

Military Prosecutions

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what arrangements he proposes to make for *(a)* the prosecution and *(b)* the punishment of armed forces personnel in relation to incidents in Northern Ireland during the recent period of the troubles; [27357]

(2) what arrangements he proposes to make for *(a)* the prosecution and *(b)* the punishment of on-the-run terrorists in relation to incidents in Northern Ireland during the recent period of the troubles. [27358]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill, which was introduced on 9 November 2005. The scheme set out in this Bill will be available for qualifying offences where individuals met the criteria set out in the Bill. The Bill covers offences under UK law committed before the Belfast Agreement (10 April 1998) in connection with terrorism and the affairs of Northern Ireland.

All other offences committed after 10 April 1998 or by individuals not meeting the criteria will be dealt with through the normal criminal justice arrangements.

Ministerial Travel

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by ministers within his Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if he will indicate who accompanied the ministers on each trip. [27807]

Mr. Hain: Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of domestic travel the information required could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved administration.

Missing Children

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children were reported missing in each of the last five years, broken down by Police Service Northern Ireland district. [28881]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not currently available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drivers were prosecuted during 2004 in Northern Ireland for driving without *(a)* vehicle insurance and *(b)* motor tax. [30090]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not yet available. Data relating to prosecutions during 2004 will become available in early 2006.

Murders

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those persons who have been murdered in Northern Ireland during the current troubles, stating in each case whether anyone has been *(a)* charged and *(b)* convicted of the murder in cases in which all proceedings are complete. [29548]

Mr. Woodward: In response to a parliamentary question in 1995, a document entitled "List of deaths due to the security situation, 1969 to 1995" was placed in the Library. It is impossible to answer the remainder of the question within the time available. However, the PSNI is currently preparing an updated list and upon completion a copy will be placed in the Library.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28974]

Mr. Woodward: Negotiations with the trade unions on the 2005 pay round for Northern Ireland Office staff are ongoing. The 2004 rates are still in effect, and 88 staff in the lowest grade on the minimum of the pay scale were in receipt of £5.04 per hour. In light of the increase in the national minimum wage, as an interim measure, we increased their salaries to £5.05 per hour from 1 October 2005.

The 2005 pay settlement, backdated to 1 April, will result in all staff being paid above the national minimum wage.

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of individuals who are likely to be affected by the special arrangements proposed in the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [28980]

Mr. Hain: Decisions on whether an individual is eligible for the scheme will be taken by an independent Certification Commissioner using criteria set out in the Bill. The number of individuals who are affected by the legislation will depend on the outcome of the Commissioner's decisions. The Government do not hold figures on how many people would meet the eligibility requirements of the scheme.

On-the-runs

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people he expects will be affected by the proposed legislation regarding on-the-runs in relation to offences committed in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* England, Scotland and Wales. [27017]

Mr. Hain: The Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill was introduced in Parliament on 9 November 2005.

It provides that an independent Certification Commissioner would determine whether individuals are eligible for the proposed scheme, using criteria set out in the Bill. The number of individuals who are affected by the legislation will depend on the outcome of the Commissioner's decisions.

Operation Viper

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fixed penalties fines were issued in each district command by the operations command units during the most recent Operation Viper. [28853]

Mr. Woodward: The most recent Operation Viper took place on 14 and 15 October 2005. Figures on the number of fixed penalty fines issued during this operation are not yet available.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what role the C3 branch of the Police Service of Northern Ireland plays regarding intelligence surrounding the deaths of terrorists and civilians in Northern Ireland at the hands of security forces. [27317]

Mr. Woodward: C3 branch of the Police Service for Northern Ireland are tasked with the gathering, assessment and dissemination of intelligence for all serious crime.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance has been requested from the Ministry of Defence by the Police Service of Northern Ireland for historical review. [27326]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that senior managers from the Historical Enquiries Team (C8) of PSNI have been in regular contact with the Tribunals and Inquiries Unit of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) while the HET has been in the process of setting up. The MOD has been fully supportive and discussions are continuing about a formal Memorandum of Understanding, to govern the exchange of any information required.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1378W, on police, how many members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland Diving Unit have been available for operational duties in each month in 2005; and what the unit's budget allocation was in each of the last five years. [28994]

Mr. Woodward: The funding of the unit is provided from central budgets and costs are not readily available.

Listed in the following table are the duties of the Underwater Search Unit in 2005. Seventeen members were on training days when called out.

Month	Call-outs	Training days	Members
January	1	4	7
February	7	3	6
March	11	1	6
April	4	2	7
May	9	3	7
June	13	2	6
July	9	—	5
August	6	4	5
September	11	3	6
October	13	1	6

Note:
Total number of days for Underwater Search Unit duties is 107.

Punishment Beatings

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many punishment beatings were reported in each of the last 12 months, broken down by district command unit. [28852]

Mr. Woodward: The following table "Casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults from October 2004 to September 2005" refers. You should note that 2005 statistics are provisional and subject to minor amendment.

Casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults—October 2004 to September 2005

	2004			2005			
DCU	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ards	2	0	1	1	0	1	0
Armagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
North Belfast	1	4	0	3	6	1	0
South Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
West Belfast	2	1	0	1	0	1	1
Ballymena	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Coleraine	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	[
Dungannon and S Tyrone	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Down	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foyle	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
Larne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lisburn	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Newtownabbey	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
North Down	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Newry and Mourne	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Omagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strabane	0	1	2	0	0	1	0
Total	9	11	6	9	11	10	4

	2005				
DCU	May	June	July	August	September	Total
Antrim	0	3	2	0	0	5
Ards	3	0	0	0	0	8
Armagh	0	0	1	0	0	1
Banbridge	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	1
North Belfast	1	1	0	0	0	17
South Belfast	0	0	2	2	0	6
West Belfast	0	1	0	0	0	7
Ballymena	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymoney	0	1	0	0	0	1
Carrickfergus	0	4	0	1	0	7
Coleraine	0	0	0	0	1	4
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	0	1	0	0	0	3
Castlereagh	2	0	0	1	1	4
Dungannon and S Tyrone	0	0	0	0	0	4
Down	0	1	0	0	0	4
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foyle	4	1	0	0	0	9
Larne	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	0	0	0	0	0	0

DCU	2005 May	June	July	August	September	Total
Lisburn	1	1	0	0	0	3
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	2
Newtownabbey	2	1	0	1	0	6
North Down	1	1	0	0	0	3
Newry and Mourne	0	1	0	0	0	4
Omagh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Strabane	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	14	17	5	5	2	103

Source:
Central Statistics Unit, Police Service of Northern Ireland

Road Deaths

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were killed on the roads of Northern Ireland *(a)* in each year from 1994 to 2004 and *(b)* in each month in 2005. [28859]

Mr. Woodward: The number of people killed on the roads of Northern Ireland *(a)* in each year from 1994 to 2004 and *(b)* in each month in the year 2005 are provided in the following tables:

	Number of fatalities
1994	157
1995	144
1996	142
1997	144
1998	160
1999	141
2000	171
2001	148
2002	150
2003	150
2004	147

2005	Number of fatalities
January	12
February	8
March	9
April	9
May	12
June	13
July	12
August	9
September	14
October	9
Total	107

Smoking

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the ban on smoking in public places in Northern Ireland in the first five years of operation. [29886]

Mr. Woodward: The introduction of smoke-free legislation will protect children, employees and the public in general from the increased health risks associated with exposure to second hand smoke such as lung cancer, ischaemic heart disease, stroke, asthma and other circulatory and respiratory diseases. Experience elsewhere suggests that comprehensive controls also help reduce smoking prevalence.

The draft smoke-free legislation will be issued for public consultation early in the new year and will be accompanied by a draft Regulatory Impact Assessment, which will address both the health and economic implications of tobacco control measures.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the special advisers in post in his Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29406]

Mr. Woodward: Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Speed Detection Devices

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions the *(a)* Operational Command Unit and *(b)* District Command Unit have used speed detection devices on the Upper Newtownards Road in each of the last six months. [28868]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not recorded.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29131]

Mr. Woodward: The following table sets out the number of employees who have been dismissed by the Northern Ireland Office in each of the last five years.

Date dismissed	Reason for dismissal	Number
6 October 2000	Misconduct	1
27 August 2004	Inefficiency—poor performance	1
27 August 2004	Misconduct	1

Stinger Devices

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 120W, on stinger devices, how many stinger type devices there are in each police district in Northern Ireland. [28878]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the table as follows:

Stinger devices by DCU	Number
Belfast, East	6
Belfast, West	17
Newtownabbey	4
Larne	2
Coleraine	0
Ballymena	2
Moyle	3
Carrickfergus	2
Lisburn	10
Craigavon	3
Armagh	5
Antrim	9
Belfast, North	15
Belfast, South	13
Castlereagh	4
North Down	8
Ards	3
Banbridge	2
Ballymoney	2
Cookstown	2
Dungannon	9
Down	7
Fermanagh	20
Foyle	9
Limavady	1
Magherafelt	4
Newry and Mourne	6
Omagh	6
Strabane	4
Total	178

Tax Credits (Helpline)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will re-introduce an intermediary telephone helpline for recognised advisory services to contact the Regional Inland Revenue Office in Belfast in relation to tax credit inquiries from Northern Ireland. [17125]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

HM Revenue and Customs' Tax Credit Office continues to maintain a telephone helpline service for recognised advisory services in Northern Ireland.

Under-age Drinking

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many cases of under-age drinking the Police Service of Northern Ireland have brought to local councils in Northern Ireland in the last 10 years; [28858]

(2) how many times the Police Service of Northern Ireland have brought cases regarding the breach of drinking by-laws to each of the local government authorities in each of the last five years. [28864]

Mr. Hain: The Chief Constable has advised me that to obtain such information would require a manual trawl of records in each of the 29 District Command Units and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Vehicle and Pedestrian Attacks

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many attacks were recorded on the stretch of road from Newtownards Road, Bridge End area to Westbourne Church *(a)* on vehicles and *(b)* on pedestrians in each of the past 12 months; and what the perceived (i) religious and (ii) political affiliations were of (A) the victims and (B) the attackers; [28188]

(2) how many attacks have been recorded on the stretch of road from Mount Pottinger Corner to Central Station in Belfast *(a)* on vehicles and *(b)* on pedestrians in each of the past 12 months; and what the perceived (i) religious and (ii) political affiliations were of (A) the victims and (B) the attackers. [28189]

Mr. Woodward: The PSNI does not record the religious or political affiliation of perpetrators and victims of crimes.

To ascertain the number vehicles subject to criminal damage and persons subject to assault in tightly defined geographical areas such as those listed in the questions would require the services of a police analyst. To have an analyst undertake this research would extract them from their prioritised work in East Belfast DCU, incurring disproportionate cost to answer the question.

The DCU Commander in East Belfast suggests that it may help for the Sector Commander responsible for that area to meet with Lady Hermon or other UUP representative to discuss the matter further.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time was in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 for people in Northern Ireland who required an MRI scan. [29881]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not collected centrally.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Chorley Magistrates Court

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many court sessions took place at Chorley magistrates court in each of the last three years; [29491]

(2) what plans she has to increase the number of court sessions in magistrates courts to reduce the time from arrest to trial; [29492]

(3) how many magistrates operate from Chorley court; and if she will make a statement; [29493]

(4) what plans there are to increase the number of magistrates in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Lancashire; [29494]

(5) if she will make a statement on the future of Chorley magistrates court. [29510]

Ms Harman: The number of half day sittings at Chorley magistrates court for the last three years are *(a)* 998 for 2002 *(b)* 852 for 2003 and *(c)* 621 for 2004.

The Government established the new organisation of Her Majesty's Courts Service on 1 April 2005 to administer all Magistrates, County and Crown Courts. This will allow increased flexibility of sitting across all courts. Under this Government targets have been established to bring more offenders to justice and a Criminal Case Management Framework has been introduced to ensure cases are properly prepared and to reduce unnecessary delay.

The number of magistrates sitting at Chorley magistrates court is 74. The average number of sittings was 32.16 (during the period 1 January 2004 until 31 December 2004) the weighted caseload was 18,324.25.

The Advisory Committee for this area will meet on 12 December 2005, to discuss the likely requirements in 2006–07 for Chorley, Ormskirk and South Ribble Local Justice Areas. A major press and radio campaign was launched on 12 September 2005. Out of a total of 108 completed application forms received to date nine are for Chorley.

There has been significant investment in Chorley magistrates court in the last two years and it forms an integral part of the future plans for the area. Her Majesty's Court Service Area Director for Lancashire is consulting on a possible merger of the three local benches but has confirmed that this would not affect the future of any of the courts at Chorley, Leyland, or Ormskirk under present business needs.

Congestion Charge

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Government car service has paid to Transport for London in congestion charges since they were introduced. [27426]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its chief executive Mr. Roy Burke to write to the right, hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Coroners

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received in connection with the current review of coroners services from *(a)* the National Missing Persons Helpline, *(b)* pathologists and *(c)* forensic scientists. [27601]

Ms Harman: There have been three formal opportunities for representative groups, or particular organisations, to make submissions about coroner services in recent years: to the Shipman Inquiry; to the Fundamental Review of the Coroner System; and in response to the Government's consequent Position Paper in 2004. Representations have been received from the Royal College of Pathologists on all three occasions, together with a number of comments from individual pathologists; from the British Association of Forensic Science to the Fundamental Review; but no representations have been received from the National Missing Persons Helpline.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions she has had with representatives of coroners courts on the identification of dead persons. [27603]

Ms Harman: I have had general discussions with *(a)* coroner officers *(b)* coroners and *(c)* Associated Chief of Police Offices. Discussions in individual cases take place as necessary.

Domestic Violence Court (Teesside)

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has for a specialist domestic violence court in Teesside. [29466]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs wrote to all magistrates courts committees on 15 December 2004 asking for expressions of interest in setting up a specialist DV court (SDVC). Teesside magistrates court was not among those who responded and was therefore not included in the selection process for establishing the first 25 specialist domestic violence court systems across England and Wales. The Home Office has recently announced a further £1 million to develop and extend the programme further in 2006–07. As before, all areas across England and Wales will be invited to put themselves forward for inclusion in the programme and a further selection process is planned for early in the new year..

Electoral Administration Bill

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what role the right hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) played in the drafting of the Electoral Administration Bill. [25590]

Ms Harman: The right hon. Member for Makerfield played no part in the drafting of the Bill. He is a Member of the Legislative Programme and the Constitutional Affairs sub-committee on Electoral Policy (CA(EP) which approved the content of the Bill.

Female Judges/Magistrates

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to increase the number of female *(a)* judges and *(b)* magistrates sitting in the Teesside courts. [29440]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is taking forward a Judicial Diversity programme which is aimed at increasing applications for judicial office from groups currently under-represented in the judiciary, including women. The Judicial Diversity programme focuses on three main areas:

Encouraging applications and raising awareness

Removing barriers to appointment

Ensuring that the way judicial office operates encourages and supports a more diverse judiciary.

As part of the work to encourage applications and raise awareness, the Department is conducting a number of outreach events. Events were held at Newcastle Upon Tyne in June 2005 and at Bedlington magistrates court in October 2005 to inform lawyers about the appointments process and encourage them to apply.

There is a managed recruitment campaign in South Cleveland, aimed at encouraging members of the community to apply for the magistracy. My Department is currently supporting the local Advisory Committee's plans to recruit a further 15 magistrates. Together, we launched a major press and radio campaign at the beginning of October 2005. This was supplemented by a presentation at Teesside University on 3 October and an open day at Teesside Law Courts 22 October.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of the magistrates sitting at Middlesbrough and Guisborough magistrates courts is female. [29471]

Ms Harman: The total number of female magistrates on the Teesside bench, that sits at Middlesbrough, is 131 out of a total of 310 (42.2 per cent.). The Langbaurgh East bench, which sits at Guisborough magistrates court, has 44 magistrates of which 19 are female (43.1 per cent.).

Great War Medal Index Cards

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answers of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 165–66W, on the Great War Medal Index Cards, whether other *(a)* organisations and *(b)* museums were given the opportunity to bid for ownership of the cards; and how the Western Front Association was informed that the National Archives wished to pass on the cards. [28939]

Ms Harman: The Ministry of Defence, together with the National Archives, held discussions with the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the National Army Museum, the Fleet Air Arm Museum, the Women's Library and Lancashire Military Museums concerning the First World War Army Medal Index Cards.

The considerable publicity given to this subject last spring provided an opportunity for other organisations to express an interest in acquiring the cards. This publicity prompted the Western Front Association to contact the National Archives.

Junior Judges

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has for the mentoring of junior salaried judges to encourage them to progress to higher judicial office. [30426]

Ms Harman: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Keith Vaz) on the 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1000W.

Legal Aid

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much legal aid was paid to *(a)* solicitors, *(b)* junior counsel and *(c)* senior counsel in each year in England and Wales since 2000. [14583]

Bridget Prentice: The table sets out the payments made both for the Community Legal Service and the Criminal Defence Service. Payment records at the Legal Services Commission do not differentiate between junior and senior counsel. The figures shown therefore account for payments made to all categories of barrister and solicitor.

The figures are gross (i.e. not the cost to public funds) and do not include payments to other people and organisations such as Not for Profit agencies, mediators, trainers and the service for providing police station telephone advice. Figures shown in the Legal Services Commission's annual reports do include such figures.

£000

	Community legal service		*Criminal defence service*	
	Solicitor[1]	*Barrister*	*Solicitor*[1]	*Barrister*
2000–01	967,166	188,139	628,634	249,700
2001–02	881,942	192,062	723,363	265,180
2002–03	867,425	189,376	774,371	317,365
2003–04	908,209	198,050	825,277	351,020
2004–05	810,643	182,760	834,624	354,178

[1] Figures include third party disbursements (for example, expert witnesses)

Lord Justice Wall Investigation

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when Lord Justice Wall is expected to report on his investigation into five cases in which the family courts were involved and children were subsequently killed during contact visits. [29333]

Bridget Prentice: Lord Justice Wall has been conducting an internal review, from the judicial perspective, for the President of the Family Division. This is in the light of broad concerns expressed rather than a response to individual complaints. This is a judicial matter.

Privy Council

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1339W on what date the Privy Council meeting

was held at Balmoral; which Ministers attended; whether each *(a)* departed from and *(b)* returned to London; and what business was conducted. [30779]

Ms Harman: The Privy Council meeting at Balmoral Castle was held on 13 September 2004, and was attended by Baroness Amos, Alan Milburn and Alan Johnson. All the Ministers departed from and returned to London. The business of the meeting was to swear in Alan Johnson as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Following the Privy Council meeting, in a separate audience with the Queen, Alan Milburn made affirmation as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Queen's Counsel

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the panel for interviewing and recommending appointments to the role of Queen's counsel will be subject to the proposed duty on public authorities to promote gender equality. [30424]

Ms Harman: Queen's counsel remains a public appointment for the time being. The Secretary of State has already included improvements in fairness and diversity in the goals for the QC scheme agreed by the professions. The Equality Bill is currently before Parliament. As currently drafted, I expect that both the QC selection panel in making recommendations to the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of State in advising Her Majesty, will be subject to the duty. In any event, the Secretary of State expects equal treatment to be an essential part of the panel's consideration of applications.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Queen's counsel appointed in each of the last five years *(a)* in England and *(b)* on the north eastern circuit were women. [29469]

Ms Harman: No Queen's counsel have been appointed since Easter 2003; we expect the first new recommendations to come from the independent selection panel in April or May 2006. The numbers of female appointees for the whole of England and Wales in the last five years were:

	Number of female appointees
2001	10
2002	12
2003	9

Figures for individual circuits are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs in how many rape trials at a Crown court *(a)* a female and *(b)* a male judge sat in each of the last five years; and how many cases resulted in (i) conviction and (ii) acquittal in each case. [29756]

Ms Harman: We do not hold centrally information on the gender of the judge who sits on trials including rape trials. Departmental records however show that there were a total of 6,237 rape trials for the period starting 2001 up to now. 2,059 trials resulted in a conviction and 3,615 in an acquittal. 563 resulted in 'other' disposal such as the jury being unable to agree on a verdict.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many rape trials were listed as floating cases in the first half of 2005 in *(a)* the central criminal court and *(b)* Teesside Crown court. [30425]

Ms Harman: Departmental records show that during the first half of 2005, there were no rape trials listed as floaters at the central criminal court. There were two cases listed as floaters at Teesside Crown court but this should be placed in the context of 21 cases listed for trial where there was at least one count of rape.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many rape trials in which all proceedings are complete have been conducted in Teesside Crown Court under the revised definition of that offence in the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and what verdicts have been returned in each case. [29439]

Ms Harman: Departmental records show that there have been 12 completed rape trials under the revised definition of that offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 at Teesside Crown Court. Three resulted in a conviction and nine in an acquittal.

Teesside Crown Court

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what facilities for video-linked examination in chief and cross examinations are in use in *(a)* Teesside Crown Court and *(b)* Middlesbrough and Guisborough magistrates courts; and what further facilities are proposed in each of the next two years. [29467]

Ms Harman: Teesside Crown court has six videolink facilities, Middlesbrough magistrates court has four videolink facilities, and Guisbrough magistrates court has one videolink installed that can be used for giving evidence in chief and cross examination.

There are no current plans to install additional videolinks in the magistrates courts. However, the Department is putting together a business case for additional equipment in Crown court centres for 2006.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of the permanent judiciary in Teesside Crown court is female. [29468]

Ms Harman: There are nine judges who sit permanently at Teesside Crown court. Currently none of them are female.

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of Crown court recorders *(a)* in England and *(b)* sitting regularly in Teesside Crown court are women. [29470]

Ms Harman: There are 1,276 recorders who sit in crime in England of whom 180 are women.

Of the 51 recorders assigned to the Cleveland/ Durham/Northumbria pool, five are female. Four of these sit regularly at Teesside Crown court.

Trials (Special Measures)

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will include trials concerning special measures among those where special measures for the protection of witnesses are automatically approved. [734]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The Government recognise that giving evidence in court can be a traumatic experience.

Because of the nature of sexual offences and the sensitivity of the evidence that is given, complainants in sexual offences are automatically eligible for special measures unless they advise the court that they do not want such assistance. Witnesses aged under 17 years are also automatically eligible for special measures assistance. A victim of domestic violence who falls into one of these categories will be eligible automatically for special measures.

Other complainants and witnesses, including those who are victims of domestic violence but who do not fall into these automatic categories, whose quality of evidence may be diminished by reason of incapacity or because of fear or distress about testifying can apply to the court for a special measures direction.

The Government believe that allowing courts to apply these principles strikes the right balance enabling measures to be taken which are appropriate to the particular circumstances of a case taking account of the needs and wishes of individual complainants and witnesses. We have no plans to amend the legislation to make special measures automatic in cases of domestic violence.

In addition to the practical measures available in cases of domestic violence, the specialist domestic violence courts programme we are taking forward is about situating the court and the criminal justice system as part of a community wide response to domestic violence which places the victim at the heart of the process. We have a programme in place to expand the existing network of specialist courts across the country and propose to develop courts in 25 areas by April 2006. Additional funding of £1 million was announced in October 2005 to expand the programme further in 2006–07.

Young Voters

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of people aged 18 to 21 years voted in the *(a)* 1992, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* 2005 general elections. [28927]

Ms Harman: No record is kept of categories of electors who cast votes in UK elections based upon age. Elections in the UK are conducted on the basis of the relevant electoral register which does not identify the age of electors.

PRIME MINISTER

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence regarding the eligibility of Swan Hunter to bid for inclusion in the CVF programme. [27689]

The Prime Minister: I have regular meetings and discussions with ministerial colleagues and others on a wide range of subjects. Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

China

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* occasions and *(b)* dates when he has raised human rights in (i) Tibet and (ii) China with members of the Chinese Government in each of the last three years; [26879]

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister whether he discussed Tibet with *(a)* Chinese President Hu Jintao and *(b)* Premier Wen Jiabao during his meetings with them in September; and if he will make a statement. [27078]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 663W.

I also refer the hon. Members to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Ian Pearson) to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on Friday 11 November, *Official Report*, column 863–64W.

Commission for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with members of the Commission for Africa since it reported. [30234]

The Prime Minister: I have remained in contact with members of the Commission for Africa since it reported, including during the G8 summit at Gleneagles in July. Following the launch of the Commission for Africa's Report in March, our priority has been to ensure that its recommendations are implemented. The report itself is only a first step, and is only valuable if we act on it and use it to achieve change to support Africa's development.

Departmental Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Office in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27407]

The Prime Minister: In relation to the employment of consultants my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) on Wednesday 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

In relation to special advisers, since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement I made on Thursday 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158–61WS. Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

John Hemming: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the special advisers in post in his Office, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Office of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29405]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement I made on Thursday 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158–61WS.

Information on special advisers for 2005–06 will be published in the normal way once it has been completed.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister how many staff in his Office were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27450]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) on Thursday 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1407W.

Financial Accountability

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the chain of financial accountability for the Prime Minister's Office; and what codes govern the legality of spending therein. [27746]

The Prime Minister: My Office forms part of the Cabinet Office for budgeting purposes, and its expenditure is reported in the Cabinet Office's resource accounts, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. The Cabinet Office is subject to the normal rules of government accounting.

G8 Climate Change Conference

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his speech of 2 November 2005 at the G8 climate change conference, whether his statement on external imposition of internal targets referred to *(a)* the Kyoto protocol and *(b)* the general concept of binding greenhouse gas reduction targets; and what assessment he has made of whether a framework of the kind he refers to for the private sector would require binding targets to be effective. [29517]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the speech I gave at the Lord Mayor's banquet on 14 November 2005. A copy of this is available on the Number 10 website.

Gifts

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Prime Minister what procedures he followed under paragraph 5.25 of the Ministerial Code in respect of gifts of watches and other jewellery to him and his family by the Prime Minister of Italy. [29927]

The Prime Minister: This is accounted for in the annual published list of gifts received by Ministers valued at more than £140. Information for the period June 2001 to 31 March 2005 is available in the Libraries of the House.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Prime Minister how much his Office spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29572]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 165W.

Ministerial Committee on Intelligence Services

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the dates on which the Ministerial Committee on Intelligence Services has met since December 2003. [29422]

The Prime Minister: Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice and the proceedings of Cabinet and Cabinet committees is generally not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Ministerial Resignations (Payments)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister if he will review the rules under which Ministers who resign receive lump sum payments in cases where *(a)* their resignation is caused by an error of judgment or by a failure of policy and *(b)* they return to Government within a period of two years; and if he will make a statement. [30543]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the letter I sent him on Monday 14 November 2005. Copies of the letter have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on his official travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27671]

The Prime Minister: The information requested cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

However, in respect of ministerial cars provided by the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) has asked Roy Burke, Chief Executive of the GCDA to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library of the House. For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the Chief Executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and

to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library of the House.

In respect of overseas travel, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Copies of these lists are available in the Library of the House. Information on the number of officials accompanying ministers on overseas visits is included in the list. All Ministers travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers". Information for the year 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the financial year.

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister how many *(a)* flights and *(b)* helicopter flights have been taken by Ministers within his Department for (i) UK and (ii) overseas visits; on how many occasions (A) charter flights were used and (B) first and club class tickets were obtained; and who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27805]

The Prime Minister: The information requested cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

However in respect of overseas travel, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Copies of these lists are available in the Library of the House. Information on the number of officials accompanying ministers on overseas visits is included in the list. All Ministers travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers". Information for the year 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the financial year.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister when he last travelled on the London underground on official business. [30703]

The Prime Minister: I travel making the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements, and use the underground as and when appropriate. My travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers".

Ministerial Visits

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister how many times he has visited *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire in his official capacity in the last 12 months; and what the purpose was of each visit. [29922]

The Prime Minister: I have visited Hertfordshire twice in the last year. My visits cover a range of matters including health, education, criminal justice and the economy. I travel making the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements. My travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 10 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers".

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister how many employees have been dismissed from his Office in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29132]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Terrorism Legislation

Grant Shapps: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 298W, to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), what means he used to calculate the conversion between gigabytes and feet. [28485]

The Prime Minister: The method of calculation was taken from the 'New Perspectives Series' published by Thomson Leaning entitled 'Computer Concepts, Fourth Edition, Enhanced' (June Parsons and Dan Oja, Chapter 4, Section D), which calculates that a computer hard drive of 20.4 gigabytes would equate to 5.4 million sheets of single spaced normal text, which would in turn produce a stack of paper around 1,800 feet high. The computer hard drive in question equalled 750 gigabytes which would, therefore, have produced the equivalent of 198 million sheets of paper standing at 66,176 feet high.

Visits

Bob Spink: To ask the Prime Minister if he will visit Cyprus during his term of office. [30384]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

WORK AND PENSIONS

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24467]

Mrs. McGuire: All contact numbers used by the Department for members of the public operate on 0845 (local rate) or 0800 (free) phone numbers. There are no records available of 0870 numbers having been used by the Department for Work and Pensions as contact numbers for members of the public.

Benefits

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of incapacity benefit claimants do not have a first level 2 qualification; [25381]

(2) what proportion of lone parents on benefits do not have a first level 2 qualification. [25382]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 144–45 to the right hon. and learned Member for Kensington and Chelsea (Sir Malcolm Rifkind) on new deal, *(a)* how many and *(b)* what proportion of people who registered with a new deal for disabled people job broker (i) found part-time work which was not sustained, (ii) found full-time work which was not sustained and (ii) did not find work, from July 2001 to May 2005. [28993]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* Between July 2001 and May 2005, a total of 144,360 people had registered with a new deal for disabled people (NDDP) job broker. The number of people gaining a job up to May 2005, following registration with an NDDP job broker, was 59,560. Of these, 29,170 (20.2 per cent.) found sustained full-time jobs and 16,420 (11.4 per cent.) found unsustained full time jobs; 8,620 people (59.7 per cent.) found sustained part-time jobs and 5,340 (3.7 per cent.) found unsustained part-time jobs.

In the same period, 84,800 (58.7 per cent.) of those registered with an NDDP job broker had not yet found work. However, 67,230 of these were still participating in the programme and so may go on to gain a job.

Notes:

1. For the purposes of new deal for disabled people, a job is regarded as sustained when a person, placed into work through an NDDP job broker, remains in work for 13 out of 39 weeks. Prior to October 2003, an NDDP job was regarded as sustained when a person, placed into work through an NDDP job broker, remained in work for 26 out of 39 weeks.
2. NDDP jobs data relates only to the number of individuals gaining a job through an NDDP job broker. A measure of sustainability is not available for non-job broker jobs.
3. Although data are now available on people into jobs through NDDP up to the end of August 2005, data provided is up to the end of May 2005, to allow three months for the job to be recorded as sustained.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of benefit claims are being handled manually because of flaws in the CMS IT system; and if he will make a statement. [28360]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. David Laws, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the proportion of benefit claims being handled manually because of the flaws in the Customer Management IT System (CMS).

Jobcentre Plus is undergoing a massive change programme. We are making substantial investment to modernise our IT, which will result in an improved service to customers, irrespective of where they live. We currently have rolled out around 2/3 of the national network using the CMS system. Initially, we encountered some problems with performance and reliability, but these have been dealt with through a series of performance releases.

CMS now performs to agreed service levels. However, in recent weeks our customers have experienced difficulties in getting through to our contact centres. We have taken steps to tackle these problems, by introducing temporary adjustments, including some clerical activities, to streamline business processes whilst we go through this transition period.

The current position is that we have 9 of our 24 contact centres operating some clerical processes. The extent of clerical activity will vary between different offices. It is not possible to identify the proportion of claims not subject to the full CMS processes, but we continue to deliver full CMS supported processes in around two-thirds of our contact centres and in well over three-quarters of linked sites. This situation is changing all of the time. Early indications are encouraging, and we have seen week-on-week improvements in call handling since the beginning of September.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Gravesham constituency were in receipt of incapacity benefit in each year since May 1997. [28374]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in the Gravesham parliamentary constituency

May 1997	3,300
May 1998	3,600
May 1999	3,300
May 2000	3,300
May 2001	3,300
May 2002	3,300
May 2003	3,400
May 2004	3,500
May 2005	3,500

Notes:

1. The parliamentary constituency figures for the years 1997 to 1999 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. 'Claimant' figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent, Samples from 1997 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Gravesham constituency were entitled to an income-related benefit in each year since 1997. [28375]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Estimates of the number of pensioners entitled to the main income-related benefits are available on a national basis only. These can be found in the DWP report series: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up"; copies of which are available in the Library.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many working age incapacity benefit claimants receive income support with a disability premium; and how this number has changed since May 1997. [27980]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Working-age incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants also in receipt of income support with a disability premium.

	IB/SDA total	*Receiving income support with a disability premium*
May 1997	2,624,600	749,500
May 2005	2,741,200	1,050,600

Notes:

1. The figures for 1997 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. 'claimant' figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples from 1997 to 1999 and Work and Pensions longitudinal study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what percentage of benefit claims in integrated benefit system pilots areas have taken longer than the 12-day target to process; [28388]

(2) what the average time taken to process a benefit claim has been in the integrated benefit system pilot areas. [28389]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Graham Brady, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning what percentage of benefit claims have taken longer than the 12-day target to process and the average time taken to process a benefit claim in the integrated benefit system pilot areas. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus is currently in the process of rolling out its integrated offices and so the number of such outlets changes quickly and, at the same time, we are rationalising and centralising the sites where benefit processing is carried out.

Jobcentre Plus administers many types of benefit. There are two that have a 12-day clearance target: Job Seeker's Allowance and Income Support.

Processing Centres keep statistics about the number of claims that are cleared and how long it took. The statistics only show where the claim was processed, not where it originated. Processing Centres have no means to differentiate between claims that have been made via its new integrated offices and existing service outlets. Unfortunately, this means that we cannot answer the question in the manner in which you requested the information.

We can say, however, that in September, Jobcentre plus had processed 180,639 claims to Job Seeker's Allowance and had completed 93.3% of these within the12 day clearance target. I am pleased to say that the Actual Average Clearance time for Income Support was 10.8 days, which is well within our target.

I hope this is helpful.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29118]

Margaret Hodge: DWP do not use consultants to lead projects within the Department as they are only engaged to support DWP-led projects.

The majority of engagements for consultancy are awarded on a fixed price basis with payment only made when products have been satisfactorily delivered. Longer-term engagements will have a number of break/review points built into the contract where the customer will review what has been delivered. In cases of poor delivery the contract can be terminated. Therefore, we do not have a system of sanctions in place, consultants are paid if and when we are satisfied with the work delivered. Some contracts will also include a performance-based system of incentivisation.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Minister of State will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 22 September concerning job vacancies. [26642]

Margaret Hodge: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 15 November 2005.

Customer Management Systems

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the operation of the second-generation customer management system in call centres and benefits offices, with particular reference to efficiency in *(a)* call handling, *(b)* payment of benefits and *(c)* interaction with local authority housing benefit claims. [28691]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your enquiry concerning the operation of the second generation Customer Management System (CMS) in Contact Centres and benefit offices. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

CMS is the IT system that has been implemented to support a number of changes in the way our customers claim Jobcentre Plus benefits. These changes are part of a wider programme of service delivery modernisation in Jobcentre Plus that also includes, for example, greater use of telephone based contact with our customers and the adoption of standard operating processes.

CMS was first introduced in Livingston in July 2003 and rollout to other sites commenced in October 2003. A second release was introduced on 13 December 2004, which made a number of improvements. This included electronic data transfer of information gathered in CMS directly into the Income Support Computer and Jobseeker's Allowance Payment Systems.

With any major change, there is often a period of 'settling in' and this has been the case for the introduction of CMS and the new processes that it supports. Initially we encountered some difficulties in terms of speed, capacity and reliability of the system, although, not entirely to do with CMS itself but related to complementary systems that CMS relies upon. A series of technical releases have largely addressed these issues and the computer system itself is now performing as expected.

As with all IT systems CMS has meant a significant change in the way staff in Jobcentre Plus do their job. They require a good understanding of how the whole process links together, including the importance of gathering information on behalf of Local Authorities (LA) and of getting it right at each stage. To support this we have developed in consultation with practitioners, a "toolkit" of advice and guidance aimed at all relevant staff and managers designed to explain and reinforce correct practice and allow managers to monitor consistently. Key messages have also been enhanced in the learning and development material being delivered to our staff.

Despite this programme of improvement work, we know from feedback from LAs that there is further work to be done to ensure that the operation of CMS is successful. The process works best in those LAs where there are effective liaison arrangements between Jobcentre Plus and the LA. Ongoing improvement work is overseen by a joint DWP/Local Authority Association (LAA) steering group. The introduction of CMS Release 3 on 31st October 2005 addressed many of the issues around the amount of clerical documentation associated with the initial releases. The removal of these clerical workarounds through this release will lead to further improvements and will be evaluated by the LAA in early 2006.

Jobcentre Plus is undergoing a massive change programme and is making considerable investment in improved information technology. However change on this scale does create challenges in maintaining levels of customer service for some parts of the business during this period of transition and transformation. As a result, some customers claiming working age benefits have, of late, experienced difficulties getting through to some of our contact centres. We have put measures in place to address this, including temporary adjustments to streamline business processes in order to maintain customer service whilst we go through this transition period. We have also strengthened recruitment plans supported by robust training programmes.

Early indications following the process adjustments are encouraging. We have seen week on week improvements in customer service since beginning of September. Whilst we have sought to minimise the impact of these changes for our staff and customers, some disruption has been unavoidable and this may regrettably contribute to delays in processing benefit claims for some customers.

I hope this is helpful.

Departmental Budget

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the latest estimate is of underspend by his Department *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of departmental budget for financial year 2004–05. [18463]

Mrs. McGuire: Outturn information for the Department for Work and Pensions was published in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper 2004–05 (Cm. 6639).

Disability Living Allowance

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in West Lancashire are in receipt of disability living allowance high rate case component as well as high rate mobility. [27836]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Rosie Cooper, dated 21 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in West Lancashire are in receipt of disability living allowance high rate case component as well as high rate mobility. The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The requested information is in the following table:

Disability living allowance, claimants in West Lancashire Parliamentary Constituency, receiving both higher rate mobility and highest rate care components, as at May 2005

	Thousand
	Number
Higher components DLA	0.9

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are allocated using the relevant ONS postcode.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

I hope this is helpful.

General Medical Service

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Department has made a submission to the General Medical Service contract review. [28256]

Margaret Hodge: General practitioners have a key role to play in contributing to the success of the Government's welfare reform agenda. They remain the first point of contact for patients and have a significant influence in helping people with health conditions or disabilities remain in work, or regain fitness for work at the appropriate time.

The Department for Work and Pensions is working closely with the Department of Health to provide incentives to general practitioners to assist their patients of working age to remain fit for work or regain fitness for work. A submission has been made to include, as one of the requirements in the quality outcomes framework of the GP contract, referral for employment advice of patients with mental health problems whose job would be at risk.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21320]

Mrs. McGuire: The Secretary of State is responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

Income Support (Appeals)

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time taken by his Department to process requests for appeals of claims for income support awards was in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [20353]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of the Appeals Service is a matter for the chief executive of the Appeals Service, Christina Townsend. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Paul Goodman, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the average length of time taken by his Department to process requests for appeals of claims for income support awards in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

The information you have requested is shown in the table.

Income support appeals 2004–05 by average total clearance duration

	Number of weeks
Lodged to received	11
Received by Appeals Service to outcome	14
Lodged to outcome	25

Notes:

1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.

2. "Lodged" denotes when an appeal is submitted to the first tier agency. Lodged data only enters the GAPS database when the appeal reaches the Appeals Service.

3. Duration is derived by calculating the time difference from when an appeal is lodged until when it is cleared. It is represented in weeks, to the nearest whole week.

4. Year 2004–05 is represented by all outcomes from April 2004 to March 2005 (including those cases that may have been lodged in an earlier year).

Source:

100 per cent. download of the generic appeals processing system

I am unable to comment on the 11 weeks that it takes on average for an income support appeal to reach the Appeals Service, as this is a matter for the first tier agency preparing the appeal.

The 14 week figure quoted takes into account the duration from receipt of the appeal until its conclusion and includes those appeals that are adjourned at first hearing upon judicial direction. This, therefore, increases the overall duration and is an issue outside of my remit of responsibility for the Administration of this Service.

I can also let you know that the Secretary of State set a target for 2004–05 that the average waiting time for an appeal to be heard from receipt in the Appeals Service should be no more than 11 weeks and we met this target during 2004–05 for all appeals. specifically for income support appeals, we achieved a 10.3 weeks average waiting time. During this period, the average clearance time for an appeal from receipt in the Appeals Service, including those cases cleared before a tribunal hearing, was 8.89 weeks.

We are constantly looking at ways in which to improve the level of service that we offer our customers. We are working with the first tier agencies to agree national service agreements in order to establish, amongst other things, a reduced end-to-end clearance target. We are also currently looking at how to improve our customers' overall experience of our Service, including reducing the time they must wait for their appeal to be heard, and we will be capturing customer feedback on this.

I hope this information is helpful.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on progress in meeting the agreed staff headcount reduction targets for the Jobcentre Plus; [28692]

(2) how many staff are employed by Jobcentre Plus; and how many were employed by Jobcentre offices in the last year of operation. [28697]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Tim Boswell:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions regarding Jobcentre Plus staff. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

At the inception of Jobcentre Plus on 1 April 2002 there were 85,880 full time equivalent staff, which included 34,040 staff employed by the Employment Service which was responsible for the delivery of services through Jobcentres. Jobcentre Plus employed 72,831 full time equivalent staff as at 30 September 2005.

We are making good progress against the staff reduction targets set for us by Ministers, and are on course to meet the March 2008 target of 65,710 full time equivalent staff.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many assaults there were on the staff of Jobcentre Plus in each of the last three years; and how many of these assaults resulted in successful prosecution. [28704]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the number of assaults on Jobcentre Plus staff in each of the last three years and how many of these assaults resulted in prosecution. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

In answer to your specific questions we have limited our response to actual physical assaults, although we also data collect on other categories of unacceptable behaviour. The available data on actual physical assaults for the last three years in Jobcentre Plus is provided below. Data is not held on how many of these assaults resulted in successful prosecution, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Calendar year	*Assaults*
2002	203
2003	235
2004	329

It may be helpful if I explain the background to these figures. Although data indicates there has been a rise in the number of incidents reported in the last 3 years it is not possible to identify any causal relationships. Not only are there significant variables such as staffing levels, types and numbers of offices and methods of service delivery over this period which render year on year comparisons, this period also coincides with a number of initiatives within the Department encouraging staff to report all incidents so that lessons can be learned and appropriate remedial action taken.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) which independent consultants were engaged for the Jobcentre Plus Programme procurement review; what reports were commissioned as part of the review; and whether he plans to publish the reports that were commissioned as part of the review; [27870]

(2) when he expects to publish the findings of the Jobcentre Plus programme procurement review; [27871]

(3) what the status is of the Jobcentre Plus programme procurement review. [27864]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the right hon. and learned Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Sir Malcolm Rifkind, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the Jobcentre Plus programme procurement review. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as chief executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The research into Jobcentre Plus programme procurement policy and procedures was commissioned from independent consultants PKF and Rocksharp. Their work was completed in the spring of 2003. The findings were presented to senior managers and formed the basis of the recommendations and actions of the programme procurement review. The review was supported by the Jobcentre Plus board and a steering group which included the DWP Director of Procurement. The findings and recommendations from the reviews were not required or presented in the format of final reports' intended for publication.

The ongoing work in delivering outstanding recommendations of the review and in developing further changes in support of the efficiency agenda is continuing as part of the wider DWP procurement modernisation programme.

I hope this is helpful.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the efficiency of the computer system dealing with the processing of claims for jobseeker's allowance. [24537]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. David Laws, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the efficiency of the computer system dealing with the processing of claims for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

Claims to JSA are processed using two computer systems. The JSA Payments Systems (JSAPS) which was implemented in 1996 is used to process completed claims and make payments of JSA to customers. This system has a very good record of reliability. Since 2003 Jobcentre Plus has been introducing a new process for taking claims for benefit, supported by the Customer Management computer system (CMS).

Jobcentre Plus is undergoing a massive change programme and is making considerable investment in improved IT. CMS is the first stage of our IT modernisation programme and is being implemented as part of the roll out programme to support the Jobcentre Plus new and repeat claim standard operating model. We started to introduce CMS in October 2003 and we brought in additional enhancements in December 2004 with CMS release 2. CMS Release 2 introduced new functionality to enable electronic data transfer from CMS to legacy benefit systems including JSAPS. Electronic data transfer replaces the need for manual re-keying of information that has already been gathered in CMS as part of the new claims process.

The modifications introduced by CMS release 2 led to some transitional problems with reliability and speed. These problems have since been addressed through a series of performance releases and CMS and is now delivering as agreed.

CMS Release 3, which went live on 31 October 2005, has been driven by user feedback and introduced a number of enhancements that make the process easier to follow and reduces the opportunity for error and the subsequent need for re-work. The enhancements to CMS Release 3 have been well received by staff.

I hope this is helpful.

Kvaerner Pension Fund

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Pension Regulator regarding the Kvaerner pension fund. [30796]

Mr. Timms: Ministers have had no discussions with the Pensions Regulator about this case.

Lone Parents

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents have had *(a)* work-focused interviews every six months, *(b)* their income support reduced as a sanction for failure to attend a compulsory work-focused interview and *(c)* their work-focused interview deferred or waived since the sanctioning regime was introduced. [25257]

Margaret Hodge: Lone Parents are required to participate in a Work Focused Interview (WFI) when they make a new claim for income support (IS). They are also required to attend a WFI after six months and 12 months on IS and annually thereafter. WFIs for existing IS customers were rolled out from April 2001. Since October 2005, lone parents with a youngest child aged at least 14 have been required to attend a WFI at quarterly intervals.

There have been 1,981,000 Lone Parent WFIs attended by 1,064,600 lone parents since they were first introduced. The breakdown of these interviews is in the following table.

Customers attending lone parent work focused interviews

Initial interviews			
New and repeat IS claimants	*Existing claimants*	*Six month review meetings*	*Annual review meetings*
596,000	468,000	214,000	342,000

Notes:

1. Customers making a new or repeat claim have been required to attend an initial WFI, six month WFI and then annual interviews since April 2002.
2. Figures are for individuals attending.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
4. During the same period, 57,000 lone parents have been sanctioned for failing to participate in a WFI. Sanctions are lifted immediately once the lone parent participates in the WFI.
5. 91,100 lone parents have had their WFI deferred at least once and 24,000 have had their WFI waived. Interviews can be deferred or waived if it is not helpful to hold them on the due date. Reasons for deferral can include a recent bereavement, illness, or caring responsibilities. A waiver can be applied in cases of severe disablement or terminal illness.

Source:

DWP Disability and Work Division, Jobcentre and New Deal for Lone Parents Evaluation Databases (August 2005)

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the current performance of each New Deal programme in respect of *(a)* the number of job-placements and *(b)* the cost-effectiveness of each placement. [21272]

Margaret Hodge: A total of 1,429,000 people had gained a job through the New Deal programme up to March 2005. The average cost of helping a person into work was £2,047.

Information on expenditure and the average cost of helping a person into work through each New Deal programme is in the table.

New Deal—people into work and cost per person into work

	Spend (£ million)	*Number of people gaining a job*	*Average cost per person gaining a job (£)*
New Deal for Young People	1,699	620,000	2,739
New Deal for 25 plus	800	237,000	3,377
New Deal for 50 Plus	254	140,000	1,813
New Deal for Disabled People	133	61,000	2,180
New Deal for Lone Parents	97	397,000	244
New Deal for Partners	3	4,000	939
Total	2,909	1,429,000	2,047

Notes:

1. Expenditure data exclude administrative costs.
2. Expenditure figures include programme costs and the costs of allowances paid to participants, apart from the 50 plus element of the working tax credit.
3. Information is provided to March 2005 as this is the latest available date for confirmed expenditure figures.
4. Figures for number of people gaining a job are rounded to the nearest thousand.
5. New Deal expenditure figures are rounded to the nearest million.
6. New Deal average cost figures are rounded to the nearest pound.
7. Figures for numbers of people into work on individual New Deal programmes will not sum to the total number of people into work through all the New Deals as some people will have gained a job through more than one New Deal programme.

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report
Department for Work and Pensions Information Directorate

The cost of helping people into work varies across the New Deals as programmes have different client groups and components. People on the mandatory New Deal programmes have generally been claiming jobseeker's allowance for some time, and can require more intensive support to overcome employment barriers than those participating on some of the voluntary New Deals. Costs can also be higher if allowances are paid to participants and employers, and can also be influenced by payments to external providers.

An investment in helping people into work, including those claiming Incapacity benefit, not only makes an immediate difference to those individuals, but also results in savings to the economy in future benefit payments.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of the total number of recorded job entries through the new deal for disabled people, excluding pathways to work pilot areas, *(a)* returned to incapacity benefits and *(b)* claimed jobseeker's allowance within (i) one month, (ii) two months, (iii) six months and (iv) 12 months in (A) 2003–04 and (B) 2004–05. [30678]

Margaret Hodge: The available information is in the table.

Percentage

	2003–04	*2004–05*
Jobs gained	18,680	32,590
Proportion claiming Jobseekers allowance within period stated		
1 month	1	2
2 months	3	3
6 months	7	n/a
12 months	11	n/a
Proportion claiming incapacity benefits within period stated		
1 month	3	3
2 months	6	6
6 months	13	n/a
12 months	20	n/a

Notes:

1. The proportion of people claiming a benefit within six months and 12 months for 2004–05 is not yet available as benefits data is only available up to May 2005.
2. Incapacity benefits data includes: incapacity benefits including passported incapacity benefit; attendance allowance; severe disability allowance; disability living allowance and income support with a disability premium.

3. Figures are for jobs gained following registration with a new deal for disabled people job broker, and jobs gained through contact with Jobcentre Plus.

4. All figures exclude people registering with new deal for disabled people job brokers in the following pathways to work pilot areas: Bridgend, Rhondda, Cynon and Taff; Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute; Derbyshire; Essex; Gateshead and South Tyneside; Lancashire East; and Somerset.

5. Years relate to April 2003 to March 2004, and April 2004 to March 2005.

6. Information is for jobs gained, not individuals into jobs.

7. The Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study links benefit and employment information held by the Department for Work and Pensions with employment records held by the Inland Revenue.

Source:

Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, DWP

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of young people *(a)* starting and *(b)* completing the New Deal for Young People have lacked basic skills. [25202]

Margaret Hodge: When New Deal for Young People (NDYP) participants attend their first NDYP interview, their personal adviser will consider whether it is appropriate to refer them for a formal basic skills assessment. If a basic skills need is identified during the assessment, NDYP participants can be referred to Basic Skills provision, which will aim to address their skills needs.

Between April 2001 and July 2005 there were 715,130 starts to New Deal for Young People, of which 86,430 (12 per cent.) subsequently started Basic Skills provision while on the programme[1]. Information is not available prior to April 2001. Information on the number of people lacking basic skills on completion of New Deal for Young People is not collected.

[1] Source: DWP Information Directorate.

Obesity

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect on the economy of sickness absence due to obesity in the last five years. [28689]

Margaret Hodge: This Department has not commissioned or evaluated any research on the effect on the economy of sickness absence due to obesity within the last five years.

Outsourced Programmes

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the total value was of outsourced *(a)* employment and *(b)* training programmes in London for each year since 2001; [27865]

(2) what the total value was of outsourced *(a)* employment and *(b)* training programmes for each year since 2001. [27866]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the right hon. and learned Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Sir Malcolm Rifkind, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what the total value was of outsourced employment and training programmes in London for each year since 2001. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The table below details the amounts spent in London on employment and training programmes, both by Jobcentre Plus London Region and by DWP Work, Welfare & Equality Group on Employment Zones and Action teams.

£ million

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Employment programmes	67	93	118	141
Training programmes	35	22	26	42
Total programmes	101	115	144	184

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest £ million and exclude receipts.
2. Figures also exclude expenditure under centrally managed budgets.
3. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

The amounts shown for training programmes cover work-based learning for adults and basic skills training which have a close employment focus. In the same way, many of our employment programmes have elements of training within them.

I hope this is helpful.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 609W, on Pathways to Work, if he will list the destinations other than work of the terminations from incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance; how many of those terminated from incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance took up employment; and how many were in each other category. [26747]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The information provided in my previous answer was sourced from Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample data. There are no additional breakdowns available from 5 per cent. sample data to those provided in that answer.

Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data offers the potential to follow benefit claimants who move onto employment schemes or into work. However, we do not expect to be in a position to release WPLS-based figures on benefit leavers into employment until the second half of 2006.

In the meantime, the annual Destination of Benefit Leavers Survey provides estimates on the proportion of benefit leavers who go to work, education and training, other benefits and so on. The latest published figures from the 2004 survey show that 52 per cent. of incapacity benefit leavers nationally moved into work of 16 hours or more per week.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* existing and *(b)* new claimants of incapacity benefits (i) were covered by Pathways to Work pilots in (A) October 2003, (B) April 2004 and (C) October 2005 and (ii) he expects to be covered in (1) April 2006 and (2) October 2006. [26862]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The information is in the table.

Pathways to Work incapacity benefit totals

	Existing customer case load	*New customers in month*
October 2003[1,2]	114,700	2,300
April 2004[2,3]	251,500	4,800
October 2005[4,5]	415,100	7,700
April 2006[5,6]	731,500	13,300
October 2006[5,7]	853,300	15,000

[1] Jobcentre Plus Districts included: Renfrewshire Inverclyde Argyll and Bute; Bridgend Rhondda Cynon and Taf and Derbyshire

[2] Data to April and actual. Data after this point are forecast data.

[3] Jobcentre Plus Districts included: As note 1 plus Essex, Gateshead and South Tyneside, Somerset and East Lancashire.

[4] Jobcentre Plus Districts included: As note 3 plus Glasgow, Cumbria, Lancashire West and Tees Valley.

[5] Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

[6] Jobcentre Plus Districts included: As note 4 plus Barnsley Rotherham and Doncaster, City of Sunderland, County Durham, Lanarkshire and East Dumbarton, Liverpool and Wirral, Manchester and Salford and Swansea and West Wales.

[7] Jobcentre Plus Districts included: As note 6 plus Eastern Valleys, Greater Mersey and Staffordshire.

Pensions

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what provision there is for members of pension schemes to claim ill health pensions from the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) *(a)* while their scheme is in the assessment period and *(b)* once it has been accepted into the PPF. [30578]

Mr. Timms: While a scheme is in an assessment period trustees may make awards of ill health pensions in accordance with their scheme rules. However, any payments made must not exceed the level of compensation that the PPF would pay.

The PPF will compensate members entitled to ill health pensions at the 100 per cent. level if the pension was in payment prior to the assessment period or if the application was made before the assessment period and certain legislative conditions are met.

In all other circumstances, compensation to scheme members who have been awarded an ill health pension is calculated in the same way as compensation to any other scheme member of the same age.

There are no provisions to enable scheme members to claim ill health pensions from the Pension Protection Fund once the PPF has assumed responsibility for a scheme.

However, any scheme member may take early payment of their compensation at a capped level of 90 per cent. from age 50, subject to actuarial reduction.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the normal retirement age is for members of the local government pension scheme. [26138]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

The local government pension scheme has a retirement age of 65, but members can choose to retire without employer consent from age 60, in which case any pension coming into payment may be subject to an actuarial reduction as a result of coming into payment early.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the level of the basic state pension in the United Kingdom is as a percentage of gross domestic product; and what assessment he has made of how this compares with other European Union countries. [30757]

Mr. Timms: The figure for the amount spent on state pensions as a whole in the UK as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) is 5.5 per cent. Studies by the European Union's Economic Policy Committee have shown the average figure for the European Union 15 is 10.5 per cent., with the UK's system deemed to be sustainable in the long-term. Such figures do not, of course, take account of non-state provision, which is significantly higher in the UK than in many other member states.

It should be stressed that the UK's system of support for the elderly is aimed at addressing poverty as well as replacing in-work income. An up-to-date and more indicative comparison is the harmonised expenditure on the elderly as a percentage of GDP. The European Statistical Agency's data published in October 2005 show that the UK spent 11.7 per cent. in 2002 (before the introduction of pension credit and age-related payments), which is at the upper end of the overall range of expenditure in EU member states, of between 3.6 and 14.9 per cent.

Note:
The European Union 15 member states at 30 April 2004 comprised: Austria; Belgium; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Ireland; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Portugal; Spain; Sweden; and the UK.

Sources:
1. The European Union's Economic Policy Committee study: "Budgetary Challenges posed by ageing populations: the impact on public spending on pensions, health and long-term care for the elderly and possible indicators of the long-term sustainability of public finances" EPC 2001, EPC/ECFIN/655/01-EN Final.
2. Joint report of the Commission and the Council on adequate and sustainable pensions March 2003.
3. EUROSTAT's (the European Statistical Agency) October 2005 publication, "European social policy statistics: Social protection—Expenditure and receipts".

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will restore the link between the state pension and average earnings; and if he will make a statement. [30758]

Mr. Timms: We will continue to administer the state pension in its current form. We will review the pensions system following the publication next week of the second report of the Pensions Commission, in the light of the National Pensions Debate which is under way at present. We are aiming for a broad consensus for reforms to the pensions system.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many approaches have been made by the Pensions Service offering a benefits entitlement check *(a)* by letter, *(b)* by telephone, *(c)* by home visit and *(d)* in total in each year for which

information is available; what follow-up takes place where no reply is received to letters or telephone calls; how many people requested a home visit in each year; what the cost has been of the initiative; and what assessment he has made of the extent of increased access to benefits as a result thereof. [30542]

Mr. Timms: The administration of The Pension Service is a matter for the chief executive, Miss Alexis Cleveland. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Alexis Cleveland to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 21 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many approaches have been made by The Pension Service offering a benefits entitlement check *(a)* by letter *(b)* by telephone *(c)* by home visit and *(d)* in total in each year for which information is available; what follow-up takes place where no reply is received to letters or telephone calls; how many people requested a home visit in each year; what the cost has been of the initiative; and what assessment he has made of the extent of increased access to benefits as a result thereof. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of The Pension Service.

Since April 2005 The Pension Service has offered a full holistic benefit entitlement check on all visits to customers, as a standard service. Also a specific campaign has been run to contact customers we believe to be highly eligible for additional benefits. Between April and October 2005 The Pension Service made 106,427 approaches by letter, 16,291 by telephone, and 9,039 through visits. As a result of the campaign and routine visits 549,849 customers were offered a benefit entitlement check.

The initial home visit is arranged either by ringing the customer and agreeing a date and time or by sending out a letter. In the latter instance, a contact number is provided in case the date is not convenient or if the customer chooses not to be visited. If the customer is not in, they are either contacted by phone if a number is available and an appointment rearranged or a further letter is sent out advising the customer of the new appointment. It is standard practice for two attempted visits to be made on different days of the week at different times. Contact details are left with the customer should they choose to take up the benefit entitlement check.

It is not possible to separate the costs of the full entitlement check from other Local Service activity however, the additional cost of the entitlement campaign from April—October 2005 was £1,088,000. The cumulative value of additional benefit generated over a full year is estimated at £350 million.

Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children were living in poverty in each *(a)* constituency and *(b)* local authority area in each of the last 30 years. [20314]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The data source does not allow us to provide robust estimates below regional level. Estimates at a regional level can be provided using data from 1994–95.

The number of children in households with low incomes, by Government Office Regions, Scotland and Wales over the period 1994–95 to 2003–04, is presented in the following table:

Number of children

Million

	Three-year rolling averages							
	1994–95 to 1996–97	*1995–96 to 1997–98*	*1996–97 to 1998–99*	*1997–98 to 1999–2000*	*1998–99 to 2000–01*	*1999–2000 to 2001–02*	*2000–01 to 2002–03*	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
Before housing costs								
North East	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.15	0.16	0.15
North West and Merseyside	0.41	0.42	0.47	0.47	0.43	0.38	0.36	0.36
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.33	0.33	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.30	0.28	0.27
East Midlands	0.21	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.22	0.21
West Midlands	0.27	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29
Eastern	0.25	0.20	0.22	0.21	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.17
London	0.36	0.38	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.37	0.36	0.37
South East	0.27	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.24	0.24	0.22	0.22
South West	0.19	0.20	0.22	0.22	0.20	0.18	0.17	0.17
Wales	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.15
Scotland	0.30	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.27	0.26	0.25	0.24
After housing costs								
North East	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.19	0.19	0.17
North West Merseyside	0.54	0.55	0.58	0.58	0.55	0.51	0.49	0.47
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.38	0.39	0.40	0.40	0.38	0.36	0.34	0.34
East Midlands	0.28	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	0.25
West Midlands	0.34	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.38
Eastern	0.36	0.30	0.32	0.30	0.29	0.28	0.27	0.27
London	0.61	0.64	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.63	0.61	0.60
South East	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.42	0.41	0.41	0.38	0.37
South West	0.31	0.31	0.32	0.32	0.30	0.29	0.27	0.28
Wales	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.20	0.19
Scotland	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.33	0.32	0.32	0.30	0.28

Notes:

1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year on year changes. Hence, figures are not consistent with previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. In circumstances such as a change in trend, rolled-averages will show less variation than single year estimates.

2. Table shows number of children in millions rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.

3. In this answer low income is determined for individuals as living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of the GB median.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* children and *(b)* pensioners were living in poverty in (i) Brent, (ii) Brent East and (iii) London in (A) 1997 and (B) 2005. [24480]

Margaret Hodge: Poverty is about more than low income. It is also about health, housing, education and the quality of the environment. The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report, published recently, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this.

Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income (HBAI) 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The information requested is not available below regional level. Information for numbers in London is presented in the following table.

Children and pensioners living in households in London with less than 60 per cent. of relative median household income 1996–97 to 1998–99 and 2001–02 to 2003–04

	Three-year rolling averages	
	1996–97 to 1998–99	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
Before housing costs		
Number of children (million)	0.39	0.37
Percentage of children	25	23
Number of pensioners (million)	0.19	0.19
Percentage of all pensioners	19	19
After housing costs		
Number of children (million)	0.65	0.60
Percentage of children	41	38
Number of pensioners (million)	0.30	0.24
Percentage of all pensioners	30	24

Notes:

1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year on year changes. Hence, figures are not consistent with previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. In circumstances such as a change in trend, rolled-averages will show less variation than single year estimates.
2. In this answer low income is determined for individuals as living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of the GB median.
3. Tables show numbers of children/pensioners in millions rounded to the nearest 10,000, and percentages to the nearest percentage point.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children were living in poverty in West Lancashire in each of the last 30 years for which figures are available. [27916]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2003–04". The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

Information below regional level is not available. Estimates at a regional level can be provided using data from 1994–95. The available information is in the table.

The number of children and the percentage of children living in households in households with low incomes, for the North West and Merseyside Government Office Regions, over the period 1994–95 to 2003–04

	Three year rolling averages	
	Number of children (in millions)	*Percentage of children*
Before housing costs		
1994–95 to 1996–97	0.41	26
1995–96 to 1997–98	0.42	26
1996–97 to 1998–99	0.47	30
1997–98 to 1999–2000	0.47	30
1998–99 to 2000–01	0.43	28
1999–2000 to 2001–02	0.38	25
2000–01 to 2002–03	0.36	23
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.36	23
After housing costs		
1994–95 to 1996–97	0.54	34
1995–96 to 1997–98	0.55	35
1996–97 to 1998–99	0.58	37
1997–98 to 1999–2000	0.58	37
1998–99 to 2000–01	0.55	35
1999–2000 to 2001–02	0.51	33
2000–01 to 2002–03	0.49	32
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.47	30

Notes:

1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year-on-year changes. Hence, figures are not consistent with previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. In circumstances such as a change in trend, rolled-averages will show less variation than single year estimates.
2. Table shows number of children in millions rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.
3. In this answer low income is determined for individuals as living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of the GB median.

Source:

Family Resources Survey

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* children, *(b)* pensioners and *(c)* working age adults have been living in (i) relative and (ii) absolute poverty in the UK since 1979; and if he will make a statement. [21959]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income (HBAI) 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

There is no fully consistent low-income time series using a single data source since 1979. The latest time series on a consistent basis is only available from 1994–95, which is sourced from the Family Resources Survey and covers Great Britain. Previous HBAI results were sourced from the Family Expenditure Survey (FES), which employed a slightly different definition of income and related to the United Kingdom. FES estimates are also presented for GB, for consistency with the FRS.

The following table gives the number of children living in relative low income and the number in absolute low income for years that estimates are available from 1979. Absolute low income is defined here as living in a household with income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97

median income held constant in real terms, and relative low income is defined as below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		Income below 60 per cent. of relative median income	
	Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
1979[1]	4.6	5.1	1.7	1.9
1981[1]	5.5	5.8	2.4	2.7
1987[1]	3.9	4.4	2.6	3.1
1988–89[1]	3.5	3.9	2.9	3.3
1990–91[1]	3.6	4.3	3.2	3.9
1991–92[1]	3.8	4.4	3.4	4.1
1992–93[1]	3.9	4.6	3.5	4.3
1993–94[1]	3.6	4.4	3.3	4.2
1979[2]	4.4	4.8	1.6	1.8
1981[2]	5.2	5.5	2.2	2.5
1987[2]	3.6	4.2	2.5	3.0
1988–89[2]	3.3	3.6	2.7	3.1
1990–91[2]	3.4	4.0	3.0	3.6
1991–92[2]	3.5	4.2	3.2	3.8
1992–93[2]	3.7	4.4	3.3	4.1
1993–94[2]	3.4	4.2	3.1	4.0
1994–95[3]	3.3	4.3	2.9	4.0
1995–96[3]	3.2	4.4	2.8	4.0
1996–97[3]	3.2	4.2	3.2	4.2
1997–98[3]	3.0	4.0	3.1	4.1
1998–99[3]	2.8	3.9	3.1	4.1
1999–2000[3]	2.4	3.6	3.0	4.1
2000–01[3]	2.0	3.0	2.7	3.8
2001–02[3]	1.6	2.5	2.6	3.7
2002–03[3]	1.5	2.2	2.6	3.6
2003–04[3]	1.4	2.2	2.6	3.5

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK).
[2] Family Expenditure Survey (GB).
[3] Family Resources Survey (GB).

The following table gives the proportions of children living in relative low income and the number in absolute low income for years that estimates are available from 1979.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		Income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income	
	Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
1979[1]	34	37	12	14
1981[1]	40	42	18	20
1987[1]	31	36	21	25
1988–89[1]	28	31	23	26
1990–91[1]	29	34	26	31
1991–92[1]	30	35	27	32
1992–93[1]	30	36	27	33
1993–94[1]	27	33	25	32
1979[2]	33	36	12	14
1981[2]	39	42	17	19
1987[2]	31	35	21	25
1988–89[2]	27	30	23	26
1990–91[2]	28	33	25	30
1991–92[2]	29	34	26	31
1992–93[2]	29	35	26	32
1993–94[2]	27	33	25	32
1994–95[3]	26	34	23	31
1995–96[3]	25	35	22	31
1996–97[3]	25	33	25	33
1997–98[3]	24	32	25	32
1998–99[3]	22	31	24	33
1999–2000[3]	19	28	23	32
2000–01[3]	16	23	21	30
2001–02[3]	12	20	21	30
2002–03[3]	12	18	21	28
2003–04[3]	11	17	21	28

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK).
[2] Family Expenditure Survey (GB).
[3] Family Resources Survey (GB).

The following table gives the number of pensioners living in relative low income and the number in absolute low income for years that estimates are available from.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		Income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income	
	Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
1979[1]	5.6	5.5	2.5	2.6
1981[1]	5.4	5.3	1.5	1.9
1987[1]	4.2	4.6	2.4	2.7
1988–89[1]	4.3	4.5	3.3	3.8
1990–91[1]	3.9	4.0	3.3	3.6
1991–92[1]	3.4	3.8	2.9	3.3
1992–93[1]	3.0	3.6	2.5	3.0
1993–94[1]	2.5	3.2	2.2	2.8
1979[2]	5.5	5.4	2.4	2.5
1981[2]	5.2	5.1	1.5	1.8
1987[2]	4.1	4.5	2.3	2.6
1988–89[2]	4.2	4.4	3.2	3.8
1990–91[2]	3.8	3.9	3.2	3.5
1991–92[2]	3.3	3.7	2.8	3.2
1992–93[2]	2.9	3.5	2.4	2.9
1993–94[2]	2.5	3.1	2.2	2.7
1994–95[3]	2.5	3.1	2.1	2.7
1995–96[3]	2.5	3.1	2.2	2.6
1996–97[3]	2.2	2.8	2.2	2.8
1997–98[3]	2.2	2.6	2.3	2.7
1998–99[3]	2.1	2.4	2.4	2.7
1999–2000[3]	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.6
2000–01[3]	1.6	1.6	2.2	2.5
2001–02[3]	1.5	1.2	2.3	2.3
2002–03[3]	1.2	1.0	2.3	2.3
2003–04[3]	1.1	0.9	2.2	2.0

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK).
[2] Family Expenditure Survey (GB).
[3] Family Resources Survey (GB).

The following table gives the proportions of pensioners living in relative low income and the number in absolute low income for years that estimates are available from.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		Income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income	
	Before housing costs	After housing costs	Before housing costs	After housing costs
1979[1]	62	60	28	28
1981[1]	57	55	16	20
1987[1]	43	46	24	27
1988–89[1]	44	46	33	39
1990–91[1]	39	40	32	36
1991–92[1]	33	37	28	32
1992–93[1]	29	35	24	29
1993–94[1]	25	31	22	27
1979[2]	62	60	27	28
1981[2]	56	55	16	20
1987[2]	43	46	24	27
1988–89[2]	44	46	33	39
1990–91[2]	38	39	32	36
1991–92[2]	33	36	28	32
1992–93[2]	29	35	24	29
1993–94[2]	25	31	22	28
1994–95[3]	25	31	22	27
1995–96[3]	26	31	22	26
1996–97[3]	22	28	22	28
1997–98[3]	22	26	23	27
1998–99[3]	21	24	24	27
1999–2000[3]	18	20	23	26
2000–01[3]	16	15	22	24
2001–02[3]	14	12	23	23
2002–03[3]	12	10	22	22
2003–04[3]	11	9	21	20

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK).
[2] Family Expenditure Survey (GB).
[3] Family Resources Survey (GB).

The following table gives the number of working-age adults living in relative low income and the number in absolute low income for years that estimates are available from.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		*Income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income*	
	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*
1979[1]	6	6.7	2.3	2.6
1981[1]	7.1	7.7	2.9	3.5
1987[1]	6.4	7.4	4.3	5.3
1988–89[1]	5.8	6.5	4.7	5.5
1990–91[1]	5.6	6.6	4.9	6.0
1991–92[2]	6.0	7.2	5.4	6.5
1992–93[3]	6.0	7.4	5.4	6.7
1993–94[3]	5.5	6.9	5.0	6.5
1979[2]	5.7	6.4	2.2	2.5
1981[2]	6.8	7.3	2.8	3.3
1987[2]	6.1	7.1	4.1	5.1
1988–89[2]	5.5	6.1	4.4	5.2
1990–91[2]	5.4	6.3	4.7	5.7
1991–92[2]	5.7	6.9	5.1	6.2
1992–93[2]	5.8	7.1	5.1	6.5
1993–94[2]	5.2	6.7	4.8	6.3
1994–95[3]	5.3	7.1	4.8	6.5
1995–96[3]	5.0	7.0	4.5	6.4
1996–97[3]	4.9	6.8	4.9	6.8
1997–98[3]	4.6	6.3	4.8	6.4
1998–99[3]	4.3	6.0	4.7	6.3
1999–2000[3]	4.0	5.7	4.8	6.5
2000–01[3]	3.7	5.3	4.7	6.4
2001–02[3]	3.2	4.6	4.6	6.3
2002–03[3]	3.2	4.4	4.8	6.4
2003–04[3]	3.2	4.5	4.8	6.4

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK).
[2] Family Expenditure Survey (GB).
[3] Family Resources Survey (GB).

The following table gives the proportions of working-age adults living in relative low income and the number in absolute low income for years that estimates are available from.

	Income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms		*Income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income*	
	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*
1979[1]	19	22	7	8
1981[1]	22	24	9	11
1987[1]	19	22	13	16
1988–89[1]	17	19	14	16
1990–91[1]	17	20	15	18
1991–92[1]	18	21	16	19
1992–93[1]	18	22	16	20
1993–94[1]	16	20	15	19
1979[2]	19	21	7	8
1981[2]	22	24	9	11
1987[2]	19	22	13	16
1988–89[2]	17	19	14	16
1990–91[2]	16	19	14	17
1991–92[2]	17	21	15	19
1992–93[2]	17	21	16	20
1993–94[2]	16	20	15	19
1994–95[3]	16	22	14	20
1995–96[3]	15	21	14	19
1996–97[3]	15	21	15	21
1997–98[3]	14	19	15	19
1998–99[3]	13	18	14	19
1999–2000[3]	12	17	14	20
2000–01[3]	11	16	14	19
2001–02[3]	10	14	14	19
2002–03[3]	9	13	14	19
2003–04[3]	9	13	14	19

Notes:
1. Tables show numbers in millions rounded to the nearest 100,000 and percentages rounded to the nearest percentage point.
2. The reference period for FRS figures is single financial years.
3. FES figures are single calendar years from 1979–87, two combined calendar years from 1988–89 to 1992–93 and two financial years combined for 1993–94.

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK).
[2] Family Expenditure Survey (GB).
[3] Family Resources Survey (GB).

Further information showing the proportion and number of individuals living in low income households, including annual levels, can be found in the publication "Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04". This also reports statistics between 1979 and 1995–96, using the data source and income definitions previously employed for the 'Households Below Average Income' series.

Press Officers

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many press officers *(a)* are employed in the Department and *(b)* he expects to be employed in 2006–07; and what the estimated cost is in each case. [27863]

Mrs. McGuire: The last full year for which figures are available is 2004–05.

As at 31 March 2005 19 national press officers and 23 regional press officers were employed at a total cost of £1,533,703.

The costs are based on average salaries for the year and take into account the number of press officers (excluding vacancies) in post each month.

As at 11 November 2005 there are no plans to increase the overall number of press officers employed by the Department and therefore the only increase in costs will be the annual increase in salary costs already agreed as part of the 2005 pay settlement.

Rachel Scully

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the retirement pension forecast team has been able to supply Rachel Scully, a constituent of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead, with a forecast of her pension which takes into account *(a)* her underlying entitlement to carer's allowance and *(b)* the awarding of credits for her second state pension. [30677]

Mr. Timms: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mr. Maude: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of the business rates revaluation on businesses in *(a)* Horsham, *(b)* West Sussex and *(c)* England. [25716]

Mr. Woolas: The assessment of the impact of revaluation on businesses in England was integral to the setting of the non-domestic rating multiplier for 2005–06 and the transitional arrangements. This assessment was done at a higher level than that of individual businesses.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Jon Trickett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what training is provided to fire services on identifying injury caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. [28956]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The firefighter job description (rolemap) requires firefighters to receive training in First Aid. This training, which must be delivered by appropriate providers such as St. Johns Ambulance Service, includes information on signs and symptoms of medical condition to ensure appropriate action is taken. Firefighters are also trained to administer treatment to support the stabilisation of a casualty's condition.

Community Right to Buy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce a community right to buy; and if he will make a statement. [26918]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's discussion document, "Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" (January 2005), invited a debate about whether the idea of a community right to buy should be pursued, and the debate is ongoing.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29121]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has a number of means to monitor the effectiveness of consultant-led projects, including regular progress meetings with the contractor and using the Gateway process to ensure that the aims of projects are met. There have been no incidents when consultant-led projects have been deemed to be unsuccessful and ODPM exercised legal remedies as a result.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 14 July, on the siting of telecommunications equipment on Birmingham city council land. [26641]

Yvette Cooper: My noble Friend Baroness Andrews replied to the letter on 16 November.

Council Tax

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make further funds available to local authorities to allow them to reduce council tax rates. [28593]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Keith Vaz) on the 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1235–36W.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Government plan to re-commence work on council tax revaluation in England. [29727]

Mr. Woolas: The Government will not take a view on this until we have received Sir Michael Lyons' final report and considered it.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27678]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27457]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established on 29 May 2002.

The figures for civil servants are available in table C on the civil service statistics, which covers permanent staff numbers, on a full-time equivalent basis in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (its predecessor) and agencies from 1998 and 2004. Civil service statistics 2004 are available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

Figures for contractors and other staff are available for ODPM (Central) for 2004 and 2005, are tabled as follows, as headcount. Figures for part *(b)* includes consultants, and part *(c)* covers 'other staff' as temporary agency staff.

Headcount

	Contractors	*Other staff*
2004	110	161
2005	190	130

Source:
ODPM (Central) HR IS

There is no centrally collected data for parts *(b)* and *(c)* for the Government Offices and the Executive Agencies (Planning Inspectorate, The Fire Service College and Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre).

Designated Growth Areas

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the infrastructure costs for each designated growth area within England; and if he will make a statement. [27440]

Yvette Cooper: Government remain strongly committed to the principle that infrastructure must be sufficient to support growth and is an essential element in achieving more sustainable communities. For example, between 1998–99 and 2002–03 public spending in the South East and Eastern Regions increased by over 17 per cent. in real terms per head of population.

The Government's approach is to ensure that infrastructure, including public services, is provided in step with growth, as plans for individual growth locations are developed. The main elements of this approach are ensuring that mainstream funding reflects the needs of growth, maximising the potential for private sector contributions and making available selective additional grant funding to unlock major growth schemes and locations.

Assessing the infrastructure requirements for particular localities is a complex and lengthy process. It needs to assess the detailed layout of a development as it evolves and to allow for changing approaches to service provision affecting what is needed and when. The Government are encouraging local delivery partners to focus on identifying, prioritising and sourcing investment in their locations—based on their individual circumstances and priorities, and using a mix of public and private funding. This approach is being taken forward in the Milton Keynes Prospectus and is being developed in other growth location business plans.

The Government's aim is to provide as much information as it can on likely future levels of support but this needs to be made within the context of the public expenditure cycle.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to put forward proposals for reform of the Disabled Facilities Grant. [28892]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement given to the House on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 13WS.

Fire Service

Steve McCabe: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 180W what the average response time was in England in each year. [29686]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The available information covers attendance at primary fires. The following table shows the average response time to primary fires attended by all Fire and Rescue Services in England each month during 2004–05. (Monthly data was requested and provided for the previous question on West Midlands). This is measured in minutes from time of first call to the fire and rescue service to time of arrival at the scene.

Primary fires attended in England: Average response times 2004–05

Month	*Response time (minutes)*
April	6.6
May	6.6
June	6.8
July	6.9
August	7.0
September	6.9
October	6.8
November	6.8
December	6.8
January	6.9
February	7.1
March	7.0
2004–05	6.9

Notes:
1. Figures for 2004–05 are provisional.
2. Data excludes late calls, heat and smoke damage only incidents.

Source:
Fire & Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Ed Balls: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many firefighters serviced *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Normanton constituency (i) in 1997 and (ii) at the latest date for which figures are available. [29176]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of firefighters at West Yorkshire fire and rescue service in 1997 and 2004 is set out as follows:

	1997[1]	*2004*[1]
Whole-time firefighters	1,739	1,658
Retained duty system firefighters	180	165
Total number of firefighters	1,919	1,823

[1] Information provided refer to work force at 31 March.

Source:
ODPM annual returns

Data on the number of firefighters at the constituency level are not available.

Ed Balls: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what provision for fire safety risk assessment there is in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Normanton constituency. [29177]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been maintaining records of attacks on firefighters since 2004. Since 1 April 2004 there have been reports of 75 attacks on firefighters of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service but no reports of attacks on firefighters in the Normanton area.

In common with other Fire and Rescue Authorities, it is the policy of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service that the attending Incident Commander should conduct a dynamic risk assessment. That assessment includes the threat of attack.

All West Yorkshires fire appliances are equipped with silent witness cameras fitted in the crew cab. This helps to deter acts against crews and provides video evidence to the police in the event of an incident.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact on fire and rescue service average response times in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood of establishing a regional fire control room for the north west region. [29332]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects that the establishment of a new national network of control centres will result in response times, under normal operating conditions, which are as good as or better than now. We expect particular improvement however during surges in demand or very large incidents. Currently, it is not possible to assess the impact on response times in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood.

Homelessness

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* homeless children and *(b)* homeless households with children were in temporary accommodation in each (i) year and (ii) quarter since 1997. [26911]

Yvette Cooper: Information reported quarterly by local authorities includes the number of households in temporary accommodation on the last day of the quarter, as arranged by the local authority under homelessness legislation. The number of these households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman has been reported since March 2002, and the number of children or expected children in these households has been reported since June 2004. Available information is summarised in the following table.

In January 2005 the Government announced in "Homes for All" their commitment to halve the number of all households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

Households with dependent[1] children in temporary accommodation[2] as arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation, and the number of children[1], on the last day of each quarter: England

	Households with children or a pregnant woman	*Number of children/ expected children*
2002		
31 March	54,660	n/a
30 June	58,870	n/a
30 September	61,740	n/a
31 December	60,310	n/a
2003		
31 March	61,510	n/a
30 June	65,040	n/a
30 September	67,260	n/a
31 December	67,540	n/a
2004		
31 March	70,580	n/a
30 June[3]	71,640	121,590
30 September[3]	72,510	122,530
31 December[3]	72,800	124,630
2005		
31 March[3]	72,670	125,860
30 June[3]	72,810	124,900

n/a = Denotes data not collected.

[1] Includes households where an expectant mother is present.

[2] Households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities pending enquiries or after being accepted as homeless under the 1996 Act.

[3] Provisional data.

Notes:

1. Data on households containing dependent children has been collected from March 2002.
2. Data on children in temporary accommodation has been collected from June 2004.

Source:

ODPM P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly).

Hostels Improvement Programme

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the progress of the Hostels Improvement Programme. [28891]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is investing £90 million over the next three years through the Hostels Capital Improvement Programme. Underlying the programme is the need to change the very nature of hostels so that they provide better opportunities for people who have experienced homelessness. Hostels will cease to be a place of last resort, but instead will be centres of excellence and choice which positively change lives. The programme is a large undertaking with around 80 projects in 34 local authorities being developed in a partnership between government, councils and the voluntary sector.

The three year £90 million Hostels Capital Improvement Programme is in its early stages and most projects are at the planning and pre-works stage.

Household Overcrowding

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish the consultation paper on the revision of standards for determining levels of household overcrowding; and if he will make a statement. [28822]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister remains committed to publishing a consultation paper on the future of the statutory overcrowding standards, and will do so as soon as possible.

Housing

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government have made to planning *(a)* guidance and *(b)* regulations relating to (i) section 106 agreements and (ii) affordable housing quotas since 1997. [26910]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published in July this year Circular 5/05, which provides guidance to local planning authorities in England on the use of section 106 agreements as part of proposed development. This replaced previous guidance set out in DoE Circular 1/97. The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002 No.828), requires local planning authorities to put details of section 106 and other agreements that relate to planning applications on their planning registers for public inspection.

Current planning policies, in Planning Policy Guidance note 3: Housing and DETR Circular 6/98, incorporate guidance on the amount of, and the site-size thresholds above which, affordable housing should be sought on application sites. ODPM has not published any regulations relating to planning for affordable housing since 1997.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what total receipts were generated from right-to-buy sales in Tamworth in each year since 1980. [27492]

Yvette Cooper: The total capital receipts from right-to-buy sales of local authority dwellings in Tamworth in the years from 1996–97 onwards are in the following table. These figures are net of discounts and are as reported by local authorities.

	Tamworth (£ million)
1996–97	1.4
1997–98	2.9
1998–99	2
1999–00	3.2
2000–01	2.6
2001–02	4.2
2002–03	7.6
2003–04	10.3
2004–05	7.1

Source:
Quarterly PI(A/B) return received from local authorities.

The information for years prior to 1996–97 is not centrally available.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will break down the number of right-to-buy sales in Tamworth since 1980 by *(a)* bed-sit, *(b)* one-bed, *(c)* two-bed, *(d)* three-bed and *(e)* four or more bedrooms. [27493]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not held centrally on the numbers of bedrooms of local authority dwellings sold through right-to-buy, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was allocated to council house refits for disabled people in West Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available; and what this represents as a proportion of the total budget for council housing refits. [27698]

Yvette Cooper: According to West Lancashire's 2005 Business Plan Annual Monitoring (BPAM) return, over the period 2004–05 they spent £491,000 on disabled/elderly adaptations within their local authority-owned housing. This represents 9.6 per cent. of their total expenditure on capital works over the same period.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold expenditure data on disabled adaptations alone.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of social rented housing in each local authority in London in each year since 1990 has been *(a)* bedsit, *(b)* one-bedroom, *(c)* two-bedroom, *(d)* three-bedroom and *(e)* four-bedroom or more. [28896]

Yvette Cooper: The breakdown requested is not available for all years. The information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of social rented housing in each Government office region in each year since 1990 has been *(a)* bedsit, *(b)* one-bedroom, *(c)* two-bedroom, *(d)* three-bedroom and *(e)* four-bedroom or more. [28897]

Yvette Cooper: The breakdown requested is not available for all years. The information requested is tabled as follows.

Distribution of social stock for Government office regions by size by year

Percentage

	Bedsits and one-bedroom	*Two-bedroom*	*Three-bedroom and over*
1998			
North East	23.4	36.9	39.7
North West	28.3	30.1	41.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	28.4	33.4	38.2
East Midlands	27.3	31.0	41.8
West Midlands	27.1	31.3	41.7
East	29.1	30.8	40.1
London	35.5	34.8	29.7
South East	31.5	30.9	37.7
South West	29.1	34.1	36.8
1999			
North East	23.6	36.9	39.5
North West	28.5	30.3	41.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	28.5	33.5	37.9
East Midlands	27.5	31.2	41.3
West Midlands	27.6	31.3	41.1
East	29.3	30.9	39.8
London	35.6	34.7	29.7
South East	31.5	31.1	37.4
South West	29.2	34.4	36.5
2000			
North East	23.8	37.0	39.3
North West	28.5	30.5	41.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	28.7	33.8	37.6
East Midlands	27.6	31.6	40.8
West Midlands	27.6	31.8	40.6
East	29.7	31.1	39.2
London	35.7	34.6	29.6
South East	31.8	31.2	36.9
South West	29.6	34.5	35.9
2001			
North East	24.4	36.8	38.8
North West	28.4	30.3	41.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	28.9	33.9	37.2
East Midlands	28.0	31.8	40.2
West Midlands	27.9	32.0	40.1
East	29.8	31.4	38.8
London	35.6	34.7	29.6
South East	32.0	31.4	36.6
South West	29.7	34.8	35.4
2002			
North East	24.1	37.4	38.5
North West	28.6	30.4	41.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	29.2	34.0	36.8
East Midlands	28.3	32.2	39.5
West Midlands	28.2	32.1	39.7
East	30.1	31.5	38.4
London	35.6	34.8	29.6
South East	32.1	31.5	36.4
South West	30.0	35.0	35.0
2003			
North East	24.6	37.5	37.9
North West	28.6	30.7	40.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	29.7	34.2	36.2
East Midlands	28.7	32.5	38.8
West Midlands	28.5	32.3	39.2
East	30.1	31.9	38.0
London	35.7	34.7	29.6
South East	32.2	31.7	36.1
South West	30.1	35.2	34.7

	Bedsit	One-bedroom	Two-bedroom	Three-bedroom	Four-bedroom and over
2004					
North East	1.8	24.0	37.4	34.6	2.3
North West	2.0	27.2	31.3	36.5	3.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.9	28.2	34.6	32.9	2.4
East Midlands	2.2	26.9	32.7	36.1	2.1
West Midlands	1.8	27.0	32.6	36.1	2.5
East	3.3	27.0	31.4	35.7	2.5
London	4.9	30.8	34.7	24.9	4.7
South East	4.5	28.1	31.8	33.3	2.3
South West	2.1	28.3	35.1	32.5	1.9
2005					
North East	1.6	22.2	38.4	35.5	2.3
North West	1.5	23.6	32.4	39.2	3.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.5	26.7	35.2	34.1	2.6
East Midlands	1.9	25.1	33.1	37.7	2.1
West Midlands	1.6	24.1	35.3	36.1	2.9
East	3.0	24.0	32.0	38.3	2.7
London	4.5	29.7	35.4	25.5	4.8
South East	3.4	24.7	33.5	35.9	2.5
South West	1.8	22.9	37.1	36.0	2.1

Note:
Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding
Sources:
The Regulatory Statistical Return of the Housing Corporation and the HAR/10
The unaudited Second Subsidy Claim form from local authorities
Not all local authorities filled in returns for all years.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government are taking to improve conditions for older people living in private rented sector housing. [29017]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have introduced a wide range of measures to ensure that elderly people who live in the privately rented sector can enjoy decent homes that are warm and free of hazards. The provisions in the Housing Act 2004 to enable local authorities to assess properties against a range of health and safety criteria will tackle the worst conditions—cold, damp, and the risk of falls. These will be reinforced by provisions which require many of the higher risk properties in the sector to be licensed in order to improve management standards.

In addition, a range of financial assistance and advice is available to improve living conditions in the sector. Local authorities have powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 to provide assistance either to landlords or tenants for this purpose. The types of assistance on offer are a matter for local discretion.

The Government policy has also taken steps to increase the number of warm homes that are energy efficient. Private tenants can seek advice from the Energy Saving Trust, and in his recent Budgets my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has provided through the landlords energy saving allowance important tax reliefs to private landlords who invest in energy saving measures such as cavity wall insulation and double glazing.

The 'Warm Front' scheme tackles fuel poverty among vulnerable households in both the private rented and owner occupied sectors. The scheme provides grants for packages of insulation and heating improvements, including central heating systems, for eligible households. It is available for landlords with tenants on benefits, provided the tenant stays with the landlord for at least two years.

Tim Farron: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are on the housing list waiting to be re-housed in Westmorland and Lonsdale. [29966]

Yvette Cooper: Information on households (rather than people) is available at local authority and not parliamentary constituency level. Westmorland and Lonsdale is situated within South Lakeland.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Households looking for transfer within the local authority's stock are not included.

The number of households on South Lakeland's housing waiting list as at 1 April 2005 was 3,240.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total expenditure on *(a)* intermediate rent, *(b)* homebuy new build and *(c)* mixed funded for sale programmes has been, broken down by local authority. [28825]

Yvette Cooper: A table detailing the total funding through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme, including Keyworker Living, for each local authority area last year (2004–05) has been made available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to enable first-time buyers in the South Hams to buy a home locally. [27370]

Yvette Cooper: Recognising the acute need for affordable housing in the South West, the Government have given a 48 per cent. increase in capital funding—

which is the highest funding increase of all English regions—to the south-west. This will be used to support the new building of affordable homes for rent, and the Government's new Homebuy products which will help first-time buyers into home ownership. Around £42 million over the next two years is intended to be allocated to the districts in the Plymouth housing market area, including South Hams, up from £23.6 million over 2004–06.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether any of the Government's homebuy schemes will be piloted in Milton Keynes. [28312]

Yvette Cooper: At the present time it is not possible to say whether any of the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister's new homebuy schemes will be piloted in Milton Keynes. The Housing Corporation are currently considering bids submitted by housing associations and other housing providers for funding the schemes as part of its National Affordable Housing Programme for 2006–08. Decisions are expected early next year.

We will also be running a limited number of early social homebuy pilots in advance of the next National Affordable Housing Programme round—however, proposals agreed with the Housing Corporation do not include any provision in Milton Keynes.

Local Government Finance

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* the average expenditure by (i) county councils and (ii) district councils on the functions for which they are responsible and *(b)* the average population served by (A) county councils and (B) district councils was in (1) 2002–03, (2) 2003–04 and (3) 2004–05. [28890]

Mr. Woolas: The average expenditure by county and district councils on the functions for which they are responsible and the average population served by county and district councils in 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 are as shown in the following table.

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
County councils average expenditure (£000)	606,377	689,035	710,447
County councils average population	679,629	683,938	687,974
District councils average expenditure (£000)	12,082	13,837	13,298
District councils average population	97,090	97,705	98,282

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from the Revenue Summary (RS) return for 2002–03 and 2003–04, and the Revenue Account budget (RA) return for 2004–05.

The definition of council expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from Aggregate External Finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (Financial Reporting Standard) 17 basis while the outturn data for 2003–04 have been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. The budget data for 2004–05 are a mix of FRS 17 and non-FRS 17. This is because the FRS 17 reporting was first introduced in 2004–05 budget form and, after consultation, local authorities were given the option to complete their form either on a non-FRS 17 basis or on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

The population figures are the mid-year estimates (ie 30 June) published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Local Government Pensions

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total amount of local government pension liabilities is if calculated using a discount rate based on index linked gilts; and what rate was used for the calculation. [26223]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally and is a matter for each individual local authority pension fund in the light of its independent actuarial and other professional advice.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 413W, on mobile phone masts, if he will list the meetings his *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* civil servants have had with mobile phone mast operators or their representatives since 1 January. [19711]

Yvette Cooper: There have been no meetings between Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or their special advisers and the five mobile network operators, or their representatives since 1 January.

Officials have met with mobile networks operators or their representatives for briefing on: the findings of the Deloitte and Touche review of the implementation of the operators' Ten Commitments; the MORI Planners—Quantitive Research Over Five Years; and the MORI General Public—Pyramid Research. Officials have also held quarterly liaison meetings with the MOA.

In addition, representatives of the mobile networks operators have attended project meetings for the review of the General Permitted Development Order; the review of the Code of Best Practice for Mobile Phone Network Development; and the research project to identify the future direction of mobile phone and electronic communications network technology.

Pathfinder

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the average price of a property facing demolition in the Pathfinder areas. [29723]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer given on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 814W.

Planning

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a local authority may advertise planning applications on its website rather than in local newspapers; and if he will make a statement. [28262]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities must advertise planning applications in a local paper when required to by the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what were the *(a)* average, *(b)* longest and *(c)* shortest times taken by the Government Office South West (i) to determine whether a planning application referred to it by a local authority required full consideration and (ii) to announce its final decision where a full inquiry was required in each of the last six years. [28438]

Yvette Cooper: The information is set out in the following tables 1 and 2. Table 1 includes the percentage of decisions on whether referred cases should be called in for determination by the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister completed within the statutory 21 day period. This indicates that in every year the average case has been dealt with in less than three weeks.

Table 1: determination of whether to call-in referred application

	Total number of referrals	*Longest time to reach decision (weeks)*	*Shortest time to reach decision (days)*	*Percentage decided in 21 days*
2000	151	60	2	88
2001	149	41	3	83
2002	144	39	2	79
2003	174	46	4	77
2004	159	41	2	81
2005[1]	93	32	2	85

[1] To date.

Table 2: determination of called-in applications

Weeks

	Longest time from call-in to decision	*Shortest time from call-in to decision*	*Average time from call-in to decision*
2000	74	39	51
2001	51	32	40
2002	47	42	45
2003	72	40	50
2004	50	38	44
2005[1]	72	55	63

[1] To date.

Peter Law: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to establish a centralised mechanism to collect data on the number of planning permissions granted for housing development on green belt land. [28885]

Yvette Cooper: A centralised national database of planning permissions granted or refused by each local planning authority is maintained on a quarterly basis. Aggregate statistics on permissions for housing development are collected but not details of individual applications or their location in each authority, including on green belt land. A special inquiry to local authorities to provide such detail would be an extra burden on them and could not be justified. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently exploring other ways of obtaining information more efficiently through "e-planning" initiatives.

Property Valuation

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many days' notice a valuation officer must give before visiting a property. [30660]

Mr. Woolas: Section 26 (2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 states that if exercising his or her power of entry, the valuation officer must give at least three days notice in writing of the proposed exercise of the power.

The Valuation Office Agency's Charter on Council Tax states that if a valuation officer needs to see inside a taxpayer's property he or she will give seven days notice, wherever possible, contacting the taxpayer to arrange a convenient appointment.

Regional Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information his Department would need to collect to be able to publish figures for the total expenditure of the English regional chambers. [26904]

Yvette Cooper: Regional assemblies are voluntary bodies. We do not collect information on regional assembly expenditure. I refer the hon. Member to my answer given on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 817W, which details grant made by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to regional assemblies between 2001–02 and 2005–06

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to the regional chambers on their duties under the Human Rights Act 1998; and if he will make a statement. [26907]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued any guidance to the regional assemblies on their duties under the Human Rights Act.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place the interim report commissioned from Arup on regional assemblies in the Library. [26915]

Yvette Cooper: Copies of the interim report prepared by Arup on regional assemblies have been placed in the Library of the House.

Staffordshire County Council

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital funding his Department has allocated to Staffordshire county council in each of the last 10 years. [27499]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The following table sets out payments made to Staffordshire county council since 2002–03.

All Figures (£ million)

	Funding	
	(a) Revenue	*(b) Capital*
2002–03	404.520	0.200
2003–04	468.167	1.800
2004–05	486.441	0.506
Total	1359.128	2.506

Town Councils

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 495–96W, on town councils, what the reason is for the time taken by his office receiving a proposal for the creation of a new town council and his office making orders to implement the proposal. [30167]

Mr. Woolas: The period referred to in my previous answer of between six and nine months is not a delay, but the period for undertaking the necessary consultative and other processes needed to implement a proposal to create a new town council.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what work the Valuation Office Agency is conducting on matters relating to the valuation of domestic properties. [26902]

Mr. Woolas: The statutory responsibilities of the Listing Officers employed by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to compile and maintain valuation lists for council tax purposes in England continue. For the current (1993) lists this means banding new properties, amending the banding of existing properties and deleting entries from the lists where properties are demolished or converted to non-domestic use. (Amendments to bandings may occur where there are physical changes that would result in a lower band, or where an improvement has been made that would take the property into a higher band and there has been a subsequent sale.) These activities will now be undertaken with the benefit of the newly digitised database of property records, which the VOA will ensure is comprehensive and up to date. This means that the VOA can introduce improved processes for handling data internally—as it will no longer be reliant on paper records—and can also provide a better service to council tax payers and to billing authorities in relation to the 1993 lists. In particular it will be better placed to deal quickly with enquiries or appeals from tax payers about their current bandings. Additionally, to secure the investment made to date in the automated valuation model technology, the VOA will complete the necessary work to ensure that the model is available for use in all its locations. Although introduced to support the 2007 revaluation, the VOA plans to use the model's capability to support the 1993 lists and also for other valuation work on domestic property which it undertakes within its statutory remit.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Valuation Office Agency has to reduce its staff following his announcement of the delay in the council tax revaluation in England. [26905]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency has reviewed its staffing need in the light of the postponement of the council tax revaluation. The immediate impact on staffing is that some 420 staff working on casual and fixed term contracts will have left the Agency by 18 November 2005. The Agency is now running an early departure scheme for permanent employees and it is anticipated that some 600 more staff will leave in the period between 30 March 2006 and 30 June 2006. It is anticipated that, coupled with natural wastage, the total reduction will amount to some 1,250 staff.

Wind Farms

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many public inquiries as a result of wind farm development planning applications in the last five years have resulted in the planning application being *(a)* upheld and *(b)* recommended for refusal; [27010]

(2) how many wind farm planning applications have *(a)* been examined by inspectors at public inquiry and *(b)* called in; and how many have been (i) approved and (ii) refused in each category. [27301]

Yvette Cooper: In the last five years in England, there have been 14 public inquiries held as a result of wind farm development planning applications. All of these were planning appeals and of these, eight resulted in the planning application being allowed and six resulted in a refusal of planning permission. There have been no such planning applications that have been called in during the last five years.

HEALTH

Alcohol Treatment

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the findings of her Department's audit of alcohol treatment and models of care for alcohol misuse. [26694]

Caroline Flint: The alcohol needs assessment research project (ANARP) was published on 1 November 2005, this provided valuable data for the programme of improvement. The ANARP confirms that there are 696 treatment services available in England, these results show that there are 43 per cent. more agencies providing alcohol treatment services than previously identified. The models of care for alcohol misusers will be published in December 2005.

Assaults (Ambulance Staff)

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking *(a)* to reduce the number of assaults on ambulance staff while on duty and *(b)* to increase the number of prosecutions in cases where assaults have been made on ambulance staff while on duty. [25240]

Jane Kennedy: In November 2003 a comprehensive range of measures were introduced by the national health service to tackle the problem of violence against NHS staff, including those that work in the ambulance services. Since that time an estimated 85,000 frontline NHS staff have been trained to prevent and manage violence. This work is supported by advice and guidance from the NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS).

The number of prosecutions identified involving those who have physically assaulted NHS staff has risen from 51 in 2002–03 to 759 in 2004–05. Other initiatives include the introduction of professional skills and expertise at local level through the role of the local

security management specialist who is trained to tackle security-related problems such as violence against NHS staff; this is supported by accredited training, advice and guidance from the NHS SMS. A key project of the NHS SMS will be to build strong links locally with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to ensure all cases of assaults are professionally investigated and prosecuted where appropriate. This will be supported by a memorandum of understanding between the NHS and the Association of Chief Police Officers, as well as advice and guidance from the NHS SMS legal protection unit.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to disseminate best practice in reducing assaults on ambulance staff while on duty. [25241]

Jane Kennedy: In November 2003, a comprehensive range of measures were introduced by the national health service to tackle the problem of violence against NHS staff, including those that work in the ambulance services, supported by the NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS).

These initiatives include the introduction of the role of the local security management specialist to provide NHS health bodies for the first-time ever with professional skills and expertise locally to tackle security-related problems such as violence against NHS staff. This is supported centrally by accredited training, advice and guidance from the NHS SMS. The NHS security management manual is supplied to trained and accredited local security management specialist and provides best practice guidance on a range of security matters, including tackling violence against staff. A specific training syllabus for the prevention and management of violence is being developed for ambulance personnel and will be launched in 2006.

The NHS SMS is currently working with the Home Office on a project known as the safer hospitals project. One of the strands of this work is devoted to evaluating how the use of technology and other interventions can be used to better protect ambulance staff. The project is due to report in early 2006.

Attention Deficit Disorder

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines she has issued on the prescription of medicines for adults which are used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children; and what research the Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on this matter. [24417]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has asked the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to prepare a guideline on the effectiveness of methylphenidate and other pharmacological and psychological interventions in combination or separately for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The guideline should apply to the treatment of children, young people and adults where evidence for treatment effectiveness is available. The Department has not directly commissioned or evaluated research on the prescription of medicines for adults which are used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children.

Audiology Services

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking *(a)* to improve capacity to deliver audiology services and *(b)* to reduce waiting times for fitting digital hearing aids. [28477]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Several initiatives have been introduced to improve capacity to deliver audiology services. These are the national framework contract public private partnership to bring in additional independent sector capacity, the development of a new degree to help to address the shortage of audiologists and the introduction of Hearing Direct which is follow-up care and advice for hearing aid users who would benefit from this.

The figures on waiting times for digital hearing aids are not collected centrally.

Barnsley Primary Care Trust (Redundancies)

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the likely cost of redundancies for the Barnsley Primary Care Trust in *(a)* 2005, *(b)* 2006 and *(c)* 2007; [20400]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of posts to be *(a)* lost and *(b)* restructured in each health establishment in South Yorkshire for each year from 2005 to 2008, broken down by grade; [20401]

(3) what estimate she has made of the likely cost of redundancies for health establishments in South Yorkshire in each year from 2005 to 2008. [20402]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities were required to provide proposals for local commissioning arrangements to the Department by 15 October. All proposals, including staff implications, will be subject to full local consultation. Once final decisions have been taken, the Department will consider whether there is a need to issue guidance.

Bed Closures

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the net number of bed closures in *(a)* London and *(b)* each NHS Trust in London was in 2004–05, broken down by bed type. [24375]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not hold this information in the format requested.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23728]

Caroline Flint: This Department supports and aims to meet the Government's strategy to reduce carbon emissions and improve the energy efficiency of the Government estate. The Department's estate consists mainly of administrative buildings, and we do not consider that the Carbon Trust's programme would be appropriate at this time.

We will continue to encourage the national health service to work with the Carbon Trust, and to offer best assistance.

Care Homes

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many care homes have closed in the Ribble Valley in each of the last five years. [21164]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested, as the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) does not collect data by constituency. Nor does CSCI collect information on home closures or the reason for closure. CSCI does however collect information on the number of homes that de-register, although this could be for a variety of reasons including closure or to re-register in another category.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the timetable is for acting on those recommendations in the Office of Fair Trading Care Homes Study with which she has agreed; [22265]

(2) for what reasons she took a different view from that expressed by the Commission for Social Care Inspection on the Office of Fair Trading's Care Homes study. [23066]

Mr. Byrne: The Office of Fair Trading's (OFT) report on care homes for older people in the United Kingdom made a number of specific recommendations for central government, the devolved administrations, the regulators, including the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), local councils and care homes. The Government's action plan published on 17 August covers all the recommendations that the OFT directed at central government in England. As the independent inspectorate for all social care services in England, the CSCI responded separately to the OFT report and addressed the specific recommendations directed at them.

The Government's action plan included the timetable for the intended actions. The plan stated that some issues would be considered in the context of next steps on "Independence, Well-being and Choice", which will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper planned to be published at the turn of the year. The Government also committed to consider through the review of the national minimum standards (NMS) and associated regulations the most effective way to address other issues. It intends to issue revised NMS and regulations for consultation in spring 2006, with the intention of implementing changes from April 2007.

Childhood Obesity

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what target date has been set for halting the rise in obesity among children under 11 years; how the target to reduce emergency bed days by 5 per cent. by 2008 will be measured; how the target to offer a personalised care plan for vulnerable adults most at risk is to be measured; and whether the targets to *(a)* increase life expectancy, *(b)* reduce mortality rates from heart disease, stroke and related diseases, *(c)* reduce the inequalities gap in mortality rates from heart disease and *(d)* reduce mortality rates from cancer by 2010 will be based on average data from 2009 to 2011 [26541]

Caroline Flint: The Department's public service agreement (PSA) targets and associated technical notes were agreed with Her Majesty's Treasury as part of 2004 spending review and are published on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/69/19/04086919.pdf. PSA technical notes contain the measurement details of the targets including target dates, data sources, coverage and references to further relevant technical information.

Continuing Care

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average time taken was to complete a successful claim for the reimbursement of wrongly charged continuing care in the last year for which figures are available; [24490]

(2) what is the timetable for reviewing claims for reimbursement for individuals who have been wrongly charged for continuing care; [24529]

(3) how many primary health trusts in England have launched advertising campaigns on the reimbursement of erroneous charges for continuing care. [24530]

Mr. Byrne: Information relating to the average time taken to complete a successful reimbursement claim for national health service continuing care is not collected centrally.

In England, strategic health authorities are seeking to complete all new cases coming to light within two months of the receipt of all the relevant documents.

The Department will not set any further deadlines for completing investigations because there are still a number of new cases coming to light it would be inappropriate to imply that there is a cut off date.

Information relating to the number of primary care trusts in England who have launched advertising campaigns on the review process for reimbursement of continuing care charges is not held centrally.

Delayed Discharges

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many delayed discharges there were in England in each of the last six years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [28108]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 174W.

Dentistry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will arrange for UK-based students qualifying for dentistry to undertake a period of employment in the NHS in return for full or partial remittance of fees. [24698]

Ms Rosie Winterton: On graduation, almost all newly qualified dentists undertake one year's vocational training in a dental practice with a significant

commitment to national health service dentistry. Some primary care trusts (PCTs), in areas where there are shortages of NHS dentists, already offer inducement payments to dentists to undertake their vocational training in their areas. We are encouraging PCTs to build on this experience by considering other innovative methods of attracting dentists to make their careers in the NHS. I will ensure the review team is aware of my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much energy has been consumed by her Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22462]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Consumption and cost of energy for the Department of Health, including NHS Pensions Agency until April 2004

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Consumption kilowatt-hour (kWh)					
Fossil Fuel	6,945,887	5,727,067	6,483,326	6,453,776	5,557,740
Electricity (Brown)	13,564,400	8,206,435	4,176,730	6,630,876	0
Electricity (Green)	0	4,938,628	9,271,000	7,223,000	13,268,795
Total	20,510,287	18,872,130	19,931,056	20,307,652	18,826,535
Cost (£)					
Fossil Fuel	85,059	89,803	102,213	100,955	114,256
Electricity (Brown)	585,193	387,419	176,720	274,605	0
Electricity (Green)	0	240,200	411,848	353,621	734,316
Total	670,252	717,422	690,781	729,181	848,572

Consumption and cost of energy for NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Consumption (kWh)					
Fossil Fuel	533,229	531,153	474,243	464,910	410,332
Electricity (Brown)	581,116	355,114	0	0	86,254
Electricity (Green)	0	280,332	584,405	479,566	486,639
Total	1,114,345	1,166,599	1,058,648	944,476	983,225
Cost (£)					
Fossil Fuel	4,555	21,231	11,178	6,915	6,938
Electricity (Brown)	23,591	32,901	0	0	[1]—
Electricity (Green)	[1]—	[1]—	38,750	30,121	39,404
Total	28,146	54,132	49,928	37,036	46,342

[1] Combined figure

Departmental Estate

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken in the context of assessment of the environmental impact of her Department to provide a clear description of her Department's estate, including executive agencies, staff numbers, buildings and land management. [22099]

Caroline Flint: I understand that this question relates to BREEAM (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) and sustainable development.

The Department reports annually on its progress against the targets contained in the "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate". The data for 2004–05 is currently being analysed by independent consultants. It will shortly be published, with a commentary by the Sustainable Development Commission, on the Government's sustainable development website at www.sustainable-development.gov.uk. The data for 2003–04 is currently available on the website.

Payment by Results

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action she is taking following the publication of the report by the Audit Commission entitled "Early Lessons From Payment By Results". [25556]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The Audit Commission's report, "Early Lessons from Payment by Results" (October 2005), provides useful insight into the experience of those national health service organisations at the forefront of implementing payment by results. Many of the key recommendations from the report are either already being implemented or are being taken forward for subsequent years.

For example, the Department has consulted on a draft code of conduct, which aims to establish clear expectations on how organisations will conduct business under payment by results and the Department will be finalising the code of conduct for next year.

In addition, the Department is working with the Audit Commission to develop an assurance framework for payment by results, which will focus on improving data quality and assuring the appropriateness of payments. Tariff changes for 2006–07 will be announced in due course.

Emergency Bed Service

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the emergency bed service. [18771]

Mr. Byrne: The emergency bed service, run by the London Ambulance Service, provides a range of information on bed availability to the national health service in the London area.

The service also provides the NHS nationally with vital information on the availability of intensive care beds via the centrally funded intensive care bed register. This service is available 24 hours a day; seven days a week; 365 days a year.

Funding Criteria

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what criteria were used in setting the funding allocation for *(a)* Lambeth primary care trust and *(b)* Dacorum primary care trust for 2005–06; and if she will make a statement; [24724]

(2) what criteria were used in setting the funding allocation to Salford primary care trust for 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [24725]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Revenue allocations are made directly to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each PCT's target share of available resources.

The components of the formula are used to weight each PCTs crude population according to their relative need (age, and additional need) for health care and the unavoidable geographical differences in the cost of providing health care (market forces factor).

GM Crops

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recommendations she made regarding GM Maize—GA21 prior to its submission to the EU regulatory authority. [25231]

Caroline Flint: An application for authorisation of products derived from GA21 maize was made to the Dutch authorities in 1998 under the novel foods regulation (EC) No. 258/97. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the UK Competent Authority under the novel foods regulation and seeks expert advice on the safety of Genetically Modified foods from the independent Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP).

The dossier on GA21 maize was reviewed by the ACNFP during 2000. They identified certain shortcomings in the available data and its advice formed the basis of the United Kingdom's objection to the initial assessment report from the Dutch Competent Authority. These shortcomings, and questions raised by other member states, were addressed by Monsanto in a supplementary dossier that they provided to the EC Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) for further assessment. The SCF concluded in March 2002 that GA21 maize is as safe as conventional, non-GM maize.

As the supplementary data and the SCF evaluation answered the ACNFP's initial questions, the FSA has advised Ministers that GA21 maize meets the necessary criteria for authorisation. The UK therefore voted in favour when European Union member states voted on the authorisation of GA21 maize in April and October of this year.

General Practitioners

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many registered general practitioners there were in the NHS in each year since 1992. [26468]

Mr. Byrne: The requested information is shown in the table.

All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] for England, 1992 to June 2005

	Number (headcount)
1992	26,572
1993	26,931
1994	27,290
1995	27,465
1996	27,811
1997	28,046
1998	28,251
1999	28,467
2000	28,593
2001	28,802
2002	29,202
2003	30,358
2004	31,523
June 2005	32,418

[1] General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes contracted GPs, GMS others and PMS others. Prior to September 2004 this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Note:

Data as at 1 October 1992–99, 30 September 2000–04 and 30 June 2005.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many GPs per head of population there have been in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire in each year since 1997. [29043]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* The information requested is shown in the following table.

General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population, by Government office region, strategic health authority and primary care trust, 1997–2004—England

Headcount

		1997			1998		
		All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per100,000 head of population*	*All Practitioners excluding retainers and registrars)[1]*	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per100,000 head of population*
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	1,086	1,899,842	57.2	1,109	1,901,721	58.3
5CC	Blackburn with Darwen PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HP	Blackpool PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5G8	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
504	Carlisle and District PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5F2	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5D5	Eden Valley PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HE	Fylde PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5G7	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
500	Morecambe Bay PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HD	Preston PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5D6	West Cumbria PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HF	Wyre PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2

Headcount

		1999			2000		
		All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per100,000 head of population*	*All Practitioners excluding retainers and registrars)[1]*	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per100,000 head of population*
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	1,106	1,899,003	58.2	1,105	1,901,743	58.1
5CC	Blackburn with Darwen PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HP	Blackpool PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5G8	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
504	Carlisle and District PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5F2	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5D5	Eden Valley PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HE	Fylde PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5G7	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
500	Morecambe Bay PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HD	Preston PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5D6	West Cumbria PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2
5HF	Wyre PCT	2	2	2	2	2	2

Headcount

		2001			2002		
		All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per100,000 head of population*	*All Practitioners excluding retainers and registrars)[1]*	*Population*	*All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per100,000 head of population*
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	1,118	1,905,060	58.7	1,145	1,910,378	59.9
5CC	Blackburn with Darwen PCT	79	138,453	57.1	91	139,302	65.3
5HP	Blackpool PCT	81	142,270	56.9	80	142,177	56.3
5G8	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	136	244,445	55.6	129	243,889	52.9
504	Carlisle and District PCT	71	114,092	62.2	72	114,454	62.9
5F2	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	112	204,508	54.8	113	205,756	54.9
5D5	Eden Valley PCT	52	69,167	75.2	56	69,755	80.3
5HE	Fylde PCT	39	73,340	53.2	37	74,164	49.9
5G7	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	71	124,709	56.9	64	125,498	51.0
500	Morecambe Bay PCT	195	308,406	63.2	199	308,184	64.6
5HD	Preston PCT	71	141,211	50.3	85	141,389	60.1
5D6	West Cumbria PCT	89	130,179	68.4	91	130,043	70.0
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	58	108,480	53.5	61	108,718	56.1
5HF	Wyre PCT	64	105,800	60.5	67	107,049	62.6

Headcount

		2003			2004		
		All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	Population	All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population	All Practitioners excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	Population[3]	All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	1,169	1,919,041	60.9	1,168	1,929,653	60.5
5CC	Blackburn with Darwen PCT	91	139,804	65.1	87	[2]	[2]
5HP	Blackpool PCT	82	142,429	57.6	81	[2]	[2]
5G8	Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	133	243,755	54.6	134	[2]	[2]
504	Carlisle and District PCT	74	115,331	64.2	75	[2]	[2]
5F2	Chorley and South Ribble PCT	113	207,072	54.6	119	[2]	[2]
5D5	Eden Valley PCT	54	70,550	76.5	56	[2]	[2]
5HE	Fylde PCT	39	75,026	52.0	40	[2]	[2]
5G7	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	68	126,613	53.7	64	[2]	[2]
500	Morecambe Bay PCT	210	308,746	68.0	213	[2]	[2]
5HD	Preston PCT	85	141,446	60.1	86	[2]	[2]
5D6	West Cumbria PCT	90	130,973	68.7	90	[2]	[2]
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	61	108,994	56.0	60	[2]	[2]
5HF	Wyre PCT	69	108,302	63.7	63	[2]	[2]

[1] General medical practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes contracted GPs, QMS others and PMS others. Prior to September 2004 this group included QMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

[2] Data not applicable.

[3] Population data for 2004 PCTs will not be available until November 2005.

Note:

Data as at 1 October 1997–99 and 30 September 2000–04.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics 2001 ONS Population Census

Health Services (Leeds)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what services provided by the Leeds Hospitals Teaching Trust will be transferred to the proposed surgical independent sector treatment centre serving Leeds patients; [18924]

(2) what maximum income of the proposed surgical independent sector treatment centre serving Leeds patients will be underwritten over the first five years of its existence; [18925]

(3) when she expects the proposed surgical independent sector treatment centre serving Leeds patients to come into operation. [18926]

Mr. Byrne: Existing local health services have not been transferred to Eccleshill Treatment Centre. The services offered are additional and patients have a choice about where they attend.

The issues raised are subject to the outcome of the on-going procurement process.

Healthcare Assistants

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the salaries of healthcare assistants. [23558]

Mr. Byrne: Many healthcare assistants are benefiting from assimilation to the new Agenda for Change National Health Service pay system under which their pay is based on the knowledge, responsibility, skills and effort required for their job, rather than their historic job title or occupational group. In addition, the department has provided evidence to the Nurses and Other Health Professions Review Body asking them to recommend an increase in pay from next April within prudent financial limits. A copy of this is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/08/41/04120841.pdf.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make it her policy to make compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 a condition of registration under the Care Standards Act 2000; [22182]

(2) if she will make it her policy to require local authorities entering into contracts with care providers to ensure that the recipient of care services has the full protection of the Human Rights Act 1998. [22183]

Mr. Byrne: Consideration has been given to the application of the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 to independent sector bodies carrying out national health service services, and to organisations registered under the Care Standards Act 2000. This is, however, an issue tied into the wider question of the meaning given to public authority in the Human Rights Act 1998 and elsewhere in discrimination law and it will, therefore, be considered in the context of the discrimination law review currently being undertaken by the Government.

Local authorities are public authorities and are subject to the HRA. Local authorities are expected to take account of the relevant aspects of the HRA in their contracting arrangements, including those with care providers. On the recommendation of the parliamentary joint committee on human rights, guidance was published in March 2005 on contracting for services in the light of the HRA.

Influenza

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how stockpiled supplies of antiviral drugs will be distributed. [21219]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts will be responsible for developing plans for the distribution of antivirals. We have recently published a framework for the National health service for stockpiling, distributing and using antivirals which is available on our website: www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what support has been given to research and development of a vaccine against possible pandemic strains of avian influenza in each year since 1997. [20862]

Jane Kennedy: The development of a vaccine that will give effective protection against a new strain of influenza virus has to follow the emergence of the strain in humans.

The Department is currently finalising a strategy that will ensure that its vaccine, anti-viral and diagnosis related research activities are in line with those of other research funders in the United Kingdom, in Europe and in North America. At the same time, the Medical Research Council will hold a workshop in December to identify particular strategic research needs for pandemic influenza. When this consultation process is complete, the Government will be in a position to commission high quality research that is both applicable to the needs of the UK and coordinated with the efforts of other countries.

The main agencies through which the Government support influenza research are the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). The research councils are independent bodies funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

MRC expenditure on research on influenza in the years from 1997–98 is shown in the table.

	£ million
1997–98	1.21
1998–99	2.06
1999–2000	1.49
2000–01	0.85
2001–02	1.07
2003–04	1.38
2004–05	1.62

The MRC additionally supports a large infections portfolio that includes research aimed at improved treatment through developing new vaccines and drugs, and understanding how infectious organisms evade the body's immune defences and evolve drug resistance. Aspects of this research will be relevant to influenza.

The BBSRC spent some £2.5 million on influenza research in the years 2001–05. Earlier information is not available. In the last two years £0.5 million of the total has been spent on research on avian influenza, and has been aimed at understanding the virus and nature of infection.

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service. The Department's national research programme spend on research related to pandemic influenza vaccination in the period from 1997 to 2004 was £417,000.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which categories of *(a)* healthcare and *(b)* other key workers will be prioritised during an influenza pandemic to receive a pandemic virus vaccine once it has been developed. [24523]

Caroline Flint: Once a vaccine for the pandemic flu strain has been developed, healthcare workers and key workers in other essential services may need to be vaccinated first, as it will be important to maintain health and other essential services during the pandemic. Final decisions regarding prioritisation will be made on the basis of information emerging from the early stages of the pandemic about the virus and those groups most at risk.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions she has had with the Welsh Assembly Government on dealing with an influenza pandemic in Wales; and if she will make a statement; [24502]

(2) what discussions she has had with her National Assembly for Wales Government counterpart on cross-border issues arising from contingency planning for an influenza pandemic. [24642]

Caroline Flint: Discussions have not taken place with Welsh colleagues at ministerial level although we have worked closely with Welsh Assembly Government officials in the development of the "UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan" that provides the framework for the overall response to a pandemic.

We also maintain a continuing dialogue with Assembly officials directly and through other channels such as the Cabinet Office working group on operational arrangements and guidance for the public and health professionals.

Information Technology

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the actual costs against planned expenditure of the patient information systems being built by private companies in the NHS. [27217]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* Under the terms of the contracts let by NHS Connecting for Health, the agency which is delivering the NHS National Programme for Information Technology, a significant proportion of the risks has been transferred to the supplier. Payment to the supplier depends on system deployment. This incentivises deployment, and payments can be clawed back where subsequent milestones are not met. NHS Connecting for Health has retained extensive rights to terminate contracts for failure to achieve the required performance levels and to receive compensation for missed milestones.

Lichfield Hospital

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1146–47W, on Lichfield hospital, whether a maternity unit will be provided at the new hospital under construction in Lichfield. [26684]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority reports that the maternity unit currently at the Victoria hospital will transfer to the new hospital in Lichfield.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many employees in her Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23420]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold this information.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23431]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not held by the Department

Medical Careers

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to ensure the management of a successful transition to modernising medical careers. [25322]

Mr. Byrne: All aspects of the implementation of modernising medical careers (MMC) are governed through the following structures. The MMC United Kingdom strategy group, attended by the four UK Chief Medical Officers, sets the strategic direction. Implementation in England is managed through the MMC programme delivery board. Input from a wide range of stakeholders is obtained through the MMC UK advisory board. There is also close working with individual stakeholders to manage different aspects of the process.

These bodies are currently developing and assessing the structure of specialist and general practitioners training following the successful introduction of foundation programmes in August this year. Their work encompasses career structures and career prospects for junior doctors.

Mental Health

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what specialist services are available for families affected by mental health problems in *(a)* Normanton constituency, *(b)* Wakefield East primary care trust, *(c)* Wakefield West primary care trust, *(d)* Wakefield district and *(e)* West Yorkshire. [24246]

Mr. Byrne: The specialist services available for families affected by mental health problems within Wakefield and across West Yorkshire are shown in the list.

Total Services in Wakefield Local Implementation Team by service name, as at September 2005:

Accident and Emergency Liaison Service
Acute Liaison Team
Adult Psychological Therapies
Airedale Community Mental Health Team
Approved Social Worker Rota
Back in Touch Project
Carers Mental Health Link
Castle Lodge
Catering Plus Ltd.
Community Link Service
Crisis Resolution Service
Day Treatment Service—Baghill House, Pontefract
Day Treatment Service—Garden Street, Wakefield
Direct Impact
Development Initiative for Voluntary Arts (DIVA)
EDT
Fieldhead Befriending Scheme
Grove House
Home Based Break Service
Hyde Park
Joint Group of Users and Carers
Mental Health Reference Group
Mind Matters
Network 2000
Newton Lodge
Open House (Out of Hours Drop-in)
Out Patients
Pioneer Project
Pontefract Assertive Outreach Team
Pontefract CMHT
Primary Care Liaison Treatment and Training (PLATT) Service
Priory Unit
Psychiatric Liaison Service
Rethink Carers Group
Richmond Fellowship Advocacy Service
Saville Park
South Kirkby CMHT
Specialist Psychotherapy Service
Targeting Your Needs—Mental Wellbeing Project
Thomas Owen House
Wakefield Assertive Outreach Team
Wakefield Carer Development Service
Wakefield District Patient Advice and Liaison Service
Wakefield District Prison Mental Health In-reach Service
Wakefield Friendship, Social and Support Group
Wakefield Mental Health Employment Consortium
Wakefield North CMHT
Wakefield Self Help Depression Group
Wakefield South Community Mental Health Team
Wakefield Walk-in Centre
Workstep

Source:
Adult Mental Health Service Mapping

Directory of services in West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority[1]: Types of Service available:

Access and Crisis Services, i.e., Community Mental Health Teams

Accommodation Services

Carers' Services

Clinical Services

Continuing Care Services

Day Services

Home Care Services

Key Services

Mental Health Promotion

Other Services

Primary Care Services

Secure Services

Service Development

Services for Mentally Ill Offenders

Support Services

Therapy Services

[1] West Yorkshire SHA includes Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield Local Implementation Teams.

Source:
Adult Mental Health Service Mapping

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government plans to use the review of the general practitioners contract to establish incentives for general practitioners to set up a register for those with mental health problems. [24418]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers, on behalf of United Kingdom health Ministers, are responsible for reviewing the General Medical Service contract with the British Medical Association's general practitioners committee. Negotiators have confirmed some changes will be made to the quality and outcomes framework from April 2006, but negotiations are still in progress.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the £1 billion allocation to mental health services has been directed to mental health services for *(a)* child and adolescent mental health services and *(b)* services of those over 60 years of age. [24944]

Mr. Byrne: The additional investment amounting to £1 billion since the publication of the national service framework for mental health was spent by national health service trusts on mental health services for adults of working age. There has also been additional investment on mental health services for other ages, details of which are shown in the report of the "2004–05 National Survey of Investment in Mental Health Services" which is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/52/96/04115296.pdf.

Midwives

Mr. Bafon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans she has to implement the Independent Midwives Association's NHS community midwifery model; and if she will make a statement; [16670]

(2) what discussions she has had with *(a)* officials and *(b)* independent organisations about the possibility of implementing the NHS community midwifery model. [16671]

Mr. Byrne: Officials met with the Independent Midwives Association (IMA) on 3 August to discuss their proposal of a national health service community midwifery model. The group agreed that it would be a useful exercise to pilot the IMA model with a small group of independent midwives. The IMA was asked to put together a proposal for this pilot, which could then be discussed with primary care trusts who had expressed an interest in working with the IMA community midwifery model. This pilot is being developed.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the number of extra midwives needed to enable full choice by 2009 in the NHS of where and how women will give birth. [23150]

Mr. Byrne: The Government's manifesto stated that by 2009, all women will have choice over where and how they have their baby and what pain relief to use.

The numbers of midwives needed is a matter for local determination, but the number of students entering midwifery training was 2,374 in 2004–05 compared with 1,652 in 1996–97 and the vacancy rate for midwives was 1.8 per cent. in 2005 compared with 3.3 per cent. in 2004.

MRSA

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the MRSA rates per thousand patient beds were for acute hospitals with *(a)* above and *(b)* below average levels of bed utilisation in each year since 2000. [20505]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the requested format.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of a possible relationship between higher rates of bed utilisation and the incidence of MRSA. [20506]

Jane Kennedy: As part of its programme to reduce health care associated infections, the Department is working on an internal desk analysis of hospital organisation specialty mix and methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). This indicates a statistical correlation but bed occupancy is only one of the factors that influences infection rates. The Department acknowledges the importance of assessing the impact of initiatives on the incidence of MRSA.

NHS Ambulance Trusts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on her plans to re-structure NHS ambulance trusts. [24593]

Mr. Byrne: The Department published the outcome of a strategic review of the national health service ambulance services on 30 June 2005, "Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services". The review, led by the national ambulance adviser, supported by a group of stakeholders, sets out how ambulance services can be transformed from a service focusing primarily on resuscitation, trauma and acute

care towards becoming a mobile health resource for the whole NHS—taking healthcare to the patient in the community.

The review will realise a range of benefits for patients; and staff including:

Patients will receive improved care, consistently receiving the right response, first time, in time.

More patients treated in the community, and potentially 1 million fewer unnecessary accident and emergency attendances

Greater job satisfaction for staff as they use additional knowledge and skills to care for patients

More effective and efficient use of NHS resources

Improvements in self care and health promotion.

In order to realise the vision and the benefits of "Taking Healthcare to the Patient-Transforming NHS Ambulance Services", ambulance trusts need to be of a size that enables appropriate investment in people and resources to underpin current and future services and enable the vision set out in the ambulance review to be delivered. We are therefore proposing that there should be fewer, bigger ambulance trusts and will be undertaking public consultation on these proposals this winter. These proposals will ensure resources are targeted to where they are most needed—improving patient care and supporting front-line services. A three-month statutory consultation on the reconfiguration of ambulance trusts is expected to commence early next month.

NHS Expenditure

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the NHS budget was spent on administrative costs in *(a)* 1975 and *(b)* 1995; and what estimate she has made of the likely percentage after the full implementation of payment by results. [20360]

Mr. Byrne: National health service administrative cost expenditure was not collected prior to 1996–97. Payment by results does not introduce new administrative costs into the NHS but creates incentives for organisations to improve the efficiency of existing administrative functions.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the spending on the national health service in England *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* adjusted for retail price inflation and *(c)* adjusted for inflation in NHS costs has been in each year since 1975. [20167]

Mr. Byrne: The required run of national health service expenditure figures is shown in the table.

NHS total net expenditure: England—1975–76 to 2004–05 (2004–05 prices)

£ billion

		Net NHS expenditure actual[1]	*Net NHS expenditure 2004–05 prices*	*Net NHS expenditure adjusted by HCHS pay and price inflation*
Cash[2]				
1975–76	Outturn	4.413	23.401	22.783
1976–77	Outturn	5.032	23.529	23.448
1977–78	Outturn	5.555	22.862	23.918
1978–79	Outturn	6.273	23.258	23.556
1979–80	Outturn	7.447	23.635	22.914
1980–81	Outturn	9.700	26.051	24.051
1981–82	Outturn	10.854	26.617	26.941
1982–83	Outturn	11.819	27.070	27.214
1983–84	Outturn	12.494	27.359	27.227
1984–85	Outturn	13.407	27.899	27.749
1985–86	Outturn	14.176	27.984	28.121
1986–87	Outturn	15.173	29.028	27.993
1987–88	Outturn	16.668	30.206	29.390
1988–89	Outturn	18.420	31.198	30.181
1989–90	Outturn	19.855	31.395	31.635
1990–91	Outturn	22.326	32.740	32.476
1991–92	Outturn	25.353	35.063	33.769
1992–93	Outturn	27.968	37.488	36.182
1993–94	Outturn	28.942	37.827	37.517
1994–95	Outturn	30.590	39.376	38.967
1995–96	Outturn	31.985	40.048	39.703
1996–97	Outturn	32.997	39.906	40.151
1997–98	Outturn	34.664	40.718	41.059
1998–99	Outturn	36.608	41.914	41.387
1999–2000	Outturn	39.681	44.780	43.648
RB stage one[3]				
1999–2000	Outturn	40.201	45.139	
2000–01	Outturn	43.932	48.691	47.396
2001–02	Outturn	49.021	53.022	51.856
2002–03	Outturn	54.042	56.653	56.256
RB stage two[4,5]				
2003–04	Outturn	63.001	64.339	
2004–05	Outturn	69.710	69.710	69.486

Notes:

1. Expenditure pre 1999–2000 is on a cash basis.
2. Expenditure figures from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are on a stage one resource budgeting basis.
3. Expenditure figures from 2003–04 to 2004–05 are on a stage two resource budgeting basis.
4. The resource budgeting stage two actual net expenditure figures shown for 2003–04 to 2004–05 are consistent with the 2005 departmental report.
5. Figures are not consistent over the period (1971–72 to 2004–05); hence no comparisons should be made across different periods.
6. Table is based on 2004–05 prices using the gross domestic product deflator series as at 28 September 2005.
7. Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) pay and price inflation is a weighted aveage of two separate inflation indices, the pay cost index (PCI) and the health service cost indes (HSCI). Up to and including 1984–85, pay inflation was calculated using the pay settlements. From 1985–86 the PCI measures pay inflation in the HCHS. The PCI is itself a weighted average of increases in unit staff costs for each of the staff groups within the HCHS sector. Pay cost inflation tends to be higher than pay settlement inflation, because of an element of pay drift within each staff group. Pay drift is the tendency for there to be a gradual shift up the incremental scales, and is additional to settlement inflation.
8. The HSCI is calculated monthly to measure the price change for each of 41 sub-indices of goods and services purchased by the HCHS. The sub-indices are weighted together according to the proportion of total expenditure which they represent to give the overall HSCI value. The pay cost index and the health service cost index are weighted together according to the proportion of HCHS expenditure on each. This provides an HCHS combined pay and prices inflation figure.

NHS Trusts

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts in England are *(a)* in deficit and *(b)* in surplus; and what the aggregate financial position is of all NHS trusts in England. [24618]

Mr. Byrne: The 2004–05 audited financial position of all national health service organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

This information includes those NHS trusts that ended 2004–05 with an underspend and those NHS trusts that reported an overspend.

NHS Staff (Overseas Recruitment)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and midwives and *(b)* doctors have been recruited through bilateral agreements or memoranda of understanding with (i) India, (ii) Indonesia, (iii) the Philippines, (iv) South Africa, and (v) Spain in each year that such agreements and memoranda have been in operation. [26858]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* We have bilateral agreements or memoranda of understanding with India, Indonesia, Philippines, South Africa and Spain. The numbers of doctors and nurses registering with the General Medical Council (GMC) and Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in each year that such agreements and memoranda have been in operation are shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Doctors, including specialist registrars, general practitioners and junior doctors registered with the GMC

	Year of registration			
Country	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
India	n/a	1,892	2,985	3,643
Indonesia	n/a	0	0	1
Philippines	n/a	8	17	16
South Africa	n/a	n/a	3,204	4
Spain	88	115	121	107

Table 2: Nurses registered with the NMC

	Year of registration			
Country	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
India	n/a	1,352	2,655	3,709
Indonesia	n/a	0	5	1
Philippines	n/a	4,361	4,747	2,898
South Africa	n/a	n/a	1,878	1,202
Spain	374	197	308	220

Note:
These tables relate to registration and therefore do not identify where the individual was employed or even if the individual secured employment in the United Kingdom.

Nurses

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses per 100 beds there have been in *(a)* England and *(b)* the West Suffolk hospital in each year since 1997. [25073]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Staff in England and West Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust as at 30 September

Headcount

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
England								
Qualified nurses	300,467	304,563	310,142	316,752	330,535	346,537	364,692	375,371
Number of beds	193,625	190,006	186,290	186,091	184,871	183,826	184,207	181,772
Nurses per 100 beds	155	160	166	170	179	189	198	207
RGR—West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust								
Qualified nurses	688	612	719	728	832	860	1,001	1,013
Number of beds	713	673	664	687	679	638	676	631
Nurses per 100 beds	96	91	108	106	123	135	148	161

Note:
Nurses per 100 bed figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census Department of Health form KH03

Nutrition

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, ref 18939, concerning nutrition in care homes, what issues were discussed with the nutritional advisory group. [22366]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that the range of issues the Commission has discussed with the Nutritional Advisory Group for the Elderly (NAGE) is as follows.

Joint working between CSCI and NAGE.

Reviewing and updating guidance, on the management of nutrition and dietary care for people in care homes.

When providers should seek expert advice on the nutritional and dietary needs of the people they care for.

Arrangements for continued liaison between NAGE, local national health service dieticians and CSCI.

Obesity

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by her Department on

advertising the effects obesity has on causing *(a)* hypertension, *(b)* diabetes and *(c)* cardiovascular disease in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [18334]

Caroline Flint: The message that obesity is a major contributor to coronary heart disease, stroke and type two diabetes, is highlighted in the Chief Medical Officer's report "At least Five a Week" and "Choosing Health", the White Paper. Both reports emphasise the importance of healthy eating and participating in regular physical activity in order to remain healthy.

Reducing obesity is one of the six overarching priorities in the White Paper, which sets out a comprehensive plan of action including curbs on marketing. Current action to tackle obesity includes further restrictions on food promotion to children, the reform of the welfare food scheme into healthy start, the healthy schools programme, the 5 A DAY programme and the school fruit and vegetable scheme.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to tackle obesity in *(a)* children and *(b)* adults. [25096]

Caroline Flint: Reducing obesity is one of the six overarching priorities of the "Choosing Health" White Paper, published in November 2004. In July 2004, the Government set a public service agreement (PSA) target to halt the year-on-year increase in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole.

The White Paper delivery plan, Delivering "Choosing Health: making healthier choices easier", together with discrete plans focusing on nutrition, "Choosing a Better Diet a food and health action plan" and physical activity, Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan" published in March 2005 set out how the White Paper commitments will be delivered and how they will contribute to delivery of the obesity target.

Specific action will include:

Campaigns—to raise awareness;

Labelling—including better signposting of food;

Food Promotion-restrictions on marketing of unhealthy food to children;

Work with Industry—to encourage more healthy processed foods;

Children and young people—including action on school and physical activity; and

Action in the national health service—more effective practical action to manage, prevent and treat obesity.

Patient Choice

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact on choice and plurality within the NHS of the policy set out in Commissioning a patient-led NHS; and if she will make a statement. [20394]

Mr. Byrne: To give patients choice, especially in areas of significant health inequalities, we need to encourage innovation and new models of provision and commission services from providers who can prove to be more responsive to patients' needs and expectations. By strengthening the commissioning function of primary care trusts (PCTs) through Commissioning a patient-led NHS, we are further enabling them to achieve these important aims.

Any proposed changes to the local provision of primary and community healthcare services will be subject to full local consultation and be based on PCT decisions taken locally.

Pennine Acute Hospital Trust

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of *(a)* the cost of implementation and *(b)* the capital investment required for each of the five options for the Pennine Acute Hospital Trust under the Healthy Futures Site Options reconfiguration exercise. [28465]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The cost of implementation and the capital investment required for the three (not five) options of the reconfiguration of health services in the North East sector of Greater Manchester, known as healthy futures, is not yet available. Full details of the costs of all the options, capital and revenue, are due to be published in the formal consultation document which is due to be issued on 7 December and will be made available on the website at: www.bestforhealth.nhs.uk

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the future capital investment programme is for the Pennine Acute Hospital Trust; [28466]

(2) what capital investment has taken place since 1997 in each of the hospitals that make up the Pennine Acute Hospital Trust. [28469]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* This is a matter for the Pennine Acute Hospital Trust. The information requested can be obtained from the trust and the Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what income has been obtained from the sale of surplus land and property in the hospitals that make up the Pennine Acute Hospital Trust since 1997. [28467]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

Policy Development

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* focus groups and *(b)* other public consultation meetings to help develop and refine policy on health her Department has commissioned in the last year; what the cost was of each; and if she will make a statement. [24401]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Department is committed to consulting and involving the public so as to help develop and refine policy. Focus groups and other public consultation meetings are used when these represent an economical, efficient and effective means to achieve this end.

School Nurses

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate her Department has made of the optimum number of school nurses in England; [24249]

(2) how many school nurses are practising; [24250]

(3) how many school nurses work *(a)* part time and *(b)* full time; [24251]

(4) in how many schools on average each *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time school nurse practises; [24252]

(5) how many school nurses have been in practice in each year since 1997. [24254]

Mr. Byrne: The majority of school nurses are currently employed and managed by the local national health service primary care trust (PCT). They were counted fully for the first time in the September 2004 NHS workforce census, which showed that there were 2,409 qualified nurses working in school nursing, of whom 856 were qualified school nurses. The next count will be available from the September 2005 census. Information on numbers of school nurses employed in the NHS working part time and full time is shown in the table.

We are providing new funding so that by 2010 every PCT, working with children's trusts and local authorities, will be resourced to have at least one full-time, year-round, qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school, taking account of health needs and school populations.

Information is not collected centrally on the number of schools in which each school nurse practises.

NHS hospital and community health services: qualified nurses working in school nursing by nature of contract in England by headcount as at 30 September 2004

headcount

	Total	*Full time*	*Part time*	*Bank*
Qualified nurses working in school nursing	2,409	313	2,058	38
of which				
Qualified school nurses	856	151	695	10

Source

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

Smoking

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what model was used to determine the costs and benefits of options one to four for banning smoking in enclosed public places contained within the partial regulatory impact assessment on the smoke free aspect of the Health Bill. [25271]

Caroline Flint: Paragraph 28 of the partial regulatory impact assessment sets out details of the methodology followed for assessing the costs and benefits, which are discussed in more detail in the published economic paper, "Smoke free public places-a report to the Chief Medical Officer" is available on the Department's website:

www.dh.gov.uk/asset/Root/04/10/27/66/04102766.pdf.

A copy of the paper is available in the Library.

Social Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to develop a national tariff for social care services. [23098]

Mr. Byrne: Payment by results (PbR) is being implemented to regulate the way money flows around the national health service; to provide the right balance of incentives to reward good performance, to support sustainable reductions in waiting times for patients, and to make the best use of available capacity. We currently have no plans to substitute PbR for the Best Value regime that governs local authority contracting.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what legal powers local authority social services departments establish panels of elected members to make decisions about the funding of care packages and placements. [22472]

Mr. Byrne: It is for each local authority to organise its decision-making processes as it thinks best in accordance with the procedures for local government decision making laid down in local government legislation.

Where a local authority has in place executive arrangements, any function, which is the responsibility of the executive, must be discharged in accordance with sections 14, 15 or 16 of the Local Government Act 2000, depending on the type of executive arrangements in place, and regulations made under section 18 to 20 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, allows a local authority to arrange for the discharge of any of their functions, which are the responsibility of the full council by a committee, sub-committee or officer of the authority.

Tamiflu

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department is involved in negotiations with Roche to speed up manufacturing of Tamiflu; and if she will make a statement. [22090]

Caroline Flint: Officials have been in regular contact with Roche and the company has recently agreed to bring forward the delivery date from December 2006 to September 2006. We will continue to work very closely with them over the course of the deliveries.

Travel Costs

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the additional cost of claims under the hospital travel costs scheme arising from her patient choice policy; and whether relatives will be able to claim under the scheme for long distance visits to patients in hospital. [25541]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The hospital travel cost scheme is a statutory scheme for people on low incomes. The Department does not collect information on the cost of the scheme.

Visitors are not eligible for assistance under the scheme.

Velcade

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the progress of the fast track referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence of velcade for the treatment of multiple myeloma. [24550]

Jane Kennedy: Velcade for multiple myeloma was referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on 20 July 2005. Velcade will be one of the first drugs to be appraised using NICE'S new Single Technology Appraisal process, which will allow guidance to be issued shortly after any licence is granted.

Veterans (Noise-induced Hearing Loss)

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what medical and scientific research her Department has commissioned to support the use of 50 decibels as the threshold for veterans claiming compensation for noise-induced hearing loss as a result of their military service; and if she will re-assess this threshold. [25894]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

Neither the Ministry of Defence, which is responsible for veterans' matters, nor the former Department of Social Security, which was responsible for the War Pensions Scheme until 2001 and remains responsible for the related civilian Industrial Injuries Scheme, have commissioned medical or scientific research on this issue. However, the Government's approach to noise-induced sensorineural hearing loss assessment is based on contemporary scientific evidence and understanding. This has been confirmed in recent years by several reviews carried out by independent audiological experts including an Industrial Injuries Advisory Council review which confirmed the appropriateness of the threshold in November 2002. Any change to our approach would need to result from further medical and scientific evidence.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Air Weapons

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of violence involving the use of air weapons there were in West Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [27685]

Hazel Blears: Lancashire police recorded 23 violent offences involving the use of air weapons during 2003–04. The corresponding figure for West Lancashire is not available centrally.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1103W, on antisocial behaviour, what the role is of the head of the antisocial behaviour unit in implementing the policies set out in the answer; and what the reasons were for the time taken to reply to the question. [29023]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* The Government's Co-ordinator for Respect (formerly National Director of the antisocial behaviour unit), is responsible for driving forward the Government's Respect agenda including: supporting the work on neighbourhood policing, police reform and alcohol and violent crime strategies. An action plan setting out our plans will be published by the turn of the year.

Unfortunately, performance data in respect of your Parliamentary Questions (PQs) is not available. I am sorry you did not receive a more prompt reply to your question. Ministers and officials make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines. However this is not always possible. I have asked those responsible for oversight of the Department's PQs to look at how we can improve our performance.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in West Lancashire in each year since they were introduced. [27694]

Hazel Blears: A table giving a breakdown by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed within antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk. This table gives data by year since ASBOs were introduced.

Anti-terrorism Legislation

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* detained and *(b)* arrested under powers in anti-terrorism legislation and subsequently (i) released without charge or (ii) not charged with an offence relating to terrorism in (A) each of the five years up to the end of 2004 and (B) in the first nine months of this year. [18605]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Section 45(4) of the Terrorism Act 2000 confers the power to detain a person only for the amount of time reasonably required to conduct a search authorised by virtue of section 44 of the Act. Records for stops and searches carried out under these powers and subsequent arrests under anti-terrorism legislation are shown in the following table.

No information is collated centrally on the charges arising from these particular arrests subsequent to the use of stop and search powers.

Total stops and searches under section 44 for the financial year 2004–05 will be published in December this year. Data for the financial year 2005–06 will be published in December 2006.

Detention under anti-terrorism legislation is also provided for following an arrest under section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Figures available show that between 11 September 2001 and 30 September 2005, 895 people were arrested under this power. Of these, 138

were charged with offences under the Terrorism Act. The remainder were either released without charge or dealt with under other legislation.

	Stops and searches	*Arrests*
1999-2000	[1]1,900	1
2000-01	[2]6,400	1
2001-02	[2]10,200	20
2002-03	[3]32,100	18
2003-04	[3]33,800	19

[1] Conducted under sections 13A and 13B of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989, which preceded powers under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000.
[2] Conducted under 13A and 13B of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989, and section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000.
[3] Under section 44.

Arrestee Survey

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the findings of the Arrestee Survey referred to on page 102 of the 2005 Departmental Report. [26656]

Paul Goggins: The findings of the Arrestee Survey are not yet available. The results from the first year of the survey will be published shortly and will be made available on the Home Office website and a copy placed in the Library.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been allocated to fund antisocial behaviour orders in West Lancashire in 2005. [28141]

Hazel Blears: We do not allocate any funding for antisocial behaviour orders. (ASBOs) are obtained from courts on application from local agencies and it is the responsibility of these agencies, in accordance with partnership working arrangements, to meet any associated costs.

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Department has to re-evaluate the cost-effectiveness of legal assistance for asylum seekers. [29501]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

The arrangements for providing publicly funded legal services for asylum seekers are subject to monitoring and review to ensure that they remain effective and provide value for money for the taxpayer.

Review and evaluation work is being undertaken currently on the reforms of legal aid introduced in April 2004, on the Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme introduced as part of the April 2004 reforms, and on the arrangements for the review and reconsideration of appeal decisions made by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal that were introduced in April 2005.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ensure that decisions to detain asylum seekers *(a)* are automatically and regularly reviewed as to lawfulness, necessity and appropriateness by a court or similar independent body and *(b)* are accompanied by the provision of legal aid; and if he will ensure that alternative non-custodial measures are considered before resorting to detention. [29516]

Mr. McNulty: Immigration detention is used sparingly and for the shortest period necessary. In all cases all reasonable alternatives to detention must be considered before detention is authorised.

All detention is subject to administrative review at regular intervals. Further, we are satisfied that access to judicial review and habeas corpus provide sufficient means by which the lawfulness of detention may be challenged.

Measures to bring asylum legal aid under effective control and to cut unnecessary expenditure were implemented by the Government in April 2004. These new measures were introduced to ensure that funding is concentrated only on meritorious cases, to improve the control of costs and to introduce a system of quality assurance for suppliers of immigration legal advice.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek a statutory prohibition on the detention of *(a)* vulnerable and *(b)* ill asylum seekers. [29528]

Mr. McNulty: It is already the case that certain persons are normally considered suitable for detention in only exceptional circumstances. Elderly persons, pregnant women, those suffering from serious medical conditions or who are otherwise mentally ill and those where there is independent evidence to show that they have been tortured would be included among those persons who would usually be considered unsuitable for detention. Detaining officers will always consider on a case by case basis whether detention is appropriate in any particular case. There is health care provision at all removal centres and the needs of detainees who require medical attention are addressed.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Libyan asylum seekers are in the United Kingdom. [24296]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the total number of Libyan asylum seekers currently in the UK is not available. This could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Some applicants may leave the United Kingdom without informing the Immigration Service.

E-borders and ID cards will enable us to monitor this more precisely in the future.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he collects on the treatment in their country of origin of failed asylum seekers who were Christian converts from Islam and are returned to Islamic countries; and if he will make a statement. [24818]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office collects information from a wide range of sources about conditions in the countries of origin of asylum seekers. This country of origin information (COI) focuses on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. Where relevant, the COI regarding Islamic countries covers the treatment and legal position of failed asylum seekers, Christians and converts to Christianity. We do not routinely monitor the treatment of individuals once

removed from the UK. But any specific allegations of ill-treatment of returned failed asylum seekers are followed up through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and with those Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) operating within the country concerned.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers are awaiting deportation. [28627]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not available.

Published statistics on immigration and asylum issues are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal immigrants have been caught trying to enter the UK through Tilbury Docks in each of the last 10 years. [27123]

Mr. McNulty: In recent times there have been no recorded clandestine arrivals at Tilbury, other than stowaways. The last clandestine arrival recorded was in 2003.

Between 1996 and 2003 there have been on average 45 cases per year, where passengers have been subject to further examination on board vessels at Tilbury. Cases have decreased to an average of 10 per year in 2004 and 2005, as a result of increased security.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures the Government are taking to regulate immigration. [24094]

Mr. McNulty: We have already made significant improvements to the regulation of immigration to the United Kingdom by:

expanding our juxtaposed controls, (the establishment of frontier control zones in key locations overseas to enable UK Immigration Officers to consider and decide the admissibility of passengers prior to embarkation for the UK);

the deployment of new detection technology at Continental ports, and

the expansion of our airline liaison network overseas.

These measures have had a significant impact both on deterring illegal immigration and reducing asylum intake.

In our five-year strategy we announced our intention to further improve border controls through initiatives such as a further expansion of the airline liaison network and the introduction of iris biometric automated gates at our major ports. Also, all visa applicants will be fingerprinted by 2008, and pre boarding checks of all persons entering and leaving the UK will be introduced through the e-borders programme. e-Borders will also deliver timely data, information, intelligence and risk assessments to relevant Government agencies on all passengers seeking to enter or leave the UK.

The five-year strategy also proposed that a point-based system should be introduced to facilitate migration beneficial to the UK economy while helping to maintain the protection and security of the public through:

being clearer and more transparent and easier for applicants, employers and educational institutions to understand and use objective and easily verifiable criteria;

allowing applicants to self-assess online to decide whether they have enough points to make an application;

supporting our ongoing efforts to tackle abuse, so that the public and genuine migrants can have confidence in the immigration system;

developing the principle that those who benefit from migration should help us maintain its integrity through the introduction of sponsorship as integral to the workings of the new system.

Cannabis

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the prevalence of cannabis use by *(a)* adults and *(b)* minors in England in each of the last 10 years. [28445]

Paul Goggins: Estimates of cannabis use among the adult population in England and Wales are available from the British crime survey, which has included a consistent self completion module of questions on illicit drug use since 1996. The figures for cannabis use since 1996 are shown in the table. The latest published figures for 2004–05 show cannabis use in the last year was reported by 9.7 per cent. of 16 to 59-year-olds, a statistically significant decrease compared with the previous year. Estimates of drug use among minors are available from the survey of smoking, drinking and drug use among secondary schoolchildren in England. Comparable estimates of drug use are available from 2001 to 2004. The level of cannabis use in the last year among the 11 to 15-year-olds in this survey remained stable at 13 per cent. between 2001 and 2003 before declining to 11 per cent. in 2004.

16 to 59-year-olds reporting cannabis use in the year before interview from the British crime survey

	Percentage
1996	9.5
1998	10.3
2000	10.5
2001–02	10.6
2002–03	10.9
2003–04	10.8
2004–05	9.7

Chief Constables

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the replacement of retiring police chief constables. [24748]

Hazel Blears: The general policy for the replacement of retiring police chief constables is in line with section four of the Home Office guidance on the appointment process of chief police officers (available on the Home Office Police website at http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/trainingandcareerdevelopment/index.html/chiefofficerrecruit.html/) and section 11 Police Act 1996.

In his capacity as chair of the Senior Appointments Panel (a tri-partite body which advises me in the exercise of my role in approving chief police officer appointments) Sir Ronnie Flanagan, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, recently wrote to police authorities addressing the implications of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's 'Closing the Gap' report on the current structure of policing. The

letter presented the panel's view that, except where specific approval had already been granted, the common sense approach would be to advise police authorities not to proceed with existing or future plans to recruit new chief constables and accordingly sought their support in maintaining a consistent approach in these exceptional circumstances. I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library.

Child Deaths in Custody

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the number of child deaths in custody. [24291]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) are working closely together to prevent the deaths of young people held in their care. The YJB has funded a dedicated juvenile outreach team to assist juvenile establishments further develop and maintain their local suicide and self-harm prevention strategies. Nationally, there is a specific suicide prevention strategy for juvenile prisoners. This focuses on promotion of peer support through insider schemes; counselling, support groups and specialised psychological intervention for those who self-harm; vulnerability recognition; and child protection training. We continue to learn lessons from previous incidents to inform our strategies for the future. Suicide prevention work is also increasingly linked with the wider Safeguards Development Programme, as part of which safeguards managers and local authority social workers have been appointed at juvenile establishments, and there has been a programme of minor works across establishments to improve provision of safer and reduced risk accommodation and other built-environment improvements.

Child Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the use of penal custody for child offenders. [26689]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government firmly believe that young people should only be sent to custody as a last resort. We have made available to the courts strong community penalties, with more young offenders being intensively supervised in the community to help reduce re-offending. The Youth Justice Board is also committed to lowering the number of young people in custody and has a target to reduce the population of those remanded and sentenced to secure facilities by 10 per cent. by March 2008.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children in West Lancashire under the age of 10 years would have been charged in the last 12 months if they had been over the age of criminality when they committed their misdemeanour. [27859]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Chinese Official Visit

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the policing of the protest during the official Chinese visit in October 1999 in preparation for the forthcoming state visit of the Chinese Premier; and if he will make a statement. [25035]

Paul Goggins: The policing of the state visits is an operational matter for the Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis. He has confirmed that the Metropolitan police facilitated lawful assembly and legitimate protest during the state visit of the President of China from 8 to 10 November 2005.

Community Service

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community-based projects for offenders sentenced to community service there are in Surrey. [27517]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are 249 probation supervised community-based projects for offenders sentenced to Unpaid Work in the Surrey Probation Area

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many non-completed community-based sentences there were in the last period for which figures are available. [27518]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the completion rates for the main types of community sentence, for each year since 1993, can be found in table 5.1 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2003, a copy of which can be found in the Library.

Correspondence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 6 July from the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Home Office reference M16069/5; IND reference K1195526) about the immigration status of Mrs. Y.B.K. of Aylesbury. [24835]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 3 November.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 20 July from the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Home Office reference M17814/5 and P400744) about the immigration and asylum status of Mr. J. P. of Aylesbury. [24836]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 3 November.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 5 July 2005 from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on behalf of Babo Yoro Ho ref Y1000875/B572069. [28442]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) wrote to my right hon. Friend on 14 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 25 May, and acknowledged on 8 June, ref B10929/5, on behalf of Thabiso Tshuma T1052684. [28443]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) wrote to my right hon. Friend on 14 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letters dated 18 July 2005, acknowledgement ref B16662/5, and 21 September 2005, not yet acknowledged, from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on behalf of Wajid Hussein H1105609. [28444]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) wrote to my right hon. Friend on 14 November 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 5 October from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mr. Oluyomi Akinola. [29107]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 15 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of *(a)* 7 April 2005 on behalf of Honya Sharif, daughter of Nask Omar Abdulla (Home Office reference S1165302) and *(b)* 20 June 2005 on behalf of Idel Austin (Home Office reference C1016519). [29149]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 27 September 2005 in response to my right hon. Friend's letter of 6 September 2005 regarding Honya Sharif. I am sorry that my right hon. Friend did not receive a reply to her letter of 7 April 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of *(a)* 24 January 2005 on behalf of Rose Kalunga Nyota (Home Office reference number N1072499), *(b)* 5 July 2005 on behalf of Antelia Barrow (Home Office reference M1136710/ M136710, correspondence ref B15228/5) and *(c)* 19 July 2005 on behalf of Matoko Matoko (Home office reference M1169837, correspondence reference B16758/5). [29154]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 18 April 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

(c) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of *(a)* 20 July 2005 on behalf of Zobair Zobar (Home Office reference M1169298, correspondence reference B16804/5), *(b)* 9 August 2005 on behalf of Vincent Massaguoi (Home Office reference M1114924/2, correspondence reference B18798/5) and *(c)* 23 August 2005 on behalf of Evrard Lefunga Mbunzama (Home Office reference M1175103, correspondence reference B19997/5). [29155]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 13 September 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

(c) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of *(a)* 21 September 2005 on behalf of Mohammed Javadi (Home Office reference J1027716, correspondence reference B22390/5) and *(b)* 10 August 2005 on behalf of Sukria Osman Ali, wife of Mr. Fayaq (Home Office reference F1042572/2, correspondence reference B19083/5). [29156]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, *(a)* of 21 June 2005 regarding Naila Rehman, Home Office ref. Q1012504, correspondence ref. B1419615, *(b)* of 29 July 2005 regarding Arelina Ngizambote, Home Office ref. N1081675, correspondence ref. B17949/5, and *(c)* of 9 August 2005 on behalf of Alice Ndayishimye Home Office ref. N180897/2. correspondence ref. B18792/5. [29158]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

(c) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects *(a)* to acknowledge and *(b)* to reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood dated 28 June, Home Office reference 52289997. [29280]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 17 November 2005.

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* advice and *(b)* guidance the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner provided to (i) the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), (ii) the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and (iii) the Treasury in

relation to the conduct of the council tax revaluation by VOA inspectors; and if he will place copies in the Library. [26930]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Office of Surveillance Commissioners has not given any advice or guidance, nor been asked to give any advice or guidance, in relation to conduct undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) for the purpose of valuing properties for council tax. The Agency does not carry out surveillance of individuals and does not operate covertly, and its officers' always identify themselves as VOA officers when carrying out their duties.

Crime

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people convicted of crimes in Hertfordshire received a non-custodial sentence in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* ethnicity and *(b)* offence for which they were convicted. [25749]

Hazel Blears: Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of people convicted for crimes who received a non-custodial sentence, by offence type, in Hertfordshire, 1997 to 2003 is in the table. Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Information on sentencing and ethnicity is also taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database. The information for Hertfordshire has not been published centrally in the past due to the high number of persons whose ethnic appearance is classified as 'unknown'. However, some breakdown on ethnicity for Hertfordshire is scheduled to be published in 2004 statistics, which will be available from February 2006.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts by offence type and sentenced to a non custodial sentence in Hertfordshire police force area, 1997 to 2003[1]

	1997		1998		1999		2000	
Offence type	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*
Violence against the person	367	240	368	237	393	256	467	305
Sexual offences	70	24	51	17	49	22	63	21
Burglary	286	150	224	126	254	139	255	125
Robbery	77	18	42	9	63	10	57	16
Theft and handling stolen goods	1,179	995	1,165	975	1,315	1,121	1,482	1,236
Fraud and Forgery	181	133	272	208	263	190	348	270
Criminal damage	31	23	45	25	40	28	37	32
Drug offences	469	406	433	369	447	379	421	354
Other indictable offences	376	296	354	290	426	342	420	343
Indictable motoring offences	90	73	85	70	67	53	81	61
Summary offences (exc. motoring)	7,047	6,952	7,781	7,692	7,290	7,180	8,113	7,994
Summary motoring offences	8,727	8,557	9,913	9,771	10,016	9,858	9,097	8,896
Total	18,900	17,867	20,733	19,789	20,623	19,578	20,841	19,653

	2001		2002		2003	
Offence type	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*	*Found guilty*	*Non-custodial sentence*
Violence against the person	456	278	539	328	507	355
Sexual offences	55	12	70	20	52	17
Burglary	226	108	314	169	313	160
Robbery	89	19	113	17	110	17
Theft and handling stolen goods	1,482	1,184	1,558	1,248	1,671	1,361
Fraud and Forgery	259	203	280	215	297	249
Criminal damage	41	22	32	30	60	54
Drug offences	462	385	481	405	545	474
Other indictable offences	477	387	450	370	610	481
Indictable motoring offences	80	63	94	68	128	93
Summary offences (exc. motoring)	7,661	7,562	6,668	6,563	8,419	8,310
Summary motoring offences	8,808	8,603	10,198	10,021	11,773	11,601
Total	20,087	18,826	20,797	19,454	24,485	23,172

[1] These data are basis on the principal offence basis

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many criminal investigators there were in the Hertfordshire Police Force in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [25800]

Hazel Blears: Information on the functions to which police officers are deployed is collected annually and is only available from March 2000. The deployment of officers to CID and other police functions is an operational matter for the Chief Constable of the Hertfordshire Constabulary (Mr. Frank Whiteley).

The number of CID officers in the Hertfordshire Constabulary are those staff mainly employed in plain clothes for the investigation of crime and who are not part of a specialist unit. More police officers are available to investigate crime with CID, but it is not

their primary policing role within force. Details of the number of CID officers in Hertfordshire Constabulary are set out in the table.

Hertfordshire Constabulary—CID strength since March 2000

As at 31 March:	*Number of CID officers*
2000	207
2001	202
2002	205
2003	280
2004	318
2005	293

Notes:
1. Data for 2000–02 was collected annually by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
2. Data from 2003 is collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate annually

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide additional resources to Hertfordshire police. [25807]

Hazel Blears: Hertfordshire received a good settlement this year. General grants increased by 3.77 per cent. to £108.8 million. This is in line with the minimum increase of 3.75 per cent. increase guaranteed to all police authorities. Hertfordshire gained £4.7 million from our decision to provide funding floor of 3.75 per cent.

The authority has also received around £9.9 million for specific grants for initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Policing Fund, to support the recruitment of 24,000 community support officers across England and Wales by 2008, and for capital. Details of the provisional police funding settlement for 2006–07, and for 2007–08 as part of the move towards three-year settlements, will be announced in late November/early December.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to improve *(a)* community engagement and *(b)* neighbourhood policing in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [25816]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to every area in England and Wales benefiting from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams by 2008. A key aim of these teams will be to build more effective engagement with the public. To support this, the Home Office and the Association of Police Authorities convened the National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement in Policing.

The panel has created a Guide to Community Engagement which is a resource for all policing practitioners, and which contains both practical and strategic advice for practitioners who want to develop or improve their approach to engagement. The guide is supported by a database of case studies which showcases recent and ongoing work around the country, and encourages policing practitioners to network with, and learn from, their peers.

The Government are working closely with the Police Service to develop neighbourhood policing, initially within pathfinder areas. In Hertfordshire, this is the Eastern Area Basic Command Unit.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to tackle violent crime in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [25817]

Hazel Blears: The Government are currently taking forward a very full range of work which will continue to reduce violent crime.

In Hertfordshire, street crime, alcohol-related violence and disorder and domestic violence have been identified as priorities, with alcohol as a particular target. The 10 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships have action plans in place at a local level, and additionally there are multi-agency Town Centre Crime Reduction Groups (for example in Watford and Hemel) which focus on violent crime in town-centres where the majority of it occurs. Strategies include enforcement of town-centre no-drinking zones, education within schools, licensed premises inspections, expansion of CCTV coverage and training for CCTV operators, enforcement of underage drinking laws and regular police public order patrols in town centres.

Nationally, there is a huge programme of work. We are, for example, introducing new measures which will give police and local communities the powers they need to tackle guns, knives and alcohol-related violence in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which is currently before Parliament.

We have also introduced Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, which will make incitement of hatred against persons on the basis of their faith a criminal offence.

Domestic violence is a key priority. Our National Delivery Plan to tackle domestic violence provides support for victims, strengthens the Criminal Justice System to be more responsive to domestic violence cases, holds perpetrators to account and provides resettlement for victims and rehabilitation packages for perpetrators through end-to-end offender management and the concept of a whole sentence plan.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes in Oxfordshire were committed by people who had left the intensive supervision and surveillance programme in 2004–05. [24283]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of crimes committed by people who had left the intensive supervision and surveillance programme is not collected centrally.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many alcohol-related crimes were recorded in Shrewsbury in each year since 2002. [29160]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally. It is not possible from the recorded crime statistics to identify those offences which are alcohol related.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of young offenders re-offended in Shropshire in each year since 2002. [29162]

Fiona Mactaggart: Re-offending rates are not currently available on a regional basis.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* levels of and *(b)* detection rates were for (i) violent crime, (ii) car crime, (iii) sexual crime, (iv) burglary and (v) robbery in West Lancashire constituency in the last year for which figures are available. [27693]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to the number of offences recorded and the detection rates in the Lancashire Western Basic Command Unit (BCU) and is given in the table.

The introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in May 2004 resulted in substantial changes to the sexual offences. In particular, the redefining of the offences of exposure into the sexual offences group resulted in substantial increases in this category nationally.

Recorded crimes and detection rates in the Lancashire Western Basic Command Unit 2004–05

Offence type	*Number of offences*	*Detection rate (percentage)*
Violence against the person	6,661	58
Sexual offences[1]	328	38
Robbery	251	46
Violent crime	*7,240*	*57*
Domestic Burglary	1,153	25
Theft of a motor vehicle	787	26
Theft from a vehicle	1,527	14
Vehicle crime	*2,314*	*18*

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what upgrades are being made to the hardware and software elements of the Criminal Cases Review Commission's IT system. [21817]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Commission is currently engaged in a project to implement an electronic records management system. This will enable it to discharge its duties under the Public Records Act 1958, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Office of Criminal Justice Reform has also recently agreed additional funding to maintain and approve the Criminal Cases Review Commission's (CCRC) data mining functionality. This is a retrieval system which enables the CCRC caseworkers to use experience gained in similar cases to reduce the time it takes to deal with new cases.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the current average time is from the receipt of an application to the dispatch of an acknowledgement of that application from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority; [24709]

(2) what the current average time is from the receipt of an application to the payment of a successful claim by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority; [24710]

(3) what the current average waiting time is from application to a decision on whether compensation will be paid by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. [24711]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) advise that for the period 1 April 2005 to 31 October 2005: the median average time from the receipt of an application to the dispatch of an acknowledgement of that application was nine days; the median elapsed time from receipt of an application to the issue of a decision on whether compensation would be paid (claims assessment stage) was 293 days; and that for cases finalised with a money award the median elapsed time between the receipt of an application for the particular stage of the process and the issue of the payment was: for the first (claims assessment) decision stage 352 days; for the formal review stage 254 days; and for the formal appeals stage (to the independent Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel) 462 days.

Criminal Justice Act

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which of the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 have *(a)* been implemented and *(b)* not been implemented. [26653]

Fiona Mactaggart: All the provisions of part 12 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 have been commenced apart from: section 151, which provides the court with an additional discretionary power for dealing with persistent petty offenders; sections 154 and 155, which provide for an increase in magistrates courts powers when imposing custodial sentences; sections 161 and 266, which make some amendments to pre-sentence drug testing and drug testing for offenders released on licence and extend the provisions to those aged 14 and over; section 181, which introduces a new custodial sentence of less than 12 months (custody plus) and all related provisions to this new sentence; sections 280–283, which provide for consequential amendments to penalties in relation to the increase in magistrates courts powers; section 298, which is related to the increase in the maximum sentence for some summary-only offences from six months to 51 weeks; section 300, which provides for the court to impose unpaid work or curfew on fine defaulters as an alternative to prison; and section 301, which provides for the court to disqualify a fine defaulter from driving for a period of up to 12 months as an alternative to custody.

Section 183, which provides for the new sentence of intermittent custody, has been commenced but the new sentence is being piloted and is only available at a number of specified courts.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the new contracts for electronic monitoring under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. [26655]

Fiona Mactaggart: New contracts for electronic monitoring came into operation on 1 April 2005 throughout the whole of England and Wales.

The contracts are independent of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, but are designed to work with its provisions for the use of electronic monitoring within the criminal justice system.

Cross-border Co-operation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his position on the establishment of an EU grouping of cross-border co-operation, with particular reference to *(a)* the powers proposed for the grouping and *(b)* the treaty base under which the grouping is proposed. [23026]

Mr. McNulty: The 'Convention on the stepping-up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism, cross-border crime and illegal migration' (commonly referred to as the Prüm treaty) was signed in Prüm, Germany on 27 May 2005. The current contracting parties are Germany, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria and Belgium. The treaty is open to all EU member states to join if they wish to do so. The Home Office, in consultation with other Government Departments, is currently considering the treaty. The Government have not yet made a decision on whether the UK will accede to the treaty.

(a) The Prüm treaty does not propose any new powers for the contracting parties.

The treaty forms the basis for enhanced cross-border cooperation between the contracting parties, particularly the mutual exchange of information.

(b) The Prüm treaty does not require a treaty base. It is not made under either the treaty on European Union or the treaty establishing the European Community.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23864]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Skills Development Plans are internal working documents to help departments identify means of addressing skills gaps and are not meant for the public domain. Cabinet Office and DfES are looking at ways to publicise case studies resulting from this work.

Drug Intervention Programme

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the areas to which the Drugs Intervention Programme is to be extended in 2005–06. [26659]

Paul Goggins: In April 2005, intensive elements of the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) expanded to a further 33 police Basic Command Unit (BCU) areas with high levels of acquisitive crime. Intensive elements of the programme include testing for Class A drugs on charge for certain trigger offences. The 33 new BCUs build on what has already been achieved in the 64 earlier DIP-intensive BCUs and are listed.

Areas were selected on the basis of number of acquisitive crimes per 1,000 households and the need to harmonise, as far as possible, with other initiatives such as Street Crime and High Crack Areas.

The DIP programme provides a route out of crime and into treatment for drug misusing offenders, using their contact with the Criminal Justice System as an opportunity to engage them in treatment and support. The key elements of DIP are delivered in all areas of England and are presently being rolled out in Wales.

Acquisitive crime—to which drug related crime makes a substantial contribution—is going down and fell by 12 per cent. in the year to April 2005.

BCU name	*DAT area*	*Police force*
Barnsley	Barnsley	South Yorkshire
Brownhills (West Mids H2)	Walsall	West Midlands
Bury	Bury	GMP
Cardiff	Cardiff	South Wales
Coventry Centre (West Mids M1)	Coventry	West Midlands
Coventry NE (West Mids M2)	Coventry	West Midlands
Coventry SE (West Mids M3)	Coventry	West Midlands
Dewsbury	Kirklees	West Yorkshire
Dudley (West Mids J1)	Dudley	West Midlands
Enfield	Enfield	Met
Gateshead	Gateshead	Northumbria
Greenwich	Greenwich	Met
Halesowen (West Mids J2)	Dudley	West Midlands
Hounslow	Hounslow	Met
Huddersfield	Kirklees	West Yorkshire
Kings Heath (West Mids E2)	Birmingham	West Midlands
Newport	Newport	Gwent
Oxford	Oxfordshire	Thames Valley
Redbridge	Redbridge	Met
Rotherham	Rotherham	South Yorkshire
Solihull (West Mids L)	Solihull	West Midlands
Stockport	Stockport	GMP
Sutton Coldfield (West Mids D2)	Birmingham	West Midlands
Swansea	Swansea	South Wales
Wakefield	Wakefield	West Yorkshire
Walsall (West Mids H1)	Walsall	West Midlands
Wednesfield (West Mids G2)	Wolverhampton	West Midlands
West Bromwich (West Mids K1)	Sandwell	West Midlands
Wigan	Wigan	GMP
Wolverhampton (West Mids G1)	Wolverhampton	West Midlands

Drug/Driving Offences

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what drugs are most commonly involved in convictions for driving while under the influence of drugs. [28308]

Paul Goggins: Information held centrally on the Home Office Court Proceedings database does not identify separately the types of drugs involved in convictions for drug driving. There are, however, data for England and Wales which relate to drug tests processed in drug driving cases by the Forensic Science Service between April 2000 and March 2004. These show the following drugs were indicated as present in the following frequencies: Cannabis 72 per cent; Benzodiazepines 35 per cent; Opiates 30 per cent; Cocaine 30 per cent; Amphetamines 17 per cent; and Methadone 9 per cent. The figures are for polydrug use and therefore add up to more than 100 per cent.

Drug-related Crime

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on tackling the link between drug addiction and shoplifting. [21063]

Paul Goggins: Individuals who are charged with theft—which includes shoplifting—in the 97 areas with the highest levels of acquisitive crime are tested for Class A drugs as a part of the Government's Drug Interventions Programme (DIP). Drug testing is one of a number of interventions aimed at identifying drug misusing offenders and persuading them to engage in drug treatment and support.

The Drug Interventions Programme continues to have a positive impact in communities not only by the interventions that it offers but also by delivering a more integrated approach by local agencies to the problems of offenders. Since the programme began, over 29,000 offenders from DIP intensive areas have entered treatment. Acquisitive crime—to which drug related crime (including theft) makes a substantial contribution—is going down and fell by 12 per cent. in the year to April 2005 compared with the previous 12 months.

Electronic Tagging

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Milton Keynes who were tagged on early release from prison breached the rules governing their early release in each of the last five years. [20828]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of prisoners who were released on the Home Detention Curfew scheme (HOC) from Her Majesty's Prison Woodhill who breached the rules governing their early release for each of the last five years is provided in the table. The area in which electronically tagged prisoners reside upon release is not recorded centrally.

Prisoners released on the HOC scheme from HMP Woodhill and those who were recalled, by year of release

	Discharged	*Recalled*[1]
2000	94	2
2001	38	2
2002	92	5
2003	204	25
2004	167	25

[1] Some recalls from HOC are due to the curfewee no longer being able to be monitored through no fault of their own. For example where he or she loses accommodation through no fault of their own.

EU Travel Bans

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1033W, on EU travel bans, which agencies hold the information. [22583]

Mr. McNulty: The details of those people subject to EU travel bans are detailed on the European Union's website at the following link: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cfsp/sanctions/measures.htm.

The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) also hold this information.

Information relating to those who may have already entered the UK in breach of an EU travel ban could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Expert Evidence

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reforms have been introduced to strengthen the quality and objectivity of expert evidence since 2001. [16464]

Fiona Mactaggart: A wide range of changes have been introduced or are under consideration to strengthen the quality and objectivity of expert evidence in the courts. Recent or current initiatives include the following:

Publication of a Code of Practice and a Code of Conduct for registered forensic pathologists have been issued.

A recent Home Office consultation exercise on the need for and possible approaches to quality regulation in forensic science.

The Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, is due to report before the end of the year on the availability of medical expert witnesses to the courts.

A consultation exercise (which closed on 28 October) led by the Department for Education and Skills is consulting on proposals which reflect recommendations from the report by the Working Group led by Baroness Kennedy on Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (published September 2004).

The recent Legal Services Commission consultation paper on the Use of Experts, which included issues relating to the quality of experts.

By December 2005 the Crown Prosecution Service plans to produce guidance for expert witnesses on the importance of fair disclosure of all prosecution material, and the role of experts in the process. This guidance should strengthen the quality and objectivity of prosecution expert evidence in future cases.

The Criminal Procedure Rule Committee recently issued for consultation a set of draft rules on the management in court of expert evidence.

In September 2005 an Experts Protocol for the civil courts came into force, which gives guidance to experts and those who instruct them.

Fatal Driving Offences

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to introduce an offence of causing death by driving without due care and attention which would attract a greater penalty than the offence of driving without due care and attention. [24691]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government published a consultation paper on the Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving on 3 February 2005. The consultation period ended on 6 May 2005 this year and resulted in 185 responses from individuals and organisations and was the subject of 11 petitions.

The Government have now published a summary of that consultation and announced a number of proposals it wishes to take forward arising from the Review. These include a new offence of causing death by careless driving carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. A measure creating the new offence was tabled on 28 October in the House of Lords as an amendment to the Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament.

Firearms Certificates

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many temporary firearms

certificates have been issued by Hertfordshire police in each of the past six months to holders of firearms certificates who are awaiting renewals. [27825]

Hazel Blears: I understand that no temporary firearms certificates have been issued by the Hertfordshire Constabulary in any of the past six months to holders of firearms certificates who are awaiting renewals.

Fireworks

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been for *(a)* breaking of the curfew for the use of category 3 and above fireworks and *(b)* the unlawful possession of category 4 fireworks since the Fireworks Regulations 2004 came into force, broken down by police force. [26380]

Hazel Blears: Fireworks Regulations 2004 came into force on 7 August 2004 and 1 January 2005, making permanent the Fireworks Regulations 2003 (Emergency Regulations).

Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November and 2005 data will be available in autumn 2006.

Offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (made under section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003) for breach of the national fireworks curfew and the illegal possession of category 4 fireworks can also attract penalty notices for disorder. The numbers of penalty notices issued by police force area are provided in the following table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for possession of a category 4 firework [1] by police force area, 2004 and 2005 [2]

Police force area	*2004*	*2005*
Avon and Somerset	—	—
Bedfordshire	—	—
Cambridgeshire	—	—
Cheshire	—	—
Cleveland	—	—
Cumbria	—	—
Derbyshire	—	—
Devon and Cornwall	—	—
Dorset	—	—
Durham	—	—
Cumbria	—	—
Essex	1	—
Gloucestershire	—	—
Greater Manchester	4	—
Hampshire	—	1
Hertfordshire	—	—
Humberside	—	—
Kent	—	1
Lancashire	—	1
Leicestershire	—	—
Lincolnshire	—	—
London, City of	—	—
Merseyside	2	—
Metropolitan	1	—
Norfolk	—	—
North Yorkshire	—	—
Northamptonshire	—	—
Northumbria	—	—
Nottinghamshire	—	—
South Yorkshire	1	—
Staffordshire	—	—
Suffolk	—	—
Surrey	—	—
Sussex	—	—
Thames Valley	—	—
Warwickshire	—	—
West Mercia	—	1
West Midlands	1	—
West Yorkshire	1	—
Wiltshire	—	—
England	11	4
Dyfed-Powys	—	—
Gwent	1	—
North Wales	—	1
South Wales	—	—
Wales	1	1
England and Wales	12	5

[1] Offence created by Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 Fireworks Act 2003.
[2] January-July provisional data.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fines have been imposed by the police in relation to offences relating to fireworks in *(a)* Great Yarmouth constituency, *(b)* Norfolk, *(c)* the Eastern Region and *(d)* England and Wales since the Fireworks Act 2003. [28019]

Hazel Blears: Since 11 October 2004 the police have had powers to issue penalty notices for disorder for four specific firework offences. The number of penalty notices issued for firework offences in Norfolk, the Eastern Region and England and Wales is shown in the table. Centrally available data do not identify Great Yarmouth separately.

Number of PNDs issued for fireworks offences, Norfolk, Eastern Region and England and Wales, 2004 and 2005 [1]

	2004			
Police force area	*Throwing fireworks*	*Breach of fireworks curfew*	*Possession of a category 4 firework*	*Possession by under 18 of adult firework*
Norfolk	1	—	—	—
Eastern Region	11	1	1	1
England and Wales	177	12	12	20

	2005			
Police force area	*Throwing fireworks*	*Breach of fireworks curfew*	*Possession of a category 4 firework*	*Possession by under 18 of adult firework*
Norfolk	1	—	—	—
Eastern Region	11	3	—	—
England and Wales	324	11	8	4

[1] January-September provisional data

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Foreign Prisoners (Deportation)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to deport foreign convicted criminals held in British prisons; and if he will make a statement. [23187]

Mr. McNulty: The Prison Service notifies the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of all prisoners identified as foreign nationals so as to enable consideration of their liability for deportation in accordance with the immigration rules. Foreign national prisoners may be released for deportation when they have served the requisite portion of their sentence (as for any prisoner) or up to 135 days early in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Prisoners notified of a decision to make a deportation order have a right of appeal against the decision before the order is signed and the prisoner removed.

We are looking to ensure that foreign national prisoners liable to deportation are removed promptly.

Forensic Science Service

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of the introduction of a new IT-based management system by the Forensic Science Service; and if he will make a statement. [26680]

Andy Burnham: The Forensic Science Service (FSS) introduced an integrated IT work management, human resources and finance system into the organisation in August 2002.

The consolidation of HR and operational casework information has resulted in a more effective management process, balancing staff resources to meet casework demand. The system manages exhibits at all stages, ensuring continuity and common operational processes across the FSS. These enhancements to the FSS work management capability have assisted in enabling casework to be delivered more efficiently.

Gang Culture

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of antisocial behaviour orders in tackling gang culture. [27632]

Hazel Blears: We are currently conducting an evaluation of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs). The outcome of this exercise will provide us with indicative findings on:

1. the extent and circumstances under which ASBOs are effective in tackling antisocial behaviour within our neighbourhoods and communities;

2. how ASBOs work as part of wider strategies to tackle antisocial behaviour and protect communities and residents from the adverse impact of antisocial behaviour.

This research will look at the overall effectiveness of ASBOs in tackling antisocial behaviour, it will not focus on specific aspects of behaviour such as gang culture. Published findings will be available in spring 2006.

General Almog

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions *(a)* his Department and *(b)* other Government Departments had with (i) the Israeli embassy in London, (ii) Israeli organisations and (iii) the Israeli Government concerning the arrest warrant for General Almog. [17028]

Fiona Mactaggart: Following the departure of General Almog from the UK, officials of the Israeli Government called on officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at a meeting which was attended by an official from the Home Office. This was the only discussion which involved the Home Office. Information concerning discussions involving other Government Departments is not held by the Home Office.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been released from prison early since the Home Detention Curfew Scheme was introduced. [21844]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information for England and Wales, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, is in the following table. The results for 2005 are up to 22 October.

Prisoners released under Home Detention Curfew by year

England and Wales	*Number*
1999	14,846
2000	15,515
2001	13,649
2002	20,456
2003	21,197
2004	19,311
2005[1]	17,787

[1] Figures for 2005 are up to 22 October

Identity Cards

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the statement of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 765, on the Identity Cards Bill, when his Department will publish the Gateway Reviews that have been undertaken with regard to identity cards; which Gateway Reviews have been completed; and if he will publish their *(a)* red, amber, green status and *(b)* recommendations. [21155]

Mr. McNulty: The ID cards programme has undergone two OGC Gateway Zero Reviews and one Gateway One Review. The Government have no plans for publishing Gateway Reviews. Publishing the traffic light status awarded by these reviews or their recommendations would be likely to prejudice both the ability of the Office of Government Commerce to examine the effectiveness, efficiency and economy with which other Government Departments exercise their functions and also the formulation and development of Government policy. However the most recent review covering business justification did confirm that the programme was ready to proceed to the next phase.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he estimates the cost will be per head of introducing identity cards. [28644]

Mr. McNulty: The current best estimate for the total average annual running costs for issuing biometric passports and ID cards to UK nationals, and running a verification service is £584 million at 2005–06 prices. The current best estimate of the unit cost of an adult passport/ID card package for UK Citizens valid for 10 years is £93 at 2005–06 prices. Within our current

financial estimates of the whole scheme, it will be affordable to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a stand-alone ID card that is valid for 10 years.

Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what target he has set for improvement in the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme completion rate. [26674]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Youth Justice Board does not set a target for the completion rate of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme. The completion rate is, however, one of the benchmarks by which it monitors the programme's performance. The benchmark rate for completion is 60 per cent. and the current completion rate is 56 per cent. The shortfall of 4 per cent. is being addressed through the sharing of good practice, the imaginative application of incentive schemes, the use of varied and stimulating programmes to encourage young people to participate fully, and a concentration on enforcement of national standards.

Licensing Act 1964

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent offences were committed in and around licensed premises in each police authority area in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [24118]

Hazel Blears: The available information is for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 and is given in the table. Information for earlier years is not currently available.

These figures relate to violence recorded by the police rather than violence committed. Therefore they should not be taken as a complete illustration of the number of violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises.

For example, in certain areas where alcohol-related violence is particularly prevalent, local police are more likely to police city centres on Friday and Saturday nights thus recording more incidents of violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises. If football-related violence is a problem, the choice to send police officers to the match will undoubtedly lead to more violent crime being recorded than if they did not attend. There are other examples, such as the pro-active policing of antisocial behaviour which can increase recorded crime.

The number of violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises by force for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Avon and Somerset	1,922	2,574	4,111
Bedfordshire	693	762	849
Cambridgeshire	584	750	753
Cheshire	504	806	890
Cleveland	588	1,615	1,699
Cumbria	488	600	995
Derbyshire	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Devon and Cornwall	2,960	3,580	3,380
Dorset	813	752	808
Durham	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Dyfed-Powys	584	816	869
Essex	[1]—	1,756	1,717
Gloucestershire	707	864	1,014
Greater Manchester	[1]—	1,620	1,309
Gwent	670	791	[1]—
Hampshire	1,717	2,417	2,572
Hertfordshire	804	1,005	1,135
Humberside	821	1,007	944
Kent	551	813	879
Lancashire	2,653	3,910	4,365
Leicestershire	1,155	1,323	1,505
Lincolnshire	[1]—	607	119
London, City of	159	151	151
Merseyside	[1]—	[1]—	2,118
Metropolitan Police	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Norfolk	521	540	[1]—
Northamptonshire	1,083	1,043	1,102
Northumbria	1,850	1,767	2,065
North Wales	963	967	[1]—
North Yorkshire	[1]—	1,124	1,096
Nottinghamshire	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
South Wales	3,140	2,895	1,769
South Yorkshire	1,624	1,581	2,175
Staffordshire	1,927	2,424	2,579
Suffolk	808	993	1,007
Surrey	562	794	912
Sussex	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Thames Valley	1,960	2,146	2,270
Warwickshire	839	932	961
West Mercia	[1]—	882	788
West Midlands	3,731	4,140	3,974
West Yorkshire	3,327	2,017	3,253
Wiltshire	[1]—	373	257

[1] Not available.

Missing Persons

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in *(a)* Havering, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England and Wales who have been classified as a missing person in each year since 1980 remain missing. [27125]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases were covered by multi-agency public protection arrangements on 31 March of each year between 2001 and 2005. [23833]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of offenders managed under multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) per year (1 April to 31 March) is as follows:

	Number
2001–02	[1]47,209
2002–03	[1]52,809
2003–04	39,492
2004–05	44,592

[1] The figures for the first two years of counting include offenders both in custody and in the community. The figures for the later years include only offenders in the community. This counting rule was changed to reflect the fact that the MAPPA were established specifically to help improve the protection of the public from sexual and violent offenders in the community.

National Identity Register

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when it was decided to have 13 items of biometric data per person on the National Identity Register. [19872]

Andy Burnham: No firm decision to hold 13 items of biometric data (facial image, 10 fingerprints and two irises) per person has been taken. The assumption that these 13 items of biometric data will be stored is a working assumption used in our modelling of enrolment processes and in the costing of the business case. Final decisions on the type and quantity of biometric data held will be informed by the procurement process within the constraints imposed by the Identity Cards Bill.

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce measures to prevent the disclosure without the consent of the individual of information held on the proposed National Identity Register. [24395]

Mr. McNulty: We expect most of the checks on the register to be done with the consent of the individual. Under Clause 14 of the Bill, regulations may be made prescribing how the individual's authority for the provision of information is to be given. This clause limits the information that may be provided to accredited organisations as part of a verification check. This includes information within paragraphs one, three and four of Schedule one, the photograph, signature, information concerning whether the ID card is valid, voluntary information and confirmation of the answers to security questions. The organisation will only be told that the information provided by the individual coincides with that which is held on the register. The organisation themselves will not be given the answers to the security questions. This limitation on the information that may be checked means that information falling in other parts of Schedule one, for example the records of provision of information (paragraph nine of Schedule 1), may not be provided to organisations verifying identity under the powers in this clause.

One of the purposes of the Identity Cards Scheme, as set out in the Bill at Clause one (3) is the provision of a secure and reliable method for registrable facts about individuals to be verified wherever it is necessary in the public interest. There will be occasions when it is in the public interest for information held on the register to be disclosed without the individual's consent. However, the provision of such information is strictly limited in the Bill. The Identity Cards Bill includes measures to regulate the provision of information without consent and to prevent unauthorised disclosure. Information may be disclosed without consent to security and intelligence agencies to ensure that the scheme benefits the work of those organisations by supporting their stated statutory purposes. The police and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs may also be provided with the registrable facts held for law enforcement and related purposes, minus the audit log of card use and information about other occasions when a person's record has been checked. Provision of this information to these bodies would only apply in cases of serious crime. The Bill ensures that provision of information without consent will be properly regulated and subject to independent oversight. The Bill also includes regulation making powers that would allow specified information to be provided without consent to other Government Departments or public authorities with the consent of Parliament. The Bill which was introduced to the House of Commons in May 2005 differed from that which was debated in the previous Parliament in that under the current Bill information cannot be disclosed without an individual's consent to organisations which are not public authorities.

Clause 29 of the Bill creates a new offence, that of unauthorised disclosure of information. This offence will apply to persons who hold an office or employment in which the duties relate to the establishment or maintenance of the register, the issue, manufacture, modification, cancellation or surrender of ID cards or the carrying out of the Commissioner's functions. A person guilty of an offence under this section may be liable to two years imprisonment, a fine or both.

Offences Against the Person Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under sections (A) 4, (B) 5, (C) 9, (D) 17, (E) 22, (F) 24, (G) 29, (H) 30, (I) 32, (J) 33, (K) 34, (L) 35, (M) 36, (N) 57 and (O) 60 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [27139]

Hazel Blears: Statistics on the number of males and females charged with an offence are not centrally collected.

Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of males and females found guilty of the sections under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 which are requested at all courts England and Wales, 1994—2003 is contained in the table.

Court statistics for 2004 will be available later this month.

Number of males and females found guilty at all courts for certain sections under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, England and Wales, 1994—2003[1]

		1994		1995		1996		1997	
Offence description	*Principal statutes*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Conspiracy or soliciting, etc., to commit murder	Criminal Law Act 1977 S.1; Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.4	15	3	9	3	6	1	14	1
Manslaughter	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.5, 9 and 10	171	26	178	17	200	32	214	30
Murder of persons aged one year or over	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.1, 9 and 10	181	9	193	15	243	6	245	19

Number of males and females found guilty at all courts for certain sections under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, England and Wales, 1994—2003[1]

Offence description	Principal statutes	1994		1995		1996		1997	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Murder of infants under one year of age	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.1, 9 and 10	2	-	4	2	8	-	11	-
Impeding the saving of life from shipwreck	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Using Chloroform, etc., to commit or assist uncommitting an indictable offence	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.221	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Administering poison with intent to injure or annoy	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.24	15	1	35	3	16	2	9	4
Causing, explosions or casting corrosive fluids with intent to do grievous bodily harm	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.29	8	-	9	-	1	-	6	-
Placing, etc., explosives in or near ships or buildings with intent to do bodily harm, etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.30	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Endangering railway passengers by placing, etc., anything on railway, taking up rails, changing points and signals etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.32	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
Endangering railway passengers by throwing anything at railway carriages, etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.33	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Endangering railway passengers by unlawful acts, or by omission or neglect	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.34	12	3	29	-	19	1	21	1
Causing bodily harm by furious driving	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.35	18	-	15	1	21	3	10	-
Obstructing, assaulting or arresting upon civil process clergymen performing service	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.36	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	1
Concealment of birth	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bigamy	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S57	15	6	10	5	13	3	10	6

Offence description	Principal statutes	1998		1999		2000	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Conspiracy or soliciting, etc., to commit murder	Criminal Law Act 1977 S.1; Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.4	11	3	10	3	13	5
Manslaughter	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.5, 9 and 10	231	35	207	27	210	28
Murder of persons aged one year or over	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.1, 9 and 10	241	8	232	15	243	13
Murder of infants under one year of age	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.1, 9 and 10	6	1	4	1	5	-
Impeding the saving of life from shipwreck	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.17	-	-	-	-	-	-
Using Chloroform, etc., to commit or assist uncommitting an indictable offence	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.221	-	1	2	-	3	1
Administering poison with intent to injure or annoy	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.24	21	6	24	3	13	3
Causing, explosions or casting corrosive fluids with intent to do grievous bodily harm	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.29	3	-	-	-	-	-
Placing, etc., explosives in or near ships or buildings with intent to do bodily harm, etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.30	-	-	-	-	-	-
Endangering railway passengers by placing, etc., anything on railway, taking up rails, changing points and signals etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.32	-	-	-	-	-	-
Endangering railway passengers by throwing anything at railway carriages, etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.33	-	-	-	-	-	-
Endangering railway passengers by unlawful acts, or by omission or neglect	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.34	23	-	21	1	20	3
Causing bodily harm by furious driving	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.35	8	1	11	-	12	-

Offence description	Principal statutes	1998 Male	1998 Female	1999 Male	1999 Female	2000 Male	2000 Female
Obstructing, assaulting or arresting upon civil process clergymen performing service	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.36	-	-	-	-	-	-
Concealment of birth	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S60	-	1	1	1	-	1
Bigamy	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S57	11	7	18	10	10	2

Offence description	Principal statutes	2001 Male	2001 Female	2002 Male	2002 Female	2003 Male	2003 Female
Conspiracy or soliciting, etc., to commit murder	Criminal Law Act 1977 S.1; Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.4	6	1	10	3	28	1
Manslaughter	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.5, 9 and 10	230	32	263	36	213	31
Murder of persons aged one year or over	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.1, 9 and 10	268	17	309	11	255	18
Murder of infants under one year of age	Common Law; Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS.1, 9 and 10	-	-	2	2	3	1
Impeding the saving of life from shipwreck	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.17	-	-	-	-	-	-
Using Chloroform, etc., to commit or assist uncommitting an indictable offence	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.221	1	-	2	-	1	1
Administering poison with intent to injure or annoy	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.24	6	5	13	2	14	7
Causing, explosions or casting corrosive fluids with intent to do grievous bodily harm	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.29	4	-	-	-	5	-
Placing, etc., explosives in or near ships or buildings with intent to do bodily harm, etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.30	8	-	-	-	-	-
Endangering railway passengers by placing, etc., anything on railway, taking up rails, changing points and signals etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.32	2	-	1	-	8	-
Endangering railway passengers by throwing anything at railway carriages, etc.	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.33	-	-	2	-	1	-
Endangering railway passengers by unlawful acts, or by omission or neglect	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.34	17	1	32	-	23	-
Causing bodily harm by furious driving	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.35	7	-	13	-	10	1
Obstructing, assaulting or arresting upon civil process clergymen performing service	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.36	1	-	1	-	-	-
Concealment of birth	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S60	-	-	-	-	1	3
Bigamy	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S57	13	4	15	1	15	5

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

Offensive Weapons

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the coverage of the list of banned offensive weapons. [25881]

Hazel Blears: The Government are considering whether any further categories of knife or other offensive weapon currently being used in crime should be added to the list of banned offensive weapons.

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many stop and searches for weapons were performed by the police in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Teignbridge constituency since the coming into force of the Knives Act 1997. [25891]

Hazel Blears: Information from 1998–99 to 2003–04 (latest available) for England and Wales on stops and searches under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 as amended by section 8 of the Knives Act 1997 is given in the table. The information is available centrally at police force area level only. Data for 2004–05 will be published in December 2005.

Searches of persons or vehicles in anticipation of violence under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 as amended by section 8 of the Knives Act 1997, section 25 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, schedule 7 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and SI 2004/1573—England and Wales

	Searches
1998–99[1]	5,500
1999–2000	6,340
2000–01	11,300
2001–02	18,900
2002–03	44,400
2003–04	40,400

[1] S8 of the Knives Act 1997 came into force on 1 March 1999.

Operation Kratos

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has held with *(a)* the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and *(b)* the Association of Chief Police Officers on extending the rules of engagement of Operation Kratos to other police operations. [24747]

Hazel Blears: None. Operational tactics are a matter for the police. Operation Kratos is a response developed by the police following 11 September which Ministers were not asked to approve but were told about. The Association of Chief Police Officers are currently reviewing the policy in relation to the handling of suspected suicide bombers. I will await the outcome of that review before considering further involvement. All police use of firearms is subject to the usual law on the use of force. In particular, the Criminal Law Act 1967 provides that the police may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to effect an arrest or to prevent crime.

Parking Offences

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the process by which power was transferred from the police to local authorities following the decriminalisation of parking offences; what steps he took to ensure that this was a smooth transition of authority; and if he will make a statement. [22910]

Paul Goggins: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Buck) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 672W.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of a national parking offenders database; and what representations he has received on this matter. [27292]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

The Department for Transport has received no representations about a national parking offenders database.

Passports

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passport applications have been made online in each of the last five years. [28855]

Andy Burnham: The following table indicates the volume of passport applications received from the online channel since March 2003, the date from which the UK Passport Service has been recording this information.

Period	Online applications received	Total passport applications	Proportion online applications (percentage)
March to December 2003	58,497	5,904,046	1.0
January to December 2004	139,233	6,162,198	2.3
January to October 2005	174,453	5,825,050	3.0

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of levels of rejected passport applications due to photographs not meeting requirements; and what percentage of applications were rejected for this reason in each of the last five years. [29196]

Andy Burnham: This data is only available for the weeks commencing 12 September 2005, when the new standards became mandatory, so it is not possible to compare this figure with the last five years.

Reject rates are however showing a decline as the photo booth industry upgrades their booths and the public understand the new standards.

The UKPS are evaluating the guidance in the application pack and continuing to work with both the industry and their partners such as Post Office Ltd. to ensure that inconvenience to customers is kept to a minimum.

The number of applications being rejected because of the photograph not meeting the new requirements is 13.7 per cent. for the last week for which figures are available (week commencing 31 October).

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the cost savings to the Exchequer of introducing a pension scheme retirement age of 65 years for all police officers, prison officers and staff employed directly by his Department and its agencies from 2025; and if he will make a statement. [21425]

Hazel Blears: Savings to the Exchequer from introducing new pension allowance (NPA) 65 from 2025 have not been estimated and could be supplied only at disproportionate cost. It is, however, likely that delaying the introduction of NPA 65 until 2025 for those who are not police officers would absorb a substantial part of the expected £13 billion savings that will arise from the implementation of scheme reform within the framework of the principles agreed at the Public Services Forum.

In the case of police officers we are introducing a pension age of 55 for new entrants to the service from April 2006. This is in line with the Government's recognition that services like the police and the armed forces have specific needs which make a lower pension age appropriate for their members. If a calculation of the savings of introducing a pension age of 65 were carried out for the police it is arguable that the cost implications for operational effectiveness should also be taken into account

Perjury

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many successful prosecutions for perjury there have been in each of the last 10 years. [28449]

Fiona Mactaggart: Data from the Home Office Court Proceedings database, showing the number of convictions for perjury at all courts in England and Wales for the last 10 years, is provided in the table.

Data for 2004 will be available in late November.

Offenders found guilty at all courts for perjury England and Wales, 1993 to 2003[1]

	Number
1993	150
1994	144
1995	193
1996	152
1997	173
1998	176
1999	114
2000[2]	135
2001	92
2002	81
2003	108

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Staffordshire police force were only able to submit sample data for persons proceeded against and convicted in the magistrates courts for the year 2000. Although sufficient to estimate higher orders of data, these data are not robust enough at a detailed level and have been excluded from the table.

Police

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress his Department has made in making the police more accountable to local communities. [25449]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to strengthening accountability at a local level by introducing dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams in all areas by 2008. In the White Paper, 'Building Communities Beating Crime', published in November 2004, the Government set out proposals for strengthening the role of the police authority to ensure communities are policed effectively and to increase the public visibility of police authorities, including through the publication of an annual local policing summary. In the light of police force restructuring, we are reviewing the White Paper proposals in relation to the role and composition of police authorities and examining ways to strengthen accountability arrangements at the basic command unit/crime and disorder reduction partnership level. In addition, the White Paper set out proposals for a mechanism to trigger action by the police or other community safety partners in response to unresolved local problems.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of allowing police officers to use hand-held electronic devices to record evidence. [25675]

Hazel Blears: The use of hand-held technology continues to play a vital role in modern-day policing. The technology affects the full range of policing activity, from public order operations and road traffic accident investigations to witness statements and recording the identity of suspects on the street.

Hand-held electronic devices enable police officers to access databases, receive and transmit data, and complete forms while out of their stations. Wider use of wireless technology across the forces has the potential to reduce the burden of bureaucracy on the police, enabling them to spend more time patrolling. Reducing bureaucracy and increasing the number of officers on patrol are two key government commitments. A number of options are being explored by the police service to determine the most appropriate way of meeting their needs.

The Home Office continues to work with the police to develop and pilot new uses of technology to support detection and enforcement on the street.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has appointed specialist advisers to review the business cases submitted as part of the police force merger consultation process. [26137]

Hazel Blears: I have brought together a multi-discipline team to support the review of police force structures under the leadership of John Giffard, Chief Constable of Staffordshire. The team includes Home Office officials, officials from other partners in the criminal justice system and seconded police officers. Among the Home Office officials are specialist financial and economic advisers to conduct the analysis of the business cases submitted by police forces and authorities.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers worked overtime in each of the last 10 years; and what the cost of police overtime was in each year. [26446]

Hazel Blears: The table gives estimates of overtime payments made to full-time police officers in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years.

	Number of full-time officers in receipt of overtimes payments			
	Rest days with less than eight days notice	*Rest days with between eight and 14 days notice*	*Other overtime*	*Total amount paid out to full-time officers for overtime (£ million)*
1995	9,003	8,677	57,159	160
1996	9,875	5,866	56,787	160
1997	11,098	7,127	58,267	170
1998	9,091	5,909	51,907	160
1999	9,753	6,851	55,603	180
2000	14,003	8,065	57,396	250
2001	19,461	12,077	62,160	310
2002	18,527	14,448	59,071	290
2003	17,598	14,374	61,687	340
2004	21,675	16,508	68,513	350

Notes:
1. Only full-time officers are included.
2. Annual figures are extrapolated from a sample drawn from November pay bills in each year.
3. Individual officers can receive more than one type of overtime pay.

Source:
Police Negotiating Board annual survey of hours and earnings

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what minimum educational standards are required for recruitment to the police force; and if he will make a statement. [26564]

Hazel Blears: Although there are no minimum educational standards required to be a police officer, numeracy and literacy are tested early in the application process. Behavioural competencies needed to carry out the role of a police officer are assessed during the recruitment process. However in practice approximately a third of recruits are graduates and 98 per cent. are qualified at GCSE level or above.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what new methods of police engagement his Department is supporting to lead to the deeper and stronger connection with the public referred to on page 93 of the 2005 Departmental Report. [26699]

Hazel Blears: Visible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams will be key to building a deeper and stronger connection with the public. Every area in England and Wales will benefit from these teams by 2008. The methods of engagement used by these teams will depend on local circumstances, and on the needs and preferences of local communities; there is no uniform way of engaging successfully with every community.

To support this, the National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement in Policing has created a Guide to Community Engagement for policing practitioners containing practical and strategic advice, supported by case studies, for neighbourhood policing teams and practitioners.

In addition, the Government's Respect Task Force sets out to improve our communities and the lives of people in them by tackling disrespect for others. This includes working together on the neighbourhood renewal and antisocial behaviour agendas, highlighting respect for others and the community, and a key role for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in tackling antisocial behaviour. As part of this we will enable community groups to trigger action in their local areas so that, via their local councillor, they can secure a response from the police or relevant local authority in cases they feel have not been adequately addressed.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the Police Standards Unit to complete its assignment with Northamptonshire police. [27293]

Hazel Blears: The Police Standards Unit has been engaged with Northamptonshire police since spring 2004. The criteria for disengagement have been agreed by the Force, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Police Standards Unit. The position of the Force in relation to these criteria is regularly monitored, and disengagement will take place when all parties are satisfied that the criteria have been met.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* civilian staff and *(b)* police officers are employed by each police force. [29193]

Hazel Blears: The breakdown of police service strength for 31 March 2005 was published on 25 July 2005 and is available in the Library and on: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb1205.pdf

Within this publication, the numbers of police officers are provided in Table 1 and the numbers of police staff in Table 8a and 8b.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will revise the Police and Criminal Evidence Code to facilitate the re-interview of terrorist detainees after charge; and if he will make a statement. [29012]

Hazel Blears: During Report Stage on the Terrorism Bill on 9 November 2005, my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary agreed to look at whether it might be possible to extend the circumstances in which post charge interviewing can be used in terrorist cases. We are currently reviewing existing legislation in consultation with the police and the CPS.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been found to be using their siren inappropriately in the last five years. [27122]

Hazel Blears: The Government keeps no central record of occasions when a siren has been inappropriately used. The use of sirens on police vehicles is controlled by the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. These provide that such sirens may only be used either to indicate to other road users the urgency of the purposes for which the vehicle is being used, or to warn them of the presence of the vehicle on the road. Training and guidance on when it is appropriate to use police sirens for these purposes is a matter for individual chief officers of police.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what regulations govern the allocation of cells in police stations; [18277]

(2) what assessments are made to determine whether those being held in police stations should share a cell and with whom they should share; [18278]

(3) what the procedures are for allocating shared cells in police stations; [18279]

(4) whether he intends to extend the recommendations concerning the allocation of cells made by the Zahid Mubarek Inquiry final report to police stations. [17794]

Hazel Blears: The PACE Code of Practice on detention, treatment and questioning Code C) requires that as far as is practicable, not more than one person should be detained in each cell; and that a juvenile is not placed in a cell with an adult. The use of police cells is an operational matter for the chief officer of the force concerned. When one person to a cell is not practicable, consideration would be given to moving a detainee to another designated police station. A risk assessment would be carried out in relation to the options available including any risk associated with individual suspects sharing cell accommodation and the impact on the overall safety and security of the custody suite.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to improve the quality of local policing in Bedfordshire following the Police Performance Assessment 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [24370]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to a major programme of police reform, to help build safer and stronger communities. This will help to drive performance in every force and includes building a more responsive, citizen-focused police service with neighbourhood policing at its heart.

Instilling a strong performance culture is an important part of ensuring the police deliver an effective service in their local area. This is taking hold, delivering real and sustainable improvements.

In terms of Bedfordshire police's performance and how this is enhanced, as for any force this is principally a matter for the Chief Officer team and the Police Authority.

The Home Office has recently published assessments for every force in the country. Bedfordshire police received the following assessments from the Police Performance Assessments 2004–05.

Performance area	*Delivery*	*Direction*
Reducing crime	Fair	Improved
Investigating crime	Good	Improved
Promoting safety	Fair	Improved
Providing assistance	Good	Stable
Citizen focus	Fair	Stable
Resource use	Good	Stable
Local policing	Poor	Improved

The force received its only poor grading in the Local Policing domain, for performance in comparison to its peers. It is, however, important to note that this is an area where the force showed improvement for the assessment period.

The Government's work with all 43 forces to develop neighbourhood policing, initially within pathfinder areas, will enhance the quality of local policing. In Bedfordshire, this is Luton Division.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions police officers from outside the North Wales police area were deployed in the North Wales area in each of the last three years for which records are available; and from which forces those officers were deployed in each case. [24733]

Hazel Blears: Information is only available for secondments coming into a force. Since 2003, North Wales police had no police officers seconded into the force.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many criminal investigators there were in the Milton Keynes division of the Thames Valley police force in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [27182]

Hazel Blears: Information on the functions to which police officers are deployed is collected annually and is only available from March 2000. The deployment of officers to CID and other police functions is an operational matter for the Chief Constable of the Thames Valley police (Mr. Peter Neyroud).

Information on the number of CID officers is collected only at force level. CID officers in the Thames Valley Police are those staff mainly employed in plain clothes for the investigation of crime and who are not part of a specialist unit. More police officers are available to investigate crime with CID, but it is not their primary policing role within the force. Details of the number of CID officers in Thames Valley Police are set out in the table.

Thames Valley police—Number of CID officers since 2000

As at 31 March:	*Number of CID officers*
2000	282
2001	287
2002	299
2003	280
2004	290
2005	315

Notes:

1. Data for 2000 to 2002 was collected annually by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
2. Data from 2003 is collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate annually.

Prison Staff

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* the rate of turnover of prison staff and *(b)* the ratio of staff to prisoners in public sector prisons is; and what estimate he has made of the equivalent figures in private prisons. [23047]

Fiona Mactaggart: The rate of turnover of permanent Prison Service staff during the year ending 30 September 2005 was 8.4 per cent. The calculation includes retirements but excludes staff who have transferred out of the public sector Prison Service to other public sector organisations due to structural re-organisations. The ratio of staff to prisoners in public sector prison establishments on 30 September was one member of staff to 1.5 prisoners.

Information on staffing turnover in the contracted estates is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. As at 30 June 2005, there was a ratio of one member of staff to 1.8 prisoners within contracted prisons.

Prison Officers (Salaries)

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* starting salary and *(b)* average salary is of prison officers in public sector prisons; and what estimates he has made of the equivalent rates in private sector prisons. [23018]

Fiona Mactaggart: The current starting salary for new entrant prison officers in public sector prisons is £17,319. For new entrant prison officers regrading from elsewhere in the Prison Service the current starting salary is £18,483. The current average salary for prison officers in public sector prisons is £23,595.

Independent research carried out by DLA MCG Consulting on behalf of the Prison Service Pay Review Body into pay of staff in the 11 privately managed prisons indicates that the average starting salary for prison custody officers is £15,334 and that the current average salary of a prison custody officer is £16,950.

Prisoners

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the change in the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of prisoners leaving custody and entering employment, education or training in each of the last five years. [26654]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the numbers of prisoners leaving custody and entering employment, training or education is only available for the last three years. The outcomes include those who attended FRESHSTART appointments at Jobcentre Plus, whereby prisoners who do not have a job or training place to go to on release are linked into employment, training and benefits advice and support immediately after release.

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Discharges	86,353	87,449	85,685
Info recorded	77,188	82,650	83,991
ETE outcomes (inc. FRESHSTART)	21,327	33,946	41,146
ETE outcomes (inc. FRESHSTART) as percentage of total discharges	25	39	48

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners convicted since 1990 have continued to protest their innocence, broken down by category of prisoner. [26688]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not centrally recorded by the Prison Service and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Prisons

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve educational resources for prisoners by *(a)* improved ICT facilities and *(b)* increased internet access in prisons. [16961]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have increased ICT provision within the prison estate considerably in recent years through projects such as Prisoners' ICT Academy, which has seen new or upgraded computer workshops installed at 18 establishments, and involvement of Learndirect, which aims to provide up to around 7,000 offenders with secure web-based access to Learndirect courses by December 2006.

Colleagues at the Department for Education and Skills are currently in the process of developing an Offender ICT strategy. As part of this, a pilot at Her Majesty's Prison Leyhill is evaluating a commercial design for a secure 'Internet Kiosk', and the practical benefit that offenders can gain from e-learning within the security constraints required by the prison environment.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Essex who were tagged on early release from prison breached the rules governing their early release in each of the last five years. [19055]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of prisoners who were released on the Home Detention Curfew scheme (HDC) from Her Majesty's Prison Bullwood Hall and Her Majesty's Prison Chelmsford who breached the rules governing their early release for each of the last five years is provided in the following table. The area in which electronically tagged prisoners reside upon release is not recorded centrally.

Prisoners released on the HOC scheme from HMP Bullwood Hall and Chelmsford and those who were recalled, by year of release

	Discharged	*Recalled*[1]
2000	147	12
2001	139	8
2002	303	25
2003	265	27
2004	125	17

[1] Some recalls from HOC are due to the curfewee no longer being able to be monitored through no fault of their own. For example where he or she loses accommodation through no fault of their own.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what projections he has made of the prison population in the next five years; and what plans he has to meet those projections. [24169]

Fiona Mactaggart: The latest prison population projections are published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/05 "Updated And Revised Prison Population Projections, 2005–2011, England and Wales". Figures for 10 scenarios can be found in this document. The scenarios range from 'High' to 'Low'. Projected total prison population figures (annual averages) for High and Low scenarios for the relevant financial years are presented in the following table.

The National Offender Management Service keeps under review the demand on prison places and the capacity of prisons to accommodate those prisoners sent to them by the courts. We are increasing the operational capacity of the prison estate by bringing accommodation back into use and through additional places built at existing prisons.

Projected prison population (end of June figures)

	High	*Low*
2005	76,600	76,110
2006	79,490	76,060
2007	84,260	76,670
2008	87,870	77,310
2009	89,400	77,080
2010	91,500	77,380

Source:
RDS NOMS

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what major changes have been made in the training provided to Prison Officers in the last five years. [25469]

Fiona Mactaggart: All newly recruited Prison Officers now undertake an eight-week Prison Officer Entry Level Training course (POELT), previously known as Prison Officer Initial Training (POINT). The POELT course has recently been rewritten and provides new staff with a foundation level of training in all core skill areas and covering interpersonal skills, mental health awareness, race and diversity, violence reduction and safer custody, along side the more traditional security awareness and practical skills needed to be a prison officer.

There has been an increased emphasis across all prison officer training on offender management and the care of all offenders. The Prison Service is in the process of embedding race and diversity throughout all training courses, where appropriate. An improved quality

assurance system is now in place for all courses, which adheres to the Adult Learning Inspectorate common inspection framework.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding the placing of unsuitable prisoners at Spring Hill prison, with particular reference to *(a)* arsonists and *(b)* violent offenders. [25860]

Fiona Mactaggart: No representations have been received about the placing of unsuitable prisoners at Spring Hill prison. Spring Hill's acceptance criteria excludes any prisoner:

who has an index offence of arson, or any current offence of arson or damage by fire; and

who has more than one previous conviction for arson or damage by fire within the last five years.

These criteria apply to all open prisons.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS among Prison Service staff; what guidance he has issued to Prison Service staff to ensure the care received by those with HIV/AIDS is fair and equitable; and what plans he has to issue further guidance on this issue. [26019]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service has issued a number of documents giving comprehensive guidance to support staff with HIV/AIDS. These include Prison Service Order (PSO) "Occupational Health", and is available on the Prison Service website: www.hmprison service.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos.

In addition, PSO 3845, "Blood Borne and Related Communicable Diseases" and the Health and Safety Guidance Note 02/2005 "Risk Assessment and Immunisation for Communicable Diseases" provide further advice and guidance. Copies of these documents are in the Library. All these documents are available to staff via the Prison Service intranet and as hard copies where required. Staff have access to occupational health advisers and additional support is available through staff care and welfare services.

The Prison Service is committed to ensuring that all those in custody receive fair and equitable treatment. Staff guidance is available in the "Health Services for Prisoners Standard" to ensure that those with HIV/AIDS receive appropriate care and was updated in May 2004. There are no immediate plans to issue further guidance on this issue but regular reviews are undertaken to ensure best practice is followed.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prison establishments where educational services are provided by Amersham and Wycombe College; and what the *(a)* commencement and *(b)* end date of the contract is in each case. [26435]

Fiona Mactaggart: Amersham and Wycombe College provides educational services at the following establishments:

Aylesbury
Belmarsh
Cookham Wood
Elmley
Grendon/Spring Hill
Holloway
Pentonville
Rochester
Standford Hill
Swaleside
Wandsworth
Wormwood Scrubs.

All Amersham and Wycombe contracts started on 1 January 1999 and are contacted to end on 31 August 2007. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is currently tendering the education provision for all prisons as part of the Offender Learning and Skills Service. The expected start date for these contracts is 1 August 2006. Providing there are no slippages in the timetable then all the education contracts will be terminated by the Prison Service earlier to coincide with the LSC contract start dates.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the main routes through which drugs are smuggled into prisons; and if he will make a statement. [26853]

Fiona Mactaggart: As I stated in my reply to a question by the hon. Member for Jarrow on 2 November, the Home Office recently commissioned a substantial piece of research that identifies patterns of drug use and supply routes. The six main routes identified were social visits, mail, new receptions, prison staff, over the perimeter and reception after court visits. Measures are already in place to target these routes and the report will inform the further development of supply reduction strategies.

Private Gregory Bruce

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the result was of the Thames Valley police investigation into the death of Private Gregory Bruce in Bicester barracks, Oxfordshire. [26748]

Hazel Blears: The Coroner's inquest, based on information in the Thames Valley police investigation report, determined on 13 October 2005 that Private Bruce's death was death by suicide.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vacancies there are in each probation area where the service *(a)* is and *(b)* is not recruiting. [23830]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following figures represent active vacancies (in terms of full-time equivalent value) in each probation area as at 30 June 2005. This is the most recent information available at present.

An active vacancy is one which an area is actively trying to fill (ie is at some stage of the recruitment process). Where an area has no active vacancies recorded, this can be taken as indicating that they were not recruiting on the day that data was captured.

	Active vacancies
Avon and Somerset	67.90
Bedfordshire	17.20
Cambridgeshire	22.80
Cheshire	21.00
Cumbria	5.50
Derbyshire	8.80
Devon and Cornwall	11.30
Dorset	20.60
Durham	19.80
Dyfed Powys	4.60
Essex	7.00
Gloucestershire	10.09
Gwent	8.00
Hampshire	26.00
Hertfordshire	20.60
Humberside	0.00
Kent	26.96
Lancashire	28.50
Leicestershire	30.60
Lincolnshire	8.00
London	490.77
Greater Manchester	0.00
Merseyside	0.00
Norfolk	5.00
North Yorkshire	0.00
North Wales	7.50
Northamptonshire	19.60
Northumbria	0.00
Nottinghamshire	12.80
South Wales	40.50
South Yorkshire	0.00
Staffordshire	12.50
Suffolk	12.10
Surrey	27.20
Sussex	17.00
Teesside	30.90
Thames Valley	59.20
Warwickshire	5.80
West Mercia	13.60
West Midlands	0.00
West Yorkshire	50.50
Wiltshire	9.60
Total	1,179.82

Note:
Greater Manchester are not able to provide active vacancy figures at present, and the zero values recorded for this area indicate a nil return rather than an absence of vacancies.

Probation Staff (Pay Award)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the outcome of the Pay and Reward Review for Probation Staff in England and Wales. [24447]

Fiona Mactaggart: Talks between the employers and trade unions on the National Probation Service pay and reward review are progressing well and a joint statement will be issued shortly.

Public Enquiry Office Belfast

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what circumstances led to the closure of the public enquiry office in Belfast with effect from 15 November 2001; and if the Government will re-establish a public enquiry office in Belfast. [28364]

Mr. McNulty: The decision to close the Belfast Public Enquiry Office (PEO) was based on the fact that only 2,000 callers used the office annually and the operating hours and capacity were very limited. A better service could be provided from the larger PEO situated in Liverpool which offered a full range of services, unlike the restricted service offered at Belfast. There are no plans to reopen the Belfast PEO.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on public bodies' compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. [26651]

Paul Goggins: The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 extended the provisions of the Race Relations Act to most public authorities by making racial discrimination unlawful in carrying out their functions. It also placed a positive duty on many public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) is responsible for enforcing and monitoring the Act.

The CRE has issued more than 200 'minded letters', indicating its willingness to take enforcement action against specific public authorities. In all cases this has resulted in the authorities concerned taking the necessary remedial action required to ensure that they are meeting their responsibilities in relation to race equality. Building on this work, the CRE is drawing up proposals on what it, in partnership with others, could do further to monitor public bodies' progress on meeting their equality targets and obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. For example, the CRE is currently targeting a range of public authorities to determine their progress in conducting Race Equality Impact Assessments. This will focus on both the number of new policies being assessed and the rigor of individual assessments. A specific focus for the CRE over the coming 12 months will be to ensure that all new policies, including legislation, are subject to Race Equality Impact Assessments. To support this work, the Home Office is working with the Interdepartmental Group on Race Equality to drive this work at a departmental level.

Reconviction Rate

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reconviction rate has been in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [16369]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table shows the available information. The data refers to samples of offenders for the each of the five years shown. Owing to the administrative costs of matching criminal histories, reconviction results are generally based on samples of offenders from the first three months of each year.

Reconviction rates are influenced by a number of different factors relating to the offence and the offender. They can be adjusted to take account of the changing characteristics of offenders and these adjusted rates are published annually on the Home Office's website (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm).

Reconviction rates—percentage of offenders reconvicted within two years for standard list offences

	Offenders discharged from prison in Qtr 1 of each year	*Offenders starting community sentences in Qtr 1 of each year*
2001	61	59
2000	60	59
1999	59	56
1998	59	56
1997	58	55

Recorded Crime Rate

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the recorded rate of crime was in Suffolk for each year since 1997 for *(a)* burglary of dwellings, *(b)* violence against the person, *(c)* vehicle crime, *(d)* robbery, *(e)* sexual offences, *(f)* total violent crime, *(g)* theft and handling of stolen goods and *(h)* criminal damage. [24844]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is given in the table.

Table 1: Offences recorded by the police in Suffolk—1997 to 2001–02

Number of offences

Offence	*1997*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Violence against the person	2,448	3,820	5,303	6,395	7,354
Sexual offences	400	405	389	421	466
Robbery	141	140	223	177	289
Violent crime	2,989	4,365	5,915	6,993	8,129
Burglary in a dwelling	2,422	2,464	2,332	2,198	2,447
Theft and handling stolen goods	16,952	17,097	17,422	17,196	19,419
Of which:					
Vehicle crime	6,687	6,446	6,501	6,291	6,915
Criminal damage	7,835	7,898	9,547	10,150	12,095

Notes:
1. The coverage was extended and counting rules revised from 1998–99. Figures from that date are not directly comparable with those for 1997.
2. The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences recorded by the police in Suffolk 2002–03 to 2004–05

Number of offences

Offence	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Violence against the person	7,949	9,529	10,347
Sexual offences	588	641	620
Robbery	249	290	260
Violent crime	8,786	10,460	11,227
Burglary in a dwelling	2,258	2,365	1,763
Theft and handling stolen goods	18,806	18,205	17,609
Of which:			
Vehicle crime	6,282	5,782	5,463
Criminal damage	11,497	12,817	12,781

Notes:
1. The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.
2. The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Re-offending

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned on the effect on the re-offending rate of *(a)* penal custody, *(b)* restorative justice programmes and *(c)* local authority-run secure accommodation. [24290]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is as follows.

(a) No recent research has been commissioned on the direct effect of penal custody on re-offending rates (as measured by reconviction); however research (Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction) is being undertaken on the link between interventions received in (as well as outside of) prison, and outcomes (including reconviction). Research has also been commissioned (building on the three Resettlement Surveys undertaken in 2001, 2003 and 2004) to provide information on the links between resettlement factors and reconviction. A large scale sentencing survey is also being undertaken which will provide information about the relative effectiveness (and cost-effectiveness) of different sentences.

(b) Research was commissioned in 2001 to provide robust evidence on the impact of restorative justice (RJ) alongside the criminal justice system (pre and post sentence) on reconviction rates. Other recently conducted research on RJ has included a study examining the impact of a restorative cautioning scheme (Wilcox et al., 2004) and an exploratory study on the effectiveness of RJ schemes (Miers et al., 2001). The evidence from both of these studies on the effect of RJ on reconviction was inconclusive.

To follow up earlier research on the introduction of referral orders (which follow the principles of restorative justice), a reconviction study on those offenders subject

to referral orders has been commissioned by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Further Youth Justice Board research is being undertaken to evaluate the enhanced effectiveness of using Family Group Conferencing in conjunction with Youth Inclusion and Support Panels to divert highest risk children from offending.

(c) No recent research has been conducted by the Home Office or the Youth Justice Board assessing the effect on the re-offending rate of local authority run secure accommodation.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times noise distraction has been used in each of the four secure training centres in each of the last three years. [25601]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not held centrally for the entire period. The following table gives details for the period October 2004 to September 2005:

	Use of noise distraction technique
Medway	178
Rainsbrook	63
Oakhill[1]	134
Hassockfield	62

[1] Figures for Oakhill do not include the period 1–18 October 2004.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to publish the full report of the review of the use of physical control in care in secure training centres. [25602]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Youth Justice Board plans to publish a full report of the review in the near future. A summary of the recommendations of the panel of experts who undertook the review is available on the Board's website.

Shoot to Kill Policy

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long he expects the police to maintain the shoot to kill policy for suspected suicide bombers. [27138]

Hazel Blears: Operational tactics to deal with suspected suicide bombers are a matter for the police. All police use of firearms is subject to the usual law on the use of force. In particular, the Criminal Law Act 1967 provides that the police may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to effect an arrest or to prevent crime.

Similar Fact Rules

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have been made to the similar fact rules since 1990; and if he will make a statement. [26690]

Fiona Mactaggart: The common law "similar fact" rule allowed the prosecution to rely on a defendant's previous misconduct in certain circumstances. However the Bad Character provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which were implemented in December 2004, abolished this and other common law rules governing the admissibility of such evidence in criminal proceedings. In their place the Act sets out a number of "gateways" through which evidence of a defendant's bad character may be admissible, where relevant and probative. One of these is where such evidence is

> "relevant to an important matter in issue between the defendant and the prosecution."

The Act makes clear that such

> "matters in issue between the defendant and the prosecution"

include the question whether the defendant has a propensity to commit offences of the kind with which he is charged.

Slavery Memorial Day

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had about setting up a national slavery memorial day; and if he will make a statement. [17846]

Paul Goggins: Home Office Ministers have had a number of discussions in recent years with individuals and organisations advocating the setting up of a national slavery memorial day. I am currently discussing with ministerial colleagues how the Government will develop their contribution to the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007.

Somalia

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications of the political instability in Somalia for his policy of repatriation of Somalian asylum seekers; and if he will make a statement. [27216]

Mr. McNulty: We continue to monitor closely political developments in Somalia and the progress of the transitional Somali Government. The new Somali Government is in the process of deciding where in southern Somalia to base itself and we are aware of the ongoing difficulties it faces in establishing its authority in the country.

Each application is considered against the background of the latest available information about the situation in the country of origin. These sources include intergovernmental organisations, governmental sources and human rights organisations. Full account is taken of the ability of the individual concerned to reside safely in other parts of Somalia where it is not safe for them to return to their home area. Caseworkers have access to the Somalia Country report produced by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate Country of Origin Information Service as well as the Somalia Operational Guidance Note which assesses the most common types of asylum claims received and the circumstances in which they are likely to prove well founded or unfounded.

Stolen Artworks

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to establish a national database for stolen art and artefacts. [20542]

Hazel Blears: As a result of work to consider the business case for such a database, we have decided not to proceed with establishing one at this time:

we are not convinced that it would have a significant impact on crime;

we are not convinced that there is sufficient demand from, or that it would be sufficiently used by, the arts and antiques industry, or the public;

we consider the costs too high given other priorities and the likely impact on crime; and

we are not convinced that the database would become self-financing.

A letter explaining our decision in more detail was sent to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee in October 2004.

Instead of the database, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published on 25 October guidelines to museums on the acquisition of cultural property. They have also provided funds and are working with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council on the production of a website that will offer advice to anyone wishing to purchase art and antiquities, to help them avoid purchasing illegally traded items.

We are also considering other options for tackling the wider market for stolen goods.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what discussions his Department has had with the Council for the Prevention of Art Thefts on the establishment of a national database for stolen art and artefacts; [20543]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Council for the Prevention of Art Thefts and *(b)* the Association of Chief Police Officers on maintaining and publicising websites detailing lost or stolen artefacts. [20546]

Hazel Blears: During 2003, we received a proposal from the Council for the Prevention of Art Thefts (CoPAT) for the provision of a database of stolen artefacts, which my Officials discussed with them at the time. It did not, however, contain any provision for a publicly accessible website.

Options of the type proposed by CoPAT were also considered as part of work carried out during 2004 to investigate the options and business case for such a database. Discussions were held with both CoPAT and representatives of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) as part of this work.

ACPO is represented on the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Enforcement Steering Group (along with the Home Office). The purpose of that Group is to discuss issues relating to the illicit trade in cultural property, including the possible provision of databases and websites. The decision not to proceed with the database was discussed in that forum.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* the website of the Metropolitan Police Art and Antiques Squad, *(b)* the website of TRACE and *(c)* the website of the Art Loss register in recovering art and artefacts stolen in the UK. [20544]

Hazel Blears: As part of work to consider the business case and options for a national database for stolen arts and artefacts, the degree to which stolen arts and artefacts were currently recovered and to what extent this would be improved by the provision of a national database was investigated.

A number of forces were consulated, as well as the Art Loss Register. The two forces that responded on this issue did suggest that the database could improve rates of recovery. However, in each case this was based on very small numbers, so the overall impact would be small. The Metropolitan Police Service were not able to respond on this issue in the time available.

The Art Loss Register stated that a significant proportion of property was recovered in 5–10 per cent. of their cases. They considered that this could be increased by up to 30 per cent. but only if the database was supported by experts who offered a service to the police, trade and public. We have not made any assessment of the effectiveness of TRACE.

Taser Weapons

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions the use of Taser weapons by the police has resulted in serious injury; and if he will make a statement. [17218]

Hazel Blears: The Defence Scientific Advisory Council's Sub-Committee on the Medical Implications of Less Lethal Weapons (DOMILL) has produced three statements on the medical implications of the use of the Taser. Copies have been placed in the Library. DOMILL's view is that the risk of life-threatening or other serious injuries from Taser appears to be very low and certainly very much lower than that from conventional firearms.

A Taser Deployment Form is completed on each occasion that Taser is deployed. These forms are passed to DOMILL, together with any post-incident medical assessments undertaken by the Force Medical Examiner. From examination of these reports DOMILL are content that the medical issues attributable directly or indirectly to laser use were not unexpected and are addressed by their extant statements.

Terrorism

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations his Department has received from *(a)* lobby organisations and *(b)* members of the public since 7 July on protection against terrorism. [28951]

Mr. Charles Clarke: We have received 128 letters from hon. Members and 305 letters from members of the public on protection from terrorism since 7 July. The number of letters from lobby organisations are not listed separately.

Together Campaign

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 50 Action Areas in which the Together campaign has been pursued. [26693]

Hazel Blears: There are currently 10 Trailblazer Areas and 51 Action Areas across the country, designated as "TOGETHER Action Areas", which will get extra help to tackle antisocial behaviour. They are as follows:

51 Action Areas

East of England:

Tendring
Great Yarmouth
Harlow
Ipswich
Norwich
Peterborough
Southend on Sea
Watford

South East:

Canterbury
Dover
Hastings
Oxford
Portsmouth
Reading
Slough
Southampton

South West:

Bournemouth
Exeter
Gloucester
Plymouth
Swindon

East Midlands:

Derby
Leicester
Northampton
Nottingham

West Midlands:

Coventry
Hodge Hill
Sandwell
Wolverhampton

North West:

Wirral
Blackburn
Bolton
Middlesbrough
Newcastle upon Tyne
South Tyneside

Yorkshire and Humberside:

Doncaster
Hull
Kirklees
Wakefield
York

Wales:

Cardiff
Newport
Swansea

London:

Hackney
Southwark

10 Trailblazer Areas

Birmingham
Brighton
Bristol
Camden
Manchester
Leeds
Liverpool
Sheffield
Sunderland
Westminster.

Torture

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that resources are available to the police to investigate credible allegations of criminal offences contrary to *(a)* section 1 of the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 and *(b)* section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 regardless of the nationality of the alleged victims and perpetrators. [19756]

Andy Burnham: The Metropolitan police has the lead responsibility for the investigation of offences under section 1 of the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 and section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. Provision towards the cost incurred is made through formula funding for the Metropolitan Police Authority.

It is for each police authority to set a budget within the resources available to them and for each chief officer to decide how best to allocate available resources according to operational priorities and objectives.

Town Police Clauses Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under section 36 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 in each year since 1984; and if he will make a statement on the operation of that section of the Act. [27142]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of males and females charged with an offence are not centrally collected.

Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of males and females found guilty of sections 21, 28, 29, 35 and 36 under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 at all courts England and Wales, 1984—2003 is contained in the table. It is not possible to separately identify the figures for section 36.

Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Number of males and females found guilty at all courts under certain offences under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, England and Wales, 1984–2003[1]

Offence description: Offences under the said sections excluding those involving disorderly behaviour, dogs, highways and drunkenness etc.

Statute : Town Police Clauses Act 1847 SS 21, 28, 29, 35 and 36

	Male	Female
1984	139	17
1985	189	11
1986	196	5
1987	150	6
1988	102	6
1989	106	6
1990	104	10
1991	99	14
1992	104	10
1993	66	8
1994	85	9
1995	65	10
1996	61	4
1997	60	6
1998	47	8
1999	56	4
2000	38	5
2001	41	4
2002	41	3
2003	37	7

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

Unsolved Murders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many murders committed in each year since 1980 in *(a)* Havering, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England and Wales remain unsolved. [27126]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the following table for the Metropolitan Police Service and England and Wales. The data are provided from the Homicide database which has data back to 1980 and has the outcome for each homicide. However, it does not hold data at a lower level than police force area. Data are also held on the recorded crime database but offences and outcomes are not linked.

Homicides currently recorded by the police[1]

	Metropolitan Police Service		England and Wales	
	Total currently recorded	Unsolved	Total currently recorded	Unsolved
1980	172	12	536	28
1981	113	20	501	33
1982	172	40	555	56
1983	125	22	481	39
1984	132	28	536	42
1985	158	25	534	41
1986	167	28	562	43
1987	163	29	597	50
1988	135	30	547	49
1989	134	24	521	63
1990	153	48	555	77
1991	158	43	623	74
1992	140	33	581	63
1993	136	31	565	60
1994	148	39	632	85
1995	147	34	663	86
1996	125	23	585	54
1997	154	36	609	79
1997–98	158	34	608	76
1998–99	144	27	650	71
1999–2000	172	43	679	93
2000–01	177	44	772	96
2001–02	182	56	808	133
2002–03	179	44	964	135
2003–04	205	56	833	174

[1] As at 22 October 2004; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.

Crime and Disorder—Recorded crime for six key offences 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

Force	CDRP name	Violence against the person, offences recorded 2002–03	2003–04	2004–05[1]
Avon and Somerset	Bath and North East Somerset	1,544	2,000	2,685
Avon and Somerset	City of Bristol UA	8,868	11,420	13,086
Avon and Somerset	Mendip	1,114	1,546	1,850
Avon and Somerset	North Somerset	2,362	2,937	3,758
Avon and Somerset	Sedgemoor	1,242	1,702	1,746
Avon and Somerset	South Gloucester	1,902	2,298	3,008
Avon and Somerset	South Somerset	1,644	2,260	2,870
Avon and Somerset	Taunton Deane	1,583	1,890	2,000
Avon and Somerset	West Somerset	480	477	460
Bedfordshire	Bedford	2,311	2,358	2,912
Bedfordshire	Luton	3,371	3,824	4,416
Bedfordshire	Mid Bedfordshire	854	955	1,043
Bedfordshire	South Bedfordshire	1,562	1,670	1,766
Cambridgeshire	Cambridge	2,579	2,726	2,758
Cambridgeshire	East Cambridgeshire	822	833	745
Cambridgeshire	Fenland	1,518	1,835	1,589
Cambridgeshire	Huntingdonshire	2,111	2,157	2,070
Cambridgeshire	Peterborough UA	4,524	5,133	5,165
Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire	1,020	979	1,031
Cheshire	Chester	1,653	1,904	2,031
Cheshire	Congleton	611	838	856
Cheshire	Crewe	1,293	1,849	1,802
Cheshire	Ellesmere Port and Neston	839	1,093	1,286
Cheshire	Halton	1,696	2,425	2,771
Cheshire	Macclesfield	1,377	1,638	1,806
Cheshire	Vale Royal	1,390	1,836	1,852
Cheshire	Warrington	1,843	2,491	3,204

Victims' Code of Practice

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in the implementation of the Victims' Code of Practice. [26646]

Fiona Mactaggart: The final Code of Practice for Victims of Crime was laid before Parliament on 19 October 2005. The code will come into force in April 2006, however, criminal justice agencies are aiming to deliver as many of the obligations in the code as they can in advance of April 2006. The Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) is working intensively with the criminal justice agencies, both nationally and locally, to assist them with delivery of the code.

Victims Fund

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when an announcement is expected to be made about the continuation of the Victims Fund beyond 31 March 2006. [27197]

Fiona Mactaggart: We have been considering the options for future funding schemes within the Victims Fund and expect to make an announcement shortly.

Violent Crime/Sexual Assaults

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to tackle *(a)* violent crime and *(b)* sexual assaults. [27148]

Hazel Blears: The information is as follows:

(a) The Government are currently taking forward a very full range of work which will continue to reduce violent crime. We are, for example, introducing new measures which will give police and local communities the powers they need to tackle guns, knives and alcohol-related violence in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which is currently before Parliament.

Domestic violence is also a key priority. Our National Delivery Plan to tackle domestic violence provides support for victims, strengthens the Criminal Justice System to be more responsive to domestic violence cases and holds perpetrators to account.

(b) The Government gives high priority to tackling sexual offending because of the nature and extent of the harm caused to victims.

We have improved the care available to victims of sexual crime by developing the network of Sexual Assault Referral Centres and supporting complementary community-based services. We are committed to bringing more sexual offenders to justice. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 redefined and increased the penalties for many sexual offences.

We are encouraging more victims to report sexual crime and specially trained police officers and prosecutors have been established to deal with rape cases. At court, we have introduced a range of measures to facilitate the giving of evidence by victims.

The Government are particularly determined to ensure that child abuse is tackled rigorously and works with the police and other agencies to minimise the risk of children being sexually abused. We are establishing a centre which will target paedophiles using the Internet to distribute illegal images of and to groom children. Following the Bichard enquiry, wide-ranging action has been implemented to develop joined-up working between different agencies.

We have developed the way that agencies work together to ensure that decisions about managing known sex offenders are based on the best information available. Based on evidence about what really works to reduce offending, programmes are being run in prisons and the community to educate sex offenders about the harm they have caused and bring them to realise what they need to do to stop offending.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to tackle violent crime in Bedfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [24369]

Hazel Blears: The Government are currently taking forward a very full range of work which will continue to reduce violent crime.

In Bedfordshire, the Luton Safe and Bed Safe initiatives have made a serious impact on the reported level of violent crime in recent months and Bedfordshire police have been pro-active in tackling these issues. Community Support Officers have been pro-actively enforcing alcohol bans in designated areas. Additional officers are now on the streets on Friday and Saturday nights in town-centres where police strategy involves high-visibility patrols, pro-active use of CCTV and mobile CCTV, mobile police stations, anti-drug operations using sniffer dogs and electronic testing devices, and partnership work with licensees to ensure they take their responsibilities and obligations seriously.

Further priorities are robbery—Operation Falcon in South Bedfordshire has seen significant reductions in the number of robberies—and domestic violence where multi-agency approach has been adopted and best practice has been embedded.

Nationally, there is a huge programme of work. We are, for example, introducing new measures which will give police and local communities the powers they need to tackle guns, knives and alcohol-related violence in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which is currently before Parliament.

Domestic violence is a key priority. Our National Delivery Plan to tackle domestic violence provides support for victims, strengthens the Criminal Justice System to be more responsive to domestic violence cases, holds perpetrators to account and provides resettlement for victims and rehabilitation packages for perpetrators through end-to-end offender management and the concept of a whole sentence plan.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* gun crimes and *(b)* sexual assaults were recorded in each London borough in each year since 1997. [26445]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to *(a)* offences involving firearms, excluding air weapons, recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service since

1997–98 and *(b)* indecent/sexual assaults recorded by each of the Metropolitan Police's Basic Command Units since 2000–01.

The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002 and statistics before and after that date are not directly comparable.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, re-defined many sexual offences, including indecent assault. As such, data for 2004–05 and earlier years are not directly comparable.

Table 3: Indecent/Sexual assaults recorded in the Metropolitan police force area by Basic Command Unit, 2000–01 and 2001–02

Basic Command Unit	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Barking and Dagenham	135	136
Barnet	142	161
Bexley	135	143
Brent	199	197
Bromley	127	153
Camden	195	251
City of Westminster	301	317
Croydon	236	238
Ealing	223	219
Enfield	179	189
Greenwich	224	234
Hackney	193	199
Hammersmith and Fulham	142	139
Haringey	216	186
Harrow	86	68
Havering	119	109
Heathrow	21	28
Hillingdon	157	186
Hounslow	173	177
Islington	167	207
Kensington and Chelsea	96	96
Kingston upon Thames	87	98
Lambeth	294	266
Lewisham	239	248
Merton	90	122
Newham	187	217
Redbridge	142	164
Richmond upon Thames	56	67
Southwark	287	274
Sutton	66	81
Tower Hamlets	183	214
Waltham Forest	157	185
Wandsworth	207	234
Total	5,461	5,803

Table 4: Indecent/Sexual assaults recorded in the Metropolitan police force area by Basic Command Unit, 2002–03 to 2004–05

Basic Command Unit	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[2]
Barking and Dagenham	165	141	114
Barnet	214	156	156
Bexley	142	108	110
Brent	172	201	138
Bromley	157	153	140
Camden	175	196	169
City of Westminster	333	323	321
Croydon	278	271	219
Ealing	222	233	200
Enfield	173	198	128
Greenwich	215	221	159
Hackney	202	203	203
Hammersmith and Fulham	170	159	111
Haringey	219	246	183
Harrow	84	78	76
Havering	110	103	86
Heathrow	20	18	26
Hillingdon	165	135	143
Hounslow	210	191	149
Islington	199	205	143
Kensington and Chelsea	102	119	102
Kingston upon Thames	84	107	80
Lambeth	304	248	244
Lewisham	277	215	220
Merton	109	103	103
Newham	218	193	182
Redbridge	145	158	146
Richmond upon Thames	69	68	66
Southwark	277	291	244
Sutton	94	93	93
Tower Hamlets	253	239	185
Waltham Forest	178	162	111
Wandsworth	234	222	202
Total	5,969	5,807	4,952

[1] The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures before and after that date are not directly comparable.

[2] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences. Offences included in Tables 3 and 4: *(a)* up to and including April 2004—indecent assault on a male, indecent assault on a female; *(b)* from May 2004—sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over, sexual assault on a male child under 13, sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over, sexual assault on a female child under 13.

Youth Custody

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals under the age of 18 years are serving a custodial sentence in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [24549]

Fiona Mactaggart: On 30 September 2005 there were 2,284 persons aged under 18 serving a custodial sentence in England and Wales. This comprised 1,897 in prison establishments, 184 in Local Authority Secure Children's Homes and 203 in Secure Training Centres.

Witnesses

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the intermediary scheme provided for in the special measures for vulnerable witnesses under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. [29341]

Fiona Mactaggart: Examination of a witness through an intermediary under section 29 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 is currently available in six pathfinder areas: Merseyside; West Midlands; Thames Valley; South Wales; Norfolk; and Devon and Cornwall. Evaluation of the pathfinders will be completed by the end of March 2006 after which plans will be made for further roll out of the scheme in England and Wales.

The latest available information about the number of times that intermediaries have been used is given in the following table.

We have issued recently information packs entitled 'What's my story?' and 'Intermediaries: Giving a voice to vulnerable witnesses' copies of which have been

placed in the Library. These materials are being used to promote awareness and understanding of the intermediary scheme in the pathfinder areas.

Area	Intermediary scheme start date	Number of witnesses assisted by an intermediary as at 15 November 2005[1]
Merseyside	23 February 2004	11
West Midlands	13 September 2004 (Wolverhampton area) 1 November 2004 (all courts in West Midlands)	20
Thames Valley	2 October 2004	51
South Wales[2]	1 February 2005	2
Norfolk	1 February 2005	5
Devon and Cornwall[3]	20 June 2005	9
Total		98

[1] Data refer to the number of witnesses for whom the Office for Criminal Justice Reform has provided a registered intermediary where the intermediary has, or is expected to, carried out a communication needs analysis relating to the witness or has assisted them to understand questions or to make their answers understood during a criminal investigation or trial.
Data refer only to pathfinder areas where notification of availability of the intermediary special measure has been made in accordance with section 18(2) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999.
[2] In South Wales trials are restricted to Cardiff Crown court, Cardiff magistrates courts, the Vale of Glamorgan magistrates courts, Newcastle and Ogmore magistrates courts, Miskin magistrates courts.
[3] In Devon and Cornwall trials are restricted to Plymouth Crown court and Plymouth magistrates court.

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve support for witnesses who fear for their wellbeing if they give evidence in open court. [24583]

Fiona Mactaggart: Provisions in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 enable a court to order that a witness who suffers fear or distress receives assistance through one or more special measures. These include live videolink, screens and clearing the public gallery. The court may also prohibit publication of information that would lead to public identification of the witness.

Witnesses who are subject to serious intimidation may be provided with specific security measures as part of an on-going risk assessment by the relevant law enforcement agency and in some cases the witness may be relocated. At the end of its second year of operation in October 2005, the National Witness Mobility Service had handled over 300 witness relocation requests received through local police forces and social landlords.

The Serious Organised Crime and Policing Act 2005 provides clear statutory rules and procedures governing witness protection which will be implemented fully by April 2006.

Intimidation of a witness is an offence under section 51 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 in relation to criminal proceedings and section 39 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 in relation to civil proceedings.

Women's Prisons (Wales)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission research into the effect on families of there being no prison for women in Wales. [28728]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government are aware of the importance of family ties for all prisoners, especially women. A Home Office Resettlement Survey (Home Office Research Findings 248 2005) which included family ties issues for all prisoners was carried out in 2003. There are no current plans to commission specific research into the effect on families of there being no prisons for women in Wales.

There are no plans, at present, to build a women's prison in Wales but accommodation requirements will be kept under review.

Young Offenders

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the levels of reoffending by young offenders were in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05. [26645]

Hazel Blears: Re-offending rates are not available but reconviction rates are a commonly used proxy for re-offending rates and reconviction rates are published annually by the Home Office.

The most recent data are for those offenders who were discharged from prison, began a community sentence, or received a pre-court disposal in the first quarter of each of the years shown in the table.

Reconviction rates should be used with caution as a number of different factors can influence them. Actual reconviction rates can be adjusted to take account of such factors to provide a like for like comparison with the 2000 baseline year. Where the actual rate is less than the predicted rate, the figures show a relative reduction—like for like—with the 2000 baseline. The most recent data show a reduction in re-offending of 2.4 per cent. against the 2000 baseline.

The Home Office public service agreement target is to reduce re-offending by 5 per cent. by 2006.

Reconviction rates: Percentage of juvenile offenders reconvicted within one year

	Actual reconviction rate	Predicted reconviction rate	Difference between predicted and actual rate
2003	36.9	37.8	-2.4
2002	36.5	37.9	-3.6
2001	35.3	37.0	-4.5
2000	36.8	—	—

Youth Action and Engagement Framework

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the launch of the new national framework for youth action and engagement. [26665]

Hazel Blears: The Government believe that providing more young people with the opportunity to become involved in volunteering brings huge benefits, both to

young people themselves and to the wider community. We are committed to implementing the national framework for youth action and engagement recommended by the Russell Commission and we have allocated up to £100 million over the next three years to do so.

A key element of the framework is the creation of a dedicated implementation body, which will work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, the private sector and with young people themselves, to deliver a step change in the quality and quantity of volunteering opportunities. Officials within the Home Office are working with Ian Russell to create this body as an independent charity. This work includes the recruitment of the chair, chief executive officer and board of the charity. An announcement on these key appointments will be made in December 2005 and we expect that the charity will be formally launched in spring 2006.

Youth Justice Board

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the Youth Justice Board to improve its custodial capacity modelling capability referred to on page 153 of the 2005 Departmental Report. [26671]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office, the Office for Criminal Justice Reform and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system (CJS) have developed a model known as the 'CJS Model', overseen by the CJS Modelling Steering Group. The model mainly involves adult offenders with only a limited section relevant to 10–17 year olds. The Youth Justice Board is in discussion with the Steering Group about the possibility of either extending the current model to cover young offenders or developing a new model specifically for 10–17 year olds.

This work is only at the feasibility stage. It is a difficult area of work which requires extensive resources. The Board is beginning to establish a small data analysis section, and part of its role will be to do modelling work relating to custodial numbers.

Youth Offending Teams

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in filling front-line vacancies in youth offending teams. [26670]

Fiona Mactaggart: Staff in Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are employed locally and not by the Youth Justice Board. The board supports recruitment and retention of front-line YOT staff, for example through its bespoke National Qualifications Framework for practitioners in the overall context of the Government Workforce strategy. It is also consulting on a Human Resources and Learning strategy 2006–08 and will be issuing guidance on workforce planning to support YOT managers. The vacancies for front-line practitioners in April 2004 was 5.9 per cent., a reduction from 6.5 per cent. in September 2003.

Zimbabweans (Naturalisation)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to speed up the process for decisions on naturalisation in the UK of Zimbabweans. [29167]

Mr. McNulty: There are no plans to treat Zimbabwean applicants for naturalisation differently from those of any other nationality. Any individual request for priority treatment will be considered on its merits.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 22 November 2005

PRIME MINISTER

Date-based Export Scheme

Tim Farron: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the European Commission regarding the lifting of the date-based export scheme; and when the scheme will be lifted. [31084]

The Prime Minister: The Government are in regular contact with the European Commission at all levels about lifting the beef export ban which will end the need for the date-based export scheme.

HEALTH

Mental Health Bill

11. **Dr. Gibson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which black and other ethnic organisations have been consulted on the race equality assessment of the Mental Health Bill. [30519]

Mr. Byrne: Our Race Equality Impact Assessment Advisory Group included representation from groups such as the Afiya Trust, Diverse Minds and the All Wales Black and Minority Ethnic Mental Health Group. In addition to consultation events, close consultation with the Black and Minority Ethnic Mental Health Network, focus groups in 13 hospitals and web based consultation, we have also had direct submissions from groups such as the African and Caribbean Mental Health Commission and from the Royal College of Psychiatrists Ethnic Minority Group.

17. **Mrs. Moon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what languages the document on the Mental Health Bill race equality consultation is available. [30525]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There has not been a formal consultation document. Consultation has been an integral part of the race equality impact assessment on the Bill. At our recent race consultation events, language co-ordinators were available to ensure that this was not a barrier to participation.

18. **Mr. Binley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to be in a position to publish the Mental Health Bill. [30526]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Mental Health Bill was in the Queen's Speech for this session. We plan to introduce it when parliamentary time allows.

NHS Dentistry

13. **Mrs. Hodgson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what effect the new dental contract is having on remuneration for dentists undertaking NHS work. [30521]

20. **Stephen Hesford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what effect the new dental contract is having on remuneration for dentists undertaking NHS work. [30528]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A committed NHS dentist typically earns an average £80,000 per year. New dental contracts are being introduced from April. Dentists' NHS incomes are guaranteed at current earnings levels until 2009. Dentists in personal dental services arrangements agree a contract with fixed monthly remuneration. This will apply to new general dental services contracts from April.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of pensioners who do not have access to an NHS dentist. [24284]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No estimate has been made of the numbers of pensioners in England who may not have access to an national health service dentist. The vast majority of people who contact NHS Direct are given details of practices where they can receive urgent treatment.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists have been practising in the Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25559]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services (CDS) and personal dental services (PDS)—Dentists in Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency as at 30 September each year

	Number
1997	36
1998	38
1999	38
2000	44
2001	44
2002	48
2003	44
2004	48
2005	50

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the results of the strategic review of oral health for older people announced by the Chief Dental Officer in April to be published; and if she will make a statement. [25971]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The strategic review of oral health of older people will be published by the British Society of Gerodontology in December and launched at their meeting on 8 December.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the indicative budgets for NHS dentistry for 2006–07 that will be provided to each primary care trust from April 2006. [27553]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We intend to publish the actual budgets for each primary care trust for dentistry at the end of November.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish details of the criteria for the new Units of Dental Activity. [28071]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the new arrangements for local commissioning of national health service dentistry from April 2006, units of dental activity (UDA) refer to courses of treatment that are weighted to reflect their relative complexity. The three main categories of courses of treatment correspond to the three bands in the proposed new patient charging system, which was published for three months consultation over the summer. The proposed weightings for different courses of treatments, that is the number of UDA to which they correspond, were set out in the draft general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) contract regulations, which were published in August 2005. The final version of those proposed regulations will be laid before Parliament shortly.

At the end of November, GDS dentists are due to receive information showing their level of activity, expressed in terms of UDA, during the reference period, 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005, and their NHS earnings during the same period. Primary care trusts (PCTs) and dentists will use this as the basis for agreeing new annual contract values and the number of UDA that the dentist is expected to carry out over the course of the year in return for this annual contract value. GDS dentists will be guaranteed an annual contract value based on their reference period earnings, uplifted to reflect 2006–07 pay and prices, provided the dentists agree with their PCT an annual level of UDA to be carried out during 2006–07 equivalent to 95 per cent. of their activity during the reference period.

PDS dentists are due to receive similar information from PCTs at the end of November. PDS dentists will be guaranteed an annual contract value worth at least that of their current PDS agreement, uplifted to 2006–07 pay and prices, in return for carrying out annually an appropriate level of UDA agreed with their PCT.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have been employed in each year since 1997 under *(a)* general dental service contracts and *(b)* personal dental service contracts. [25270]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of dentists employed in general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) by contract type in England as at 30 September, 1997 to 2005

	GDS and PDS dentists	GDS only dentists	PDS only dentists	Total
1997	0	16,670	0	16,670
1998	0	17,199	0	17,199
1999	57	17,606	92	17,755
2000	132	17,845	190	18,167
2001	282	17,970	470	18,722
2002	329	17,995	622	18,946
2003	383	18,151	726	19,260
2004	842	17,023	1,857	19,722
2005	1,940	13,801	5,149	20,890

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the number of NHS dentists. [25206]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We announced on 9 November, that 1,453 whole-time national health service dentists had been recruited since April 2004, contributing to a net increase of 1,100 dentists at the end of September 2005, according to figures supplied by the Dental Practice Board.

We also announced that 189 additional dental students had begun their studies at dental schools in the United Kingdom, 19 more than the 170 target. By 2009–10, there will be approximately 850 more undergraduates in training than in 2004–05.

Mental Illness

15. **James Brokenshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the availability of choice of therapies for people with mental illness. [30523]

Jane Kennedy: We are committed to modernising mental health services to provide patients with quick, easy access to high quality services and effective treatment and care, and to give people greater choice in the treatment and care they receive. Taken together, NHS and local authority expenditure on mental health has increased in real terms by almost £1.27 billion. This is a real increase in resources of over 26.6 per cent. in the period 1999–2000 to 2003–04.

We along with the National Institute for Mental Health in England are supporting local services in implementing our guidance called 'Organising and Delivering Psychological Therapies' in order to promote choice; and develop new ways of working.

Chlamydia Screening Programme

16. **Barbara Keeley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the National Chlamydia Screening Programme. [30524]

Caroline Flint: Chlamydia screening in England began in April 2003 in 10 areas and was extended to a further 16 areas in April 2004. The 26 programmes cover 25 per cent. of all primary care trusts and offers opportunistic screening to asymptomatic sexually active men and women under 25 years of age. National screening will begin in April 2006. We are currently on target for full implementation in 2007, as set out in the White Paper "Choosing Health: Making Healthier choices easier" published in 2004, copies of which are available in the Library.

21. **Linda Gilroy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to improve access to Chlamydia screening. [30529]

Caroline Flint: The National Chlamydia Screening Programme started in April 2003 in 10 areas and was extended to a further 16 areas in April 2004. We are on target for full implementation by 2007.

In addition to the screening programme, we have also contracted Boots to evaluate the potential of retail pharmacies as Chlamydia screening venues. Screening began on 14 November.

The key drivers of the project are wider and easier access to screening services in order to provide quick and easily available screening options.

Paddington Health Campus Report

19. **Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has read the independent report on "The Paddington Health Campus: The Lessons Learnt"; and if she will make a statement. [30527]

Mr. Byrne: This report was commissioned by North West London strategic health authority and is for the SHA to consider and respond to in the first instance. However, its conclusions largely concur with a joint Department of Health, Treasury and National Audit Office report into the project which was published last year and which has been acted upon by the Department.

Blindness/Visual Impairment (Rehabilitation Services)

22. **Mr. Hurd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the responsibilities of local authorities are in respect of the provision of rehabilitation services for blind and visually impaired people. [30530]

Mr. Byrne: It is for local authorities to determine how best to provide services to meet the needs of individuals in their populations, in the light of local priorities. This includes assessment and provision of appropriate support and rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people.

ME

23. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research her Department has commissioned on myalgic encephalomyelitis. [30531]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has commissioned a number of research projects related to chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgic encephalomyelitis and details of these are available on the National Research Register, which can be accessed through the Department's research and development website [at www.dh.gov.uk/research].

Primary Care Trusts

24. **Helen Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future role of primary care trusts. [30532]

Jane Kennedy: Following unprecedented levels of funding, the national health service has made huge improvements but we know there is more to do to ensure that patients get the services they need.

We need stronger primary care trusts with a more focused role to:

Design local health services that best meet the needs of their communities securing availability, quality and fairness for patients.

Ensure that the money is actually spent in the communities where there is greatest need thus supporting the Government's commitment to reducing health inequalities.

Be the custodian of taxpayers money working to ensure the NHS maximises the benefits of its resources.

Support the extension of practice based commissioning so that frontline clinicians who are closest to patients are able to plan and develop services for them.

Work closely with local government to ensure that patients and service users benefit from joined up services.

Nurses

25. **Mr. Jamie Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to extend the role of nurses. [30533]

Caroline Flint: We have developed new clinical roles like nurse consultants and modern matrons and community matrons. We have introduced initiatives such as prescribing rights for nurses. We have provided support for new advanced nursing roles in all settings and funded thousands of nurses to take part in leadership programmes.

Abortions

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of NHS-funded abortions was in each year since 1997. [25896]

Caroline Flint: The available information is shown in the following table.

Estimated cost[1], in millions, of national health service funded terminations (performed in the NHS and the independent sector) since 1997

	Estimate cost (£) million
1997–98	34.8
1998–99	42.9
1999–2000	47.0
2000–01	54.4
2001–02	61.6
2002–03	68.7
2003–04	74.6

[1] Total estimated cost based on the average NHS hospital cost for all years.

Alzheimer's Disease

Dr. Blackman-Woods: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence to publish its final guidance on the continued use of *(a)* donepezil, *(b)* rivastigmine and *(c)* galantamine to treat Alzheimer's disease. [20516]

Jane Kennedy: This is a matter for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Information about NICE's current work programme is available on the NICE's website at: www.nice.org.uk. I

understand that NICE's appraisal committee is due to meet later in December and NICE will conclude the appraisal in April 2006.

Anti-depressant Drugs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* number of prescription items and *(b)* prescription expenditure has been for anti-depressant drugs in each year since 1984; and what the percentage change was between (i) 1984 and 1994, (ii) 1994 and 2004 and (iii) 1984 and 2004. [22971]

Jane Kennedy: The number of anti-depressant medicines prescribed by the national health service in England between 1984 and 2004 and the cost of these items during this period is shown in table 1.

Table 1: NHS anti-depressant prescription medications in England 1984–2004: quantity and cost

	Number of anti-depressant medicines prescribed on the NHS in England	*Value of anti-depressant items prescribed on the NHS in England (£)*
1984	6,885,619	25,373,866
1985	6,769,247	25,981,683
1986	7,029,186	27,334,792
1987	7,176,740	30,084,435
1988	7,348,989	31,992,693
1989	7,666,176	35,358,676
1990	8,026,669	40,867,911
1991	8,954,500	54,046,476
1992	9,914,330	81,117,564
1993	10,776,690	98,829,813
1994	11,816,438	117,246,286
1995	13,227,137	146,832,856
1996	14,960,610	191,242,848
1997	16,822,563	239,120,545
1998	18,424,473	279,004,273
1999	20,108,130	315,269,246
2000	22,021,840	310,378,169
2001	24,342,713	341,660,880
2002	26,329,382	380,883,112
2003	27,687,990	395,178,028
2004	28,995,511	400,681,709

The percentage change, in prescription volumes and costs between 1984 and 1994, 1994 and 2004 and 1984 and 2004 is shown in table 2.

Table 2: NHS anti-depressant prescription medications in England: volume and cost percentage changes 1984–94; 1994–2004; and 1984–2004

	Percentage change	
Period	*NHS anti-depressant medications in England: volume growth change*	*NHS anti-depressant medications in England: cost change*
1984–94	71.6	362.1
1994–2004	145.4	241.7
1984–2004	321.1	1,479.1

Anti-tumour Necrosis Therapy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how anti-tumour necrosis therapy out-patients costs will be calculated under the payments by results scheme; and when procedures for purchasing anti-tumour necrosis therapy out-patient services will come into effect; [25549]

(2) how much money was spent on anti-tumour necrosis therapy in England in each of the last five years; [25550]

(3) what the total budget for anti-tumour necrosis factor therapy is for 2006–07 in England; [25551]

(4) how many patients have received anti-tumour necrosis factor therapy in England in each of the last five years; [25552]

(5) how many patients are waiting to commence anti-tumour necrosis factor therapy in England. [25553]

Mr. Byrne: Anti-tumour necrosis therapy is already commissioned at local level under arrangements that should cover the cost of patient attendances at outpatient clinics as well as any anti-tumour necrosis factor drugs (anti-TNF drugs). From 2006–07, payment by results will apply a national tariff to rheumatology out-patient clinics. The tariff will set the price for out-patient attendances and will exclude the additional cost of anti-TNF drugs, for which funding will continue to be negotiated locally. These arrangements are already operating in 2005–06 for national health service foundation trusts and other early implementers of payment by results.

The cost of prescriptions dispensed in the community for the three anti-TNF drugs is shown in the table.

Cost of prescriptions dispensed for anti-TNF drugs, 2000–04

	Cost (£)
2000	12,000
2001	198,000
2002	327,000
2003	833,000
2004	2,312,000

However, the main use for these drugs was in hospitals. An estimate for 2004 costs for anti-TNF drugs dispensed in hospitals, based on a large sample of hospitals, is £71,658,000.

Health bodies are obliged to fund, from general allocations, anti-TNF treatment for those with severe rheumatoid arthritis who meet the clinical guidelines set by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

The Department does not hold information on the number of people who have received anti-TNF treatments.

We do not collect information on waiting lists for specific treatments.

Audiology

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the roll-out of the newborn hearing screening programme. [24746]

Mr. Byrne: Overall, about 85 per cent. of newborn babies are now being screened by the newborn hearing screening programme. It is expected that all sites will be screening newborn babies for hearing loss by the end of December 2005.

Avian Influenza

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action she has taken to reassure consumers about the safety of chicken and turkey meat in the context of the avian influenza threat. [27105]

Caroline Flint: The Government have sought to ensure that the messages they put out about risks to consumers and the wider public posed by avian influenza are evidence-based and proportionate.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has advised that avian influenza does not pose a food safety risk for United Kingdom consumers and has made this available through its website. The FSA has also accepted all requests it has received to give television and radio interviews and has had its views well publicised in the media.

Child Health and Social Services

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the implementation of *(a)* the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, *(b)* Standard 8 of the Framework and *(c)* the autism exemplar chapter of the Framework. [28991]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services, published in 2004, is a 10-year programme intended to stimulate long term and sustained improvement in children's health.

Standard eight of the NSF relates to children who are disabled or who have complex needs. It requires that they receive co-ordinated, high-quality child and family-centred services that are based on assessed needs, which promote social inclusion and, where possible, which enable them and their families to live normal lives. Toward this end, the Department will shortly publish an exemplar on complex disability, which will be launched on 30 November at a conference to mark one year since the launch of the NSF. In addition, the Council for Disabled Children will be holding a workshop on 8 December, sponsored by the Department, which will look at what more central Government can do to help colleagues to implement standard eight.

Exemplars are not standards against which to measure progress. Rather, they are illustrations of policy in the form of a description of a patient's journey.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many secondary school-age children suffered from *(a)* high cholesterol levels, *(b)* heart failure and *(c)* diabetes in each year since 1995. [25186]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table. Patient counts are not available for years prior to 1997–98 and therefore not included.

Diagnosis of school-age children suffering from high cholesterol levels, heart failure and diabetes, England, 1995–96 to 2003–04

	(a) High cholesterol		*(b) Heart failure*		*(c) Diabetes*	
	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*	*Finished consultant episodes*	*Patient counts*	*Finished consultant episodes*	*Patient counts*
1995–96	61	—	84	—	3,598	—
1996–97	35	—	76	—	3,729	—
1997–98	59	41	63	46	4,110	2,495
1998–99	44	38	83	56	4,525	2,680
1999–2000	64	55	81	53	4,983	2,934
2000–01	70	54	94	60	5,237	3,158
2001–02	65	50	147	73	5,349	3,240
2002–03	78	66	121	75	5,947	3,507
2003–04	90	77	141	86	6,106	3,629

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether NHS organisations have implemented the guidance issued by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence on chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, which was published on 25 February 2004. [27546]

Mr. Byrne: Clinical guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) are reflected in the standards published by the Department, which provide a framework for continuous improvement in the overall quality of care people receive. Clinical guidelines are covered by the developmental standards, standards which the national health service is expected to achieve over time. The Healthcare Commission has responsibility for assessing progress towards achieving these standards.

Clinical Negligence Payments

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what clinical negligence payments were made by hospital trusts within the Cheshire and Mersey Strategic Health Authority in 2004 to 2005. [26372]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Clinical negligence payments made by national health service trusts in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area during 2004–05[1]

Trust	*Amount (£)*
5 Borough Partnership NHS Trust	52,863
Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust	1,013,764
Cardiothoracic Centre Liverpool NHS Trust	385,543
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	14,252
Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust	9,362
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1,696,840

Clinical negligence payments made by national health service trusts in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area during 2004-05[1]

Trust	*Amount (£)*
East Cheshire NHS Trust	4,970,088
Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	6,700,090
Mersey Care NHS Trust	157,420
Mersey Regional Ambulance Services NHS Trust	6,638
Mid Cheshire Hospitals Trust	1,218,475
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2,713,357
Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen Universit Hospitals NHS Trust	934,759
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust	966,097
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospital NHS Trust	1,188,190
Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery NHS Trust	519,724
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	5,028,241

[1] Data relate to the 2004-05 financial year as audited by the National Audit Office.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine

David Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on a full clinical assessment of the cost effectiveness of complementary and alternative medical therapies. [21420]

Jane Kennedy: There have been no formal discussions with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) about a full clinical assessment of the cost effectiveness of complementary and alternative medical therapies. However, NICE'S guidance on supportive and palliative care for cancer patients took the view that while there was little conclusive evidence of their effectiveness as a form of treatment, there was some evidence of their value to patients.

Departmental Expenditure (Child Care)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has spent on *(a)* child care and *(b)* child care vouchers for its staff in each of the last five years. [19724]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has a yearly budget allocation for a range of child care provision, including subsidised on-site play-scheme places, nursery and out-of-school allowances that are payable to eligible parents.

The total allocation is shown in the table.

£

	Amount allocated
2005-06	127,000
2004-05	220,000
2003-04	220,000
2002-03	270,000
2001-02	95,725

The Department does not currently offer child care vouchers to staff, but is currently reviewing its child care provision and is looking favourably at child care vouchers as part of a salary sacrifice scheme.

Doctors

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to ensure that doctors trained in the UK are not lost to other countries if they are unable to secure a training post. [25321]

Mr. Byrne: The number of medically qualified hospital and community health services doctors in training and equivalents has increased from 29,572 in 1997 to 40,844 in September 2004, an increase of 11,272 (38 per cent.). The number of general practitioner registrars has increased from 1,343 in 1997 to 2,481 in June 2005, an increase of 1,138 (88 per cent.).

Training opportunities arise each week and a number of junior doctors have long taken up training posts outside the United Kingdom. Any doctor in training who experiences difficulty in obtaining a placement should seek help from their postgraduate dean. Departmental Officials have been working closely with the deans to ensure that help and advice is available.

Eating Disorders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken by the Government to reduce the number of cases of eating disorders in young girls. [25895]

Caroline Flint: The issue of eating disorders among young people, especially young girls, is a serious problem. Anorexia in particular can have serious consequences for general health and has high rates of mortality.

In January 2004, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a guideline on the care of people with eating disorders. The guideline makes specific recommendations for the treatment of adolescents and young people in recognition of their unique needs. Some of the recommendations are:

Effective assessment of people with eating disorders, which includes co-ordination of care, the involvement of patients and their carers, providing good information, moral support and getting help early;

Involving family members, including siblings, in the treatment of children and adolescents with eating disorders. Interventions may include sharing of information, advice on behavioural management and facilitating communication;

Offering adolescents with bulimia cognitive behaviour therapy adapted as needed to suit their age, circumstances, level of development and including the family as appropriate; and

Young people are treated in age appropriate settings.

While each patient will have their own individual needs, the guideline gives clear recommendations on the type of treatments that are available and sets out a structured pathway of care. NICE have also published information for the public that explains the guideline and sets out what people with eating disorders can expect from the national health service.

There are opportunities to address healthy eating within the curriculum through science, design and technology and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Children learn about different types of food in the context of a balanced diet, nutrition, safety and hygiene. PSHE also offers scope for schools to explore how young people can access appropriate advice and support.

Equal Pay Claims

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the cost to each NHS trust of legal fees for defending equal pay claims has been in each year since 1997; [25804]

(2) how many of the loans from her Department to each NHS trust since 1997 to cover the costs of equal pay claims have been repaid; and what the timescale was for each such repayment; [25805]

(3) how much has been lent by her Department to each NHS trust to cover the costs of equal pay claims in each year since 1997; [25806]

(4) what the interest rate was on each loan lent by her Department to NHS trusts to cover the costs of equal pay claims since 1997. [25833]

Mr. Byrne: Information about the cost of equal pay claims and associated legal costs is not available centrally. The Department of Health has not made any loans to NHS trusts for the costs of equal pay claims.

General Practitioners

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio of men to women general practitioners is. [26470]

Mr. Byrne: The number of general practitioners, excluding returners and registrars, as at 30 September 2004 was 31,523. Of these, 19,288 were men and 12,235 were women—a ratio of 1:0.63.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* the total number of statins and *(b)* the number per 1,000 population was prescribed by general practitioner practices in Dacorum Primary Care Trust for the years (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [27981]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Total items prescribed the total number of patients and total number of statins items per1,000 population of Dacorum Primary Care Trust (PCT)

	Financial	
	2003–04	*2004–05*
Prescriber name	PCT Dacorum	PCT Dacorum
British National Formulary name	Statins	Statins
Total items	43,874	56,722
Total patients	149,955	149,852
Total number of Statin items per 1,000 population	292.6	378.5

Notes:

ePACT Data

This information was obtained from the prescribing analysis and cost tool (PACT) system, which covers prescriptions prescribed by general practitioner (GP) practices in England and dispensed in the community in the United Kingdom. For data at PCT level, prescriptions written by a GP practice located in a particular PCT but dispensed outside that PCT will be included in the PCT in which the GP practice is based. Prescriptions written in England but dispensed outside England are included.

Prescriptions written in hospitals or clinics that are dispensed in the community, prescriptions dispensed in hospitals and private prescriptions are not included in PACT data. It is important to note this as some BNF sections have a high proportion of prescriptions written in hospitals that are dispensed in the community. For example, BNF chapter 4, "Central Nervous System" has a fair proportion of items written in mental health clinics that are dispensed in the community—these prescriptions are not included in PACT data.

Healthcare Recruitment Agencies

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust has used healthcare recruitment agencies based outside the UK for the recruitment of healthcare professionals from developing countries since the Code of Practice was agreed; and if she will make a statement. [25922]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

The Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals identifies guiding principles to promote high standards in the recruitment and employment of healthcare professionals from overseas. It is also concerned with the protection of developing countries and seeks to prevent targeted recruitment from developing nations who are experiencing shortages of healthcare staff.

Health Protection Agency

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure was on the Health Protection Agency for 2004–05; and what the planned expenditure is for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 in (i) cash and (ii) real terms, including the reductions proposed in the NHS non-departmental body review. [30458]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Details of the expenditure of the Health Protection Agency (HPA) in 2004–05 are published in its annual report and accounts, which are available in the Library.

The budget for the HPA in 2005–06 is £134,300,000, which includes its planned expenditure. The indicative cash budget for the HPA in 2006–07 will be £137,926,000, which includes a 2.7 per cent. increase to allow for inflation.

The HPA has been asked to make efficiency savings of £4,000,000 in 2006–07, which it is intended will be recycled to HPA front line activities supporting the national health service.

Healthcare Commission

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidelines her Department has issued on how long the Healthcare Commission should take *(a)* to make a decision on whether to conduct an inquiry and *(b)* to hold an inquiry and produce a report following the death of a patient in NHS care; [20897]

(2) how many complaints the Healthcare Commission has received about the treatment of patients unable to communicate verbally in each year since its creation; [20901]

(3) how many requests the Healthcare Commission has received to conduct an inquiry into a patient death in hospital in each year since its creation; and how many of these requests have led to inquiries being launched. [20902]

Jane Kennedy: The Healthcare Commission was established by the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 and came into existence

on 1 April 2004. It is independent of Government. The Department does not issue guidelines on how the Healthcare Commission should operate.

Under section 52 of the 2003 Act, the Healthcare Commission has powers to conduct investigations into the provision of health care. The Healthcare Commission has published on its website its own criteria for deciding when it will investigate. Since the end of July 2004, the Healthcare Commission has also had responsibility for managing the second independent review stage of the national health service complaints system.

I understand from the Chairman of the Healthcare Commission that in the first year of its operation, it received 93 referrals which were considered against its criteria for investigation, resulting in a range of actions, including five formal investigations. Between 1 August 2004 and 1 August 2005, the Healthcare Commission also received 8,260 requests for independent review under the NHS complaints system; 3,799 reviews were completed in the same period. I understand that the Commission does not have information on what proportion of referrals relate to individual patient deaths in hospital. I also understand that the Healthcare Commission does not collect information centrally on complaints relating to patients who cannot communicate verbally. 13 per cent. of all cases received to date under the second stage of the NHS complaints system have contained an issue concerning communication.

Household Products (Health Effects)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research has been conducted into the impact upon *(a)* indoor air quality and *(b)* human health of the use of air fresheners; what advice has been given to the public relating to their use; and if she will make a statement. [27813]

Caroline Flint: The Department is aware of recent research by the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children team at the University of Bristol on the effect on health of the use of household products including air fresheners[1]. The results have been noted. However, it is important to be cautious about their interpretation until the results have been supported by other research.

The committee on the medical effects of air pollutants has published a document, "Guidance on the Effects on Health of Indoor Air Pollutants" on its website at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/comeap/PDFS/guidanceindoorairQualityDec04.pdf This contains a brief section on volatile organic compounds and on household products. It advises that ensuring good ventilation in homes is the best way to reduce exposure.

[1] Farrow *et al* (2003) Arch.Env.Health 58(10):633–641; Sherriff *et al* (2005) Thorax 60(1): 45–49.

Infection Control

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the optimum budget which should be used by an average-sized NHS trust to fund its cleanyourhands campaign; and what resources each NHS trust committed to infection control in the last period for which figures are available. [23031]

Jane Kennedy: National health service trusts have always paid for their own handrubs, but in preparation for cleanyourhands, new contracts for handrubs were developed by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency. As a result of these new contracts, significant cost savings have been realised. This has meant that in many cases, individual trusts' existing expenditure on alcohol handrubs has been reduced. Expenditure on infection control is decided locally and information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts have appointed a director of infection prevention and control; and how many directors of infection prevention and control are also their trust's *(a)* director of finance, *(b)* director of estates and facilities, *(c)* director of nursing and *(d)* non-executive director. [23032]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not held centrally.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the demand for critical care beds in the event of an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [20859]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Estimates of the impact of an influenza pandemic are based on the best available evidence. However, the number of people affected and the impact on the health care system will depend on the nature of the pandemic flu virus. The UK Health Department's Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan estimates the minimum number of excess hospitalisations, including those who may require intensive care, over the course of a pandemic to be 82,500 for the United Kingdom as a whole. The Department is currently working with the Intensive Care Society to estimate the likely impact of an influenza pandemic on critical care services in particular.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of NHS capacity in *(a)* critical care, *(b)* secondary care and *(c)* primary care to cope in the event of an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [22095]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Estimates of the impact of an influenza pandemic are based on the best available evidence. However, the number of people affected and the impact on the healthcare system will depend on the nature of the pandemic 'flu virus. The United Kingdom health departments' influenza pandemic contingency plan estimates the minimum number of excess hospitalisations, including those who will require intensive care, over the course of a pandemic to be 82,500 for the United Kingdom as a whole. The plan also contains estimates for the demand on primary care during an influenza pandemic. These are based on the best available assumptions. The Department is currently working with the Intensive Care Society and other key stakeholders to estimate the likely impact of an influenza pandemic on critical care services.

We have also provided operational guidance to the national health service to help inform its local planning for a possible influenza pandemic. The Department's routine winter preparations guidance also reinforced the requirement for local NHS to follow guidance from the Department on preparing for an influenza pandemic.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her contingency plan is in the event of an influenza pandemic if daily reports on stocks of antivirals show that supplies are getting low. [22096]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The United Kingdom's stockpile of antivirals is intended primarily to treat all patients who develop influenza given a clinical attack rate of 25 per cent. The stockpile will be carefully managed to ensure that it is used for the 25 per cent. of the population who are expected to become ill. The use of antiviral medicines will be closely monitored from the outset. However, the clinical attack rate will depend on the nature of the virus. Should the attack rate prove higher than expected, or a pandemic strike before the stockpile is fully established, antivirals may need to be prioritised. The published antiviral strategy allows for prioritisation to treat those front line health staff at higher risk due to exposure and the groups identified as being in greatest clinical need. Further advice will be provided during the pandemic by the UK national influenza pandemic committee on the basis of emerging information.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to develop a recovery plan for the period after a possible influenza pandemic. [22124]

Ms Rosie Winterton: "The UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan" recognises that returning to normal business after a pandemic may take some time for all organisations. We will encourage business and service sectors to consider recovery in their planning for a possible influenza pandemic.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what factors underlay the assumption of the number of people likely to be affected by an influenza pandemic in her Department's contingency plan; and what preparation is being made for a worst case scenario. [22196]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The base scenario in the United Kingdom influenza pandemic contingency plan assumes that 25 per cent. of the population would have clinical symptoms of pandemic 'flu. This is based on the best available evidence, including considerations of influenza pandemics in the 20th century and independent experts. However, there are many uncertainties and the number of people affected and the impact on the health care system will depend on the nature of the pandemic 'flu virus. That is why the plan outlines scenarios with different numbers of people affected.

The base scenario also considers that at least 0.37 per cent. of those ill will die from pandemic influenza or complications. This is based on the proportion seen in seasonal flu and the 1957 pandemic. Scenarios with a case fatality rate of up to 2.5 per cent. (greater than the pandemic of 1918–19) are also considered in the plan. Local planners are encouraged to consider the range of fatality rates when drawing up their local contingency plans.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which of the steps listed in Annex G of her Department's Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan her Department plans to take; and what the timetable is for those actions. [27047]

Caroline Flint: On 20 October 2005, the Chief Medical Officer, announced that the Department is inviting manufacturers to tender for a contract to supply pandemic flu vaccine once the pandemic strain is known. The proposal to purchase in advance the capacity needed to make pandemic flu vaccine will make sure that an effective vaccine is available for use in the United Kingdom as early as possible after a flu pandemic starts. The UK will need approximately 120 million doses to be available as soon as possible.

We are working closely with other countries, the World Health Organization, and the European Commission and are in regular dialogue with manufacturers to ensure that a vaccine can be developed as quickly as possible once a pandemic influenza strain emerges. This will allow us to put arrangements in place to ensure production of vaccine for the UK population.

We are finalising a contract for the purchase of a two to three million doses of vaccine against the H5N1 strain currently circulating in South East Asia. This vaccine can be used for research and for possible use for healthcare workers in an emergency, and may provide some limited protection against a pandemic emerging from that source. We hope to award this contract shortly.

We are constantly reviewing all issues identified in annex G of the plan and will implement specific measures when we consider it to be necessary.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 November to Question reference 21455, how much central contingency stock of influenza vaccine her Department holds; how many people this would treat; and if she will make a statement. [28320]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The Department has purchased 400,000 doses of flu vaccine. This is sufficient to treat 400,000 adults.

Intermediate Care Beds

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intermediate care beds there were in England in each of the last six years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [28109]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* As at 31 March 2005, there were 29,500 places benefiting over 360,000 people. The NHS Plan aimed for an extra 6,700 places for intermediate care by March 2005; 5,000 residential and 1,700 non-residential places. The national health service has delivered an extra 18,095 places; 270 per cent. more than the combined target. The available data are shown in the table.

Number of intermediate care beds 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	Places in non-residential IC schemes	Intermediate Care beds	People using Intermediate Care
1999–2000	7,149	4,242	132,447
2000–01	[1]	[1]	[1]
2001–02	13,878	7,021	246,034
2002–03	19,078	7,493	284,365
2003–04	17,339	8,697	333,821
2004–05	20,558	8,928	362,664

[1] Information not collected

Source:
Statistical Summary to Chief Executive's Report to the NHS (13 May 2005)

MRSA

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2715W, on MRSA, when she expects to publish the results of the evaluation of the pilot. [20750]

Jane Kennedy: We do not plan to prepare a formal report on the pilot. Enhanced surveillance of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemias was rolled out to all trusts on 1 October 2005 on the basis of positive feedback from the Health Protection Agency.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent action the Government have taken to reduce the number of cases of MRSA in hospitals. [25905]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has established a wide ranging programme of mutually reinforcing activities to support our target to halve methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) blood stream infections *(bacteraemias)* by March 2008.

A recent key initiative in June 2005 was the launch of "Saving Lives", which brings many of the programme's activities together to provide trusts with a tool to implement best practice and reduce infection rates. Other recent projects include the launch in September 2005 of new e-learning tools for all national health service staff and in October, enhancement of the MRSA surveillance system.

NICE Guidance

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimates have been made by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) of *(a)* the gross costs of implementing NICE guidance and *(b)* the number of patients benefiting from such implementation, broken down by disease category. [23004]

Jane Kennedy: This is a matter for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

The Department publishes an assessment of the cost of implementing NICE's guidance in the public expenditure inquiry. In 2005, the total cost of implementing NICE's guidance to date was estimated to be £836 million.

The Department estimates that some tens of thousands of patients have benefited from NICE's guidance.

Parliamentary Questions

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Vale of York on 25 October 2005, ref 22789; and what representations she has received on the mammogram reading at St Margaret's Hospital, Epping. [27065]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 389W. Since the hon. Member's question, I have received one representation on the reading of mammograms at St. Margaret's hospital in Epping.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to disseminate information on toxicological impacts of pesticides on human beings; and what monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place. [25499]

Caroline Flint: The Department works closely with other Government Departments and agencies on matters related to the toxicological impacts of pesticides on humans. Information on toxicological impacts of pesticides is widely available to the public. Evaluation documents are published on the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) website, and such information is published in the ACP annual report. Information is also available from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs' pesticides safety directorate (PSD) carries out a yearly survey into all human health incidents reported to approvals holders for amateur and professional pesticide products by users. The results of this survey are published on the PSD website at www.pesticides.gov.uk/home.asp. Any potential exposures to pesticides should be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), who will investigate complaints involving ill health arising because of a work activity. Once an investigation is complete, details of investigated cases are sent for examination to the HSE's Pesticides Incident Appraisal Panel (PIAP). PIAP reviews all the reports and publishes its conclusions in an annual report that is reviewed by the ACP. The Department of Health has an assessor on the ACP.

Following recommendations of the recent report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution on "Crop spraying and the health of residents and bystanders" the Government will be reviewing these arrangements.

Podiatry

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many podiatry services there are in England broken down by *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* hospital setting. [26855]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally. However, all primary care trusts will commission these services to meet the needs of their local population.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to raise awareness of the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test for prostate cancer among men; and how many PSA tests have been carried out in each year since 1997. [26013]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The NHS Prostate Cancer Programme, launched in September 2000, set out the Government's commitment to improve early detection of prostate cancer. The prostate cancer risk management programme (PCRMP) has been set up to ensure that all men considering a test for prostate cancer are given information on the benefits, limitations and risks associated with having a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test.

Raising public awareness of prostate cancer is one of the key challenges for the future. We want men to know what their prostate is, what it does and what can go wrong with it. However we have to raise public awareness in a responsible way so as not to cause undue anxiety and worry. Thanks to the work of the prostate cancer advisory group we now have, for the first time, a definitive set of key messages for the general public about the prostate gland, including prostate cancer. The key messages have been agreed by 20 organisations, including charities, patient groups and professional bodies as well as the Department.

On 31 October, we announced a joint venture to pilot raising awareness of the prostate using the key messages in a primary care trust area. The effectiveness of the intervention will be fully evaluated, along with the impact on local health services. £100,000 is being provided by the Government, with the remaining £50,000 being provided by signatories to the prostate cancer charter for action. The pilot is due to begin in spring 2006.

We have provided funding for the following organisations to increase public awareness of prostate cancer:

In 2003–04, we provided £30,000 to the men's health forum to help fund their publication "the Men and Cancer Manual";

We have provided £135,000 to the Prostate Cancer Charity to increase available information about prostate cancer;

We are providing £105,000 to the Prostate Cancer Charity to improve awareness of the risks and symptoms of prostate cancer in African and Afro-Caribbean men in Britain;

We have worked with the prostate cancer charter for action to develop UK Prostate Link, a unique information source for men with prostate cancer, their families and health professionals. UK Prostate Link was launched on 3 November 2005, and is available at: http://prostate-link.org.uk/. £100,000 is being provided by the Government, with the remaining £50,000 being provided by signatories to the prostate cancer charter for action.

The number of PSA tests carried out each year is not collected centrally. However, research funded by the Department and carried out by the cancer screening evaluation unit, Institute of Cancer Research, has shown that the overall rate of PSA testing increased significantly from 1999 to 2002. The number of PSA requests submitted by participating laboratories rose by 42 per cent.

Scans (Poole)

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the waiting time is for *(a)* an urgent scan and *(b)* a non-urgent scan at Poole NHS Trust; [29961]

(2) what the average waiting time is for *(a)* an urgent scan and *(b)* a non-urgent scan in each NHS hospital in England. [29962]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Waiting time data for diagnostic scans are not currently collected centrally. A new diagnostic data collection will be rolled out nationally from January 2006 to support delivery of the 2008 18-week target. This will not, however, enable a distinction between waiting times for urgent and non-urgent scans to be made.

School Nurses

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to recruit school nurses. [24253]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is committed to providing new funding so that by 2010, every primary care trust, working with children's trusts and local authorities, will be resourced to have at least one full-time, year-round, qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school.

The Department understands that school nurses have an important and central role to play in tackling health issues among children and younger people, such as obesity, exercise, smoking prevention and cessation and sexual and emotional health.

The Chief Nursing Officer is leading the development and promotion of a new modern role for school nurses, and many school nurses are already modernising their roles and playing a key role in initiatives such as healthy schools, and preventing teenage pregnancy. The NHS Improvement Plan and the nursing strategy "Making a Difference' also point towards an expanded role for school nurses, and a three-year school nurse development programme is currently being updated to ensure school nurses remain a dynamic workforce who are able to contribute to good outcomes for children and young people.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurses there are in England. [25656]

Mr. Byrne: As at 30 September 2004, there were 2,409 qualified nurses working in school nursing employed in the national health service in England.

Sign Language

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much of her Department's budget in 2005–06 is dedicated to funding training in sign language and lip reading; [26824]

(2) what measures she is taking to ensure that the NHS delivers specialist support to those who became severely or profoundly deaf after the age of 16 years. [26847]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally.

It is the responsibility of the national health service and local authorities to determine how best to provide services for people with hearing impairments. This includes resource allocation for training staff in appropriate means of communication and specialist support services.

Social Care Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will commission research on the cost-effectiveness of providing preventative social care services. [23099]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's partnerships for older people projects initiative is making available ring-fenced funding of £20 million in 2006–07 and £40 million in 2007–08 to council-led partnerships to establish and test innovative approaches to preventative social and healthcare services. These will be subject to comprehensive evaluation at a local and national level and will become operational on 1 May 2006. The national evaluation will start at the same time as the partnerships pilots and will run for two and half years. Its findings will be integral to the Government's aim of developing an evidence base to support preventative approaches to care for older people.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she expects there will be further ward closures at Southport and Ormskirk hospital trust sites in the next 12 months. [26585]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for the Southport and Ormskirk hospital national health service trust to determine in partnership with local stakeholders.

Sudan One

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the scientific studies which informed her Department's decision to remove Sudan One from the market. [29213]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* Sudan One is an illegal substance that is not permitted to be used in food. Under the General Food Law (EC Regulation 178/2002) the food industry has a legal responsibility to withdraw and recall all products known to be contaminated with such substances and to inform consumers.

The decision to recall products containing the dye Sudan One from the market was informed by a risk assessment agreed by the chairs of the independent expert Committees on Toxicity, Mutagenicity and Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment.

The risk assessment concluded that, based on the available data, it was prudent to assume that Sudan One is a genotoxic carcinogen. The risk assessment, including a list of the scientific studies on which it is based, was published in the 2003 annual report for the three committees.

Your Health, Your Care, Your Say

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many members of the public from the Hemel Hempstead area have been selected to take part in the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation exercise. [25750]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Regional events were held in Gateshead, Leicester, London and Plymouth and a citizen's summit was held in Birmingham. None of the participants selected were from Hemel Hempstead.

On 4 November, 147 feedback forms had been received from local consultation events. In addition, over 18,000 on-line questionnaires had been completed and approximately 15,500 hard copies of the questionnaires had been returned. It is possible that participants from Hemel Hempstead may have taken part in these local events or completed the on-line or hard copy form of the questionnaire.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Active People Survey

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much *(a)* statutory funding and *(b)* National Lottery funding Sport England plans to spend on the Active People survey; and if she will make a statement. [21574]

Mr. Caborn *[pursuant to the reply, 31 October 2005, Official Report, c. 525W]:* I regret that my previous answer on how the costs of the Active People survey will be met was incorrect. It should read as follows:

> The £2 million annual cost over three years of the Active People survey will be apportioned by approximately *(a)* £1.1 million of Exchequer funding and *(b)* £0.9 million of Sport England Lottery funding. Sport England will review the apportionment annually.

Arts Council England

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which black artistic *(a)* companies, *(b)* projects and *(c)* individuals received Arts Council England funding for theatre in 2004–05. [26837]

Mr. Lammy: The table supplied by Arts Council England provides a breakdown of the information requested.

Regularly funded organisation funding for BME led organisations 2004–05

	£
Emma Wolukau Wanambwa Ms	16,000
Francesca Beard	16,000
Kali Theatre Company	131,500
Nitro	230,000
Talawa Theatre Company	463,989
Tamasha Theatre Company	255,625
Tara Arts Croup Ltd	333,125
Theatre Royal Stratford East	768,493
Tiata Fahodzi	131,500
Yellow Earth Theatre	131,500
Peshkar Productions	47,500
Rasa Productions	30,000
Diversity NTCs	60,000
Black Arts Development Project	47,500
Total	2,662,732

Regularly funded organisation funding for BME led organisations 2004–05

	£
Funding for strategic initiatives	
Black Regional Initiative in Theatre	310,000
Eclipse Theatre	110,000
Total	420,000
Grants for the arts BME individuals	
Individuals	297,557
Organisations	18,756
Touring	70,939
Total	387,252
Grants for the arts BME Organisations	
Organisations	514,334
Touring	166,515
Total	680,849
Other regularly funded organisations that are BME focussed	
Arcola	32,500
Arts Depot	32,500
Croydon Clocktower	32,500
Greenwich and Lewisham Young Peoples Theatre	13,527
Hackney Empire Ltd	253,305
New Peckham Varieties	48,000
Oval House Theatre	245,000
Tricycle Theatre Company	648,978
Total	1,306,310
Total	5,457,143

BBC Licence Fee

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many complaints have been received regarding the BBC's latest proposals to increase the licence fee; and if she will make a statement. [25873]

James Purnell: My Department regularly receives correspondence relating to the television licence fee. Since the BBC's announcement on 11 October 2005 we have received approximately 60 items of correspondence regarding the BBC's own assessment of its future funding needs. The Government are currently conducting a review of BBC funding to determine the future level of the licence fee and will make an announcement in due course.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what representations the Government have received from the BBC requesting that the application of the BBC television licence fee be extended to premises which do not have a television but which have access to the internet; [27597]

(2) what consideration the Government have given to extending the application of the BBC television licence fee to premises which do not have a television but which have access to the internet. [27598]

James Purnell: The Government have received no such representations from the BBC. However, the BBC, as television licensing authority, considers that the current definition of a television receiver in the licence fee regulations already extends to a PC that is used to watch television programme services over the internet, if they are received at the same time or virtually the same time as they are received elsewhere by conventional means.

The Government have no plans for any changes to the current arrangements but, as indicated in the BBC Charter Review Green Paper published in March 2005, believes that changes to the existing funding model might have to be considered if in future large numbers of people are downloading audio-visual content from the internet and watching it on their computers or mobile phones, rather than using traditional TV services.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people have black and white television licences. [27040]

James Purnell: As of March 2005, there were 58,000 black and white television licences in force.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the additional cost to the public purse would be of reducing the age at which a free television licence can be obtained to 65 years. [29963]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The estimated additional cost of extending free television licences to all households with a person aged 65 or over would be £443 million a year, based on the current licence fee level.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many television licences have been issued in each constituency in Northern Ireland in each year since 2001. [30193]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer the television licensing system as agents for the BBC, do not record the number of licences issued by constituency. Data by nation and region are estimated from United Kingdom figures and is available only for the last four years. The estimated number of licences issued in Northern Ireland in each of the last four years are as follows:

Year ending 31 March	*Number of licences issued*
2005	585,137
2004	566,739
2003	546,429
2002	525,812

BBC/Commercial Radio

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many written representations her Department has received since 1 October from hon. Members concerning commercial radio and the review of the BBC Charter. [30454]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Since 1 October, my Department has received 27 letters from hon. Members concerning commercial radio and the review of the BBC Charter.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many contracts were signed by her Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05 for direct mail; and what the value was in each case. [27674]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS has not placed any contracts for direct mail in either; *(a)* 2005–06 or *(b)* 2004–05.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the 10 highest-paid employees in her Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27430]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is published annually in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Resource Accounts. The most recently published accounts for 2004–05 were laid before the House of Commons on 19 October 2005 and copies placed in the Libraries of the House.

Digital Television

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that *(a)* disabled and *(b)* elderly viewers will be able to meet the costs of the television switchover from analogue to digital. [26900]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State plans for a support scheme to provide help with equipment and installation and follow-up support for people aged 75 years and over and people with significant disabilities.

Assistance will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one TV set and the relevant support to install and use the equipment. The help will be available free of charge for those within the eligible groups on low incomes, and at a modest fee for others. Further details of how the scheme will operate in practice are being developed and will be set out in due course.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her most recent estimate is of the date by which households across Coventry, South constituency will be able to receive digital terrestrial broadcasts. [29800]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has confirmed the regional timetable for digital switchover; it will take place between 2008 and 2012 by ITV region in the following order:

	ITV region
2008	Border
2009	West Country, HTV Wales, Granada
2010	HTV West, Grampian, Scottish Television
2011	Yorkshire, Anglia, Central
2012	Meridian, Carlton/LWT (London), Tyne Tees, Ulster

Note:
Further details can be found at www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk

Digital switchover will enable coverage for digital terrestrial television to reach the same level as that of the current analogue signals. It will take place in the Coventry South constituency (central region) in 2011.

Free Television Licences

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people over 75 years in Paisley and Renfrewshire, North constituency receive free television licences. [28964]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Paisley and Renfrewshire, North constituency in 2004–05 was 2,960, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Licence Fee-funded Programmes

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to ensure that all programmes funded through the BBC licence fee are made available free of charge only to UK citizens. [30616]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Government has no plans to take such steps. We do not believe it is practicable or desirable to make British citizenship a criterion for reception of BBC programmes.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many air miles were accrued through departmental ministerial travel in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17330]

Tessa Jowell: I have accrued 49,908 air miles from Ministerial travel in 2004–05.

No air miles were accrued by other Ministers.

Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers. Guidance for Ministers on the use of air miles is set out in the Ministerial Code. The guidance makes clear that air miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. However, if it is impracticable to use the benefits for Government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity of these is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

Similar rules are in place for officials.

My air miles were collected in order that they will go towards helping young athletes with their travel costs.

Ministerial Visits

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many times she has visited *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire in her official capacity in the last 12 months; and what the purpose was of each visit. [29921]

Tessa Jowell: During the last 12 months I have not visited Dacorum but have visited Hertfordshire twice. Details are in the following table.

	Venue	Purpose
25 June 2005	Hockerill anglo-European College, Bishops Stortford	Speech to school leavers
20 October 2005	Richard Hale School, Hertford	To view the school sports facilities

National Lottery

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what lottery funding is available for grass root sports clubs in the west midlands region. [29801]

Mr. Caborn: The following amounts of lottery money have been made available to grass root sports clubs in the West Midlands region in this financial year: £3,000,000 from the Community Investment Fund; £500,000 for the Football Foundation and £400,000 through the Awards for All scheme. Active England, which funds a range of projects benefiting grass root sports clubs, will also have invested £10,100,000 in the West Midlands region over the period 2002–03 to 2005–06.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the value has been to date of national lottery grant applications made by organisations in Southend-on-Sea; how many lottery grant applications have been made by organisations in Southend-on-Sea; and how many lottery grant applications in Southend-on-Sea have been approved. [30070]

Mr. Caborn: This Department has never collected comprehensive information on either the number or value of applications for lottery grants received by the distributing bodies.

Since the start of the lottery there have been 330 awards made in Southend-on-Sea borough council area. This information is derived from the Department's lottery award database, searchable at www.lottery.culture.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the lottery distributors.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been paid out in grants from lottery funds to organisations in Southend-on-Sea *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the Essex total. [30071]

Mr. Caborn: Since the start of the lottery, £12.4 million of lottery money has been awarded in the Southend-on-Sea borough council area. This is 5.2 per cent. of the total awarded in Essex (£237.9 million). It is not possible to provide a geographical breakdown of lottery payments.

This information is derived from the Department's lottery award database, searchable at www.lottery.culture.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the lottery distributors.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* lottery bids have been submitted by and *(b)* grants have been awarded to organisations in each of the six constituencies in Gloucestershire in each year for which figures are available; and what the size of the grant was in each case. [31087]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not hold information on Lottery applications. There have been almost 2,000 awards in the six parliamentary constituencies in Gloucestershire. The number, and total value, of awards in each constituency in each year are given in the following tables. The information is derived from the Lottery Awards Database, which uses information supplied by the lottery distributors.

	Cheltenham		Cotswold		Forest of Dean	
	Number	Total value (£)	Number	Total value (£)	Number	Total value (£)
1995	4	208,717	10	358,220	6	531,153
1996	10	1,451,193	13	10,430,926	13	1,227,077
1997	22	1,004,365	43	1,256,776	48	1,397,153
1998	9	852,942	12	1,098,058	23	1,175,147
1999	36	3,625,952	44	832,392	45	1,088,138
2000	20	7,438,498	43	4,764,487	53	1,134,327
2001	17	1,732,959	28	2,267,738	45	2,023,991
2002	33	3,979,000	33	1,234,659	36	401,110
2003	28	1,197,496	34	1,304,514	25	771,335
2004	23	847,168	51	756,040	49	508,373
2005[1]	30	394,628	34	738,345	40	585,507

[1] To date.

	Gloucester		Stroud		Tewkesbury	
	Number	Total value (£)	Number	Total value (£)	Number	Total value (£)
1995	10	651,835	10	3,885,571	2	78,070
1996	24	2,376,440	15	1,663,932	6	250,606
1997	34	2,283,390	47	2,764,938	25	393,461
1998	14	11,793,132	22	600,462	13	181,060
1999	34	4,026,720	42	478,857	21	992,878
2000	48	3,959,910	41	239,452	34	385,633
2001	50	5,655,644	32	144,160	18	602,663
2002	53	2,081,479	33	414,524	25	433,676
2003	46	2,048,119	26	579,144	16	1,441,736
2004	46	1,188,690	48	12,614,485	33	629,905
2005[1]	50	1,941,306	43	442,960	32	255,072

[1] To date.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list those of her Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish their response to advice from. [20107]

Mr. Lammy: The Government are not required to consult prior to legislative proposals or to publish their response to advice in respect of any of the advisory non-departmental public bodies for which the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has responsibility.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department have a statutory base; which *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each instance. [20108]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has a statutory responsibility to publish and lay before Parliament an annual report on the operation of the Treasure Act, and this includes information which arises from recommendations made by the Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC). However, the committee does not have a statutory base or statutory requirement to publish its advice to Government.

There is no statutory base or statutory requirement to publish advice to Government, publish an annual report or to lay an annual report before Parliament, for any of the other advisory non-departmental public bodies for which the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has responsibility.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20109]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows.

Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites (ACHWS)

English Heritage, which provides administrative support to the Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites (ACHWS), compiles a register of members' interests in relation to the ACHWS which is available to the public on request. The agendas and minutes of ACHWS meetings are not published but are available on request. The intention is to publish them on the internet in future.

ACHWS do not hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercises or conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection

The Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection publishes abridged versions of minutes. These can be found at www.gac.culture.gov.uk. The Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection do not hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercises, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Advisory Council on Libraries

The Advisory Council on Libraries (ACL) publishes a briefing report (summary of the minutes of meetings) on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's website.

ACL do not hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercises, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Casino Advisory Panel

The Casino Advisory Panel is still considering how it will go about making its recommendations to the Secretary of State. However, it will be expected to consult as widely as possible in formulating its recommendations—this is likely to include the conducting of public consultation exercises and consultation exercises with outside commercial interests.

The panel will make available a register of members' interests on request and plans to publish its meeting agenda and minutes. There is no statutory requirement for the panel to do any of these tasks.

Legal Deposit Advisory Panel

The Legal Deposit Advisory Panel conducts consultation exercises with outside commercial interests. A register of members' interests is not published; however, there is a register which is open to the public (who can call the Department and request to view it).

The panel has only held one meeting so far and the minutes of the meeting have not been published. It is considering publishing summarised minutes on the DCMS website but has not agreed this with the chair of the panel yet. The panel do not hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercises, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art

A register of Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art (RCEWA) members' interests is held by its secretariat and details can be obtained from the secretariat at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. Minutes of RCEWA policy discussions and case hearings held since 1 January 2005 are published on the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's website.

RCEWA do not hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercises, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests or publish agendas for its meetings. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Spoliation Advisory Panel

The Spoliation Advisory Panel does not hold public meetings or conduct public consultation exercises or consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, though it does consult individuals and organisations as part of its evidence gathering.

It does not publish a register of members' interests, agendas for meetings or minutes of meetings. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Treasure Valuation Committee (TVC)

The Treasure Valuation Committee has in the past accepted requests for non- members to attend its meetings. There is no statutory requirement to publish the minutes of the meeting, but it is part of the DCMS publication scheme that a record of each meeting should be published on the DCMS website.

TVC do not conduct public consultation exercises, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests or publish agendas for meetings. There is no statutory requirement to perform any of the functions outlined in this question.

Olympic Delivery Authority

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who was involved in setting the *(a)* person specification and *(b)* job description for the job of chief executive of the Olympic Delivery Authority. [25489]

Tessa Jowell: The person specification and job description for the chief executive of the Olympic Delivery Authority were agreed by me following consultation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Greater London authority, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and the London boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets. In addition to this specific consultation, more general consultation has also taken place with the organisers of previous games.

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the budget of the Nations and Regions Group for the London 2012 Olympics is; and how *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Kent will be dealt with by the Group. [25628]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The Nations and Regions Group met on 4 November to discuss how best to co-ordinate UK-wide interests in staging the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and will meet again early next year to confirm its remit and membership. Any budgetary requirements would need to be considered as part of those discussions.

Each English region has, or is putting place, a regional group responsible for taking work forward and reporting to the Regions and Nations Group. They will include representatives from Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), Regional Sports Boards and other relevant stakeholders. Under this arrangement, Kent would be dealt with through the South East Group, and Essex through the East of England Group.

The RDAs will of course play a vital role in this work, and we will write to them shortly to ask them to develop plans to maximise business and development opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics in their region.

Among other areas of potential benefit they will wish to consider is the opportunity to host preparation and holding camps for overseas teams. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and the British Olympic Association (BOA), will develop a Pre-Training Guide by 2008, which will include details of facilities appropriate for use as preparation or training camps. They will work closely with regional representatives to maximise opportunities across the UK.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to appoint representatives at a regional level to ensure that each region in the United Kingdom has access to advice on making the most of business and development opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics. [25650]

Tessa Jowell: The Nations and Region Group, chaired by Charles Allen, met on 4 November to discuss ways to co-ordinate UK wide interests in staging the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Group will meet again early next year to confirm its remit and membership.

In the meantime, each of the English Regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have established, or are putting in place, regional working groups tasked with taking work forward. Regional groups will involve the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and appropriate representatives from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The RDAs will of course play a vital role, and we will write to them shortly to ask them to develop plans to maximise business arid development opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics in their region.

Among other areas of potential benefit they will wish to consider is the opportunity to host preparation and holding camps for overseas teams. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and the British Olympic Association (BOA), will develop a Pre-Training Guide by 2008, which will include details of facilities appropriate for use as preparation or training camps. They will work closely with regional representatives to maximise opportunities across the UK.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what criteria *(a)* the London Development Agency and *(b)* Transport for London will use to decide which companies will be awarded contracts in relation to the requirements of the Olympic Park; and whether British companies will be given (i) preference and (ii) assistance by the Government when bidding for those contracts. [25707]

Tessa Jowell: The London Development Agency (LDA) and Transport for London are only letting critical contracts in advance of the establishment of the

Olympic Delivery Authority. The contracts will be let on the basis of a number of objective criteria, including cost, quality and capacity to deliver.

The interim Olympic Delivery Authority (interim ODA) is preparing a draft procurement strategy addressing the key criteria that need to be defined to ensure a successful project. The initial draft is expected to be published in December. The interim ODA has already published 'Procurement Principles' setting out its commitment to sustainability, design quality, local benefits, regeneration, legacy use and best value for money.

In accordance with European Union procurement regulation, no preference can be given to UK companies, but the Government will work with the LDA and other public agencies to ensure that UK companies can compete effectively for these contracts and that UK people have the best possible chance of seeing the thousands of jobs that will be created.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to *(a)* meet officials in charge of delivering previous Olympic games and *(b)* visit (i) Beijing, (ii) Athens, (iii) Atlanta, (iv) Barcelona, (v) Seoul, (vi) Los Angeles, (vii) Moscow and (viii) Montreal. [25709]

Tessa Jowell: During the bid phase, the Minister for Sport and Tourism and I visited previous host cities—specifically Athens, Sydney, Barcelona and Beijing.

We drew heavily on the experience of the Sydney games in developing the bid and will continue to draw on the experience of previous host cities as we move forward to hosting the games.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the evidence from the Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on 1 November, which voting members of the British Olympic Association were contacted by *(a)* Sport England and *(b)* the English Institute of Sport in connection with the recent election of the new Chairman of the British Olympic Association. [27642]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* I would refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 605W, where I confirmed that no member of Sport England has discussed the election to the Chairmanship of the British Olympic Association (BOA) with either candidates for the post, potential candidates for the post nor voting members of the BOA.

The identity of the NOC member referred to in my answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 157W, is Mr. Graham Bell, the representative of Snowsport Great Britain. I understand that the Chair of the English Institute of Sport (EIS) contacted him to establish whether he was prepared to take a call from a prospective candidate and that he communicated with both in his capacity as a personal friend, and not in his capacity as EIS chair. I understand that at no stage was any attempt made to influence the election of the new chair of the BOA.

Olympic Lottery

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what Lottery funding is available for grass root sports clubs; and what assessment she has made of the effect on grass root sports clubs of the Olympic funding arrangements. [27352]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* Information on the Lottery funding available for grass roots sports clubs in England is provided in the table. Information on the Lottery funding available for grass roots sports clubs in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales can be obtained from the Scottish Executive, the Northern Ireland Office and the National Assembly for Wales.

Sport England's business Plan for the next four years identifies a number of Lottery programs that are available to Grass Roots sports clubs either directly or through the National Governing Bodies. The total amount of Lottery funding into those programs amounts to £440.9 million and comprises:

	£
Football Youth Development Project	13,112
Safer Sports Grounds	1,373
UK Athletics	20,000
Community Athletics Refurbishment Program	4,289
National Governing Bodies (Whole Sport Plans)	137,899
Active Communities Development Fund	6,093
Sport Action Zones	2,878
Awards for All	26,400
Community Capital Projects	61,958
Community Investment Fund—Active England	101,682
Community Investment Fund—Open Interventions	65,246
Total (£ million)	440.9

We have been quite clear since launching our Olympic bid three years ago that Lottery proceeds would form a key part of the public funding package. We have allowed for up to £1.5 billion to be raised in this way, some of which will be raised by new Lottery games solely for this purpose. We expect the non-Olympic good causes to receive up to 5 per cent. less in income, as a result of sales diversion, over the eight-year period from 2005 to 2013. In addition, up to £410 million will be redirected from the proceeds of non-Olympic Lottery games after 2009.

Olympic Lottery Games

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the *(a)* income raised by and *(b)* popularity of the first Olympic scratchcard. [26430]

Tessa Jowell: Camelot Group plc has informed us that the Go for Gold scratchcard has been the fastest selling £1 scratchcard of 60 such cards launched since November 2002. Camelot considers that the income raised to date is in line with its estimates for Olympic lottery sales in the initial stages of what is a seven-year plan to raise £750 million towards our overall Olympics funding package.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the new Olympic scratchcard on other lottery games. [26475]

Tessa Jowell: It is too early to make an accurate assessment of the impact of the new Go for Gold scratchcard on other national lottery games. Our long-term aim is to grow lottery sales overall—with a view to maximising returns to the good causes from both national lottery and Olympic lottery games. That aim is shared with the National Lottery Commission (the lottery regulator) and is subject to our other, shared overriding statutory duties, namely to ensure that the national lottery is run with due propriety and that the interests of all players are protected.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department has undertaken an analysis of sales of the new Olympic scratchcard by *(a)* geographical region and *(b)* age. [26474]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* My Department has not undertaken any specific analysis of sales by either region or age of players. Such matters are for the operator, Camelot Group plc, to consider at an appropriate time, if it believes that they would help it maximise income for the Olympics good cause. However, I am aware that the Go for Gold scratchcard has been very widely distributed across the UK and that initial sales have been very good.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many calls were made from call centres in her Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment she has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28175]

Mr. Lammy: My Department does not operate any call centres.

Tourism

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps are being taken *(a)* to encourage tourism and *(b)* to improve tourist facilities in (i) Havering and (ii) Essex. [25887]

James Purnell: My Department allocates £50 million grant in aid to VisitBritain each year to market Britain overseas and England domestically. This activity benefits all parts of the country including Havering and Essex.

The Department allocates grant in aid of £1.9 million to the Greater London authority to support the Mayor in his lead responsibility for tourism in London. One of the Mayor's priorities in this area is the dispersal of visitors throughout all parts of the capital. Havering will benefit from the new East London tourism development strategy, key strands of which include the development of markets, products, sector skills and the encouragement of greater entrepreneurship.

This work has been given new impetus and the profile of East London raised by winning the competition to stage the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games. A new pan-London Tourism vision and action plan are currently in development to ensure that benefits derived from tourism are maximised.

My Department also allocates grant-in-aid of £3.6 million to the regional development agencies for tourism support, including the East of England Development Agency. This contributes to the work of organisations such as the Essex Development and Regeneration Agency, which promotes Essex as a tourism destination.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Boarding

Steve McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many *(a)* fines and *(b)* terms of imprisonment have been imposed on dog and cat home boarders found guilty of operating without a licence under the Animal Boarding Establishment Act 1963 in the last 12 months, broken down by local authority area; [29270]

(2) how many dog and cat home boarders have been found to be operating without a licence under the Animal Boarding Establishment Act 1963 in the last 12 months, broken down by local authority area. [29271]

Mr. Bradshaw: There were no convictions in England and Wales during 2004 for offences under Section 1 (8) of the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 relating to the licensing and inspection of boarding establishment to ensure the welfare of animals, although two separate proceeding were taken forward during this period.

Animal Exhibitions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria are being applied to establishments exhibiting animals to decide which fall outside of the terms of Article 2 of the Zoo Directive 1999/22/EC. [30915]

Jim Knight: My Department publishes guidance on the criteria which are used to determine whether establishments exhibiting wild animals can be granted exemption from the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (and hence from Directive 1999/22/EC in accordance with Article 2). These criteria are set out in Annex D of Circular 02/2003 (as amended by more recent guidance on llama and alpaca). The circular and updated guidance can be found at http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/gwd/zoo.htm.

The criteria were developed with advice from the Zoos Forum, the Government's advisory body on zoo licensing matters. Each application is considered on its merits, along with advice from zoo inspectors, and some flexibility may be applied if there are other relevant considerations.

Batteries

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of batteries was recycled in the most recent year for which figures are available. [29143]

Mr. Bradshaw: A study for the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), carried out by consultants in 2000, estimated that the recycling rate for spent automotive and industrial batteries in 2003 would be around 90 per cent. of arisings. Data collected more recently indicate that less than 2 per cent. of spent portable batteries are currently being recycled.

Beef

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the timetable is for ending the EU ban on British beef.[25229]

Mr. Bradshaw: The European Commission has acknowledged that the essential preconditions for lifting the EU export ban have been fulfilled. We are now awaiting proposals from the Commission for legislation to lift the ban. Such proposals would have to be submitted to EU Member States to consider in the Standing Committee for the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH). If the Member States were to vote in favour of the proposals in SCoFCAH, they would be translated into all EU languages and presented to the College of Commissioners for formal adoption. We hope that these processes will be completed in early 2006, but this is a best case scenario.

In the meantime we are consulting widely within the UK on the corresponding changes which will be required to domestic legislation. This should enable us to implement the necessary amendments as soon as possible when the EU legal processes are completed. This should enable beef exports from the UK to resume at the earliest opportunity. The consultation package is available on the DEFRA website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/bse-exports/index.htm.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects beef exports to *(a)* France and *(b)* Germany to begin, following the end of the Over Thirty Months Scheme. [28032]

Mr. Bradshaw: The timing of lifting the export ban remains uncertain but is unlikely to happen before February 2006 at the earliest. The Government are continuing to work in Brussels to ensure that the export ban is lifted as soon as possible.

We would expect Germany and France to comply with EU law when the ban is lifted.

Commmunities Food Supplies

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list those *(a)* organisations, *(b)* communities and *(c)* categories of groups in receipt of Communities food supplies from intervention stocks under Regulation (EEC) 3149/92 as amended by Regulation (EC) 1608/2205; if she will list those that have received such aid in the United Kingdom since May 1997; and if she will make a statement. [27753]

Jim Knight: The Surplus Food Scheme laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) 3149/1992, as amended by Commission Regulation (EC) 1608/2005, allows member states to choose whether or not to participate in the scheme. The UK has chosen not to participate in this scheme since 1998, therefore no organisations, communities or categories of groups are currently in receipt of intervention stocks. The Rural Payments Agency no longer has records relating to this activity.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department since May 1997, broken down by Act. [26706]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 9 November 2005]* DEFRA came into being on 8 June 2001 and so it is appropriate to answer the question from that date.

The following Acts created criminal offences in the 2002–03 session of Parliament.

The Animal Health Act 2002 (c.42)

created several criminal offences including the offence of deliberately infecting an animal with any one of 15 diseases specified in the Act, including foot-and-mouth disease. The Schedule created an offence of failing to comply with a restriction notice preventing the use for breeding of sheep that are of a genotype that is susceptible to transmissible *spongiform encephalopathies* (TSE) and also offences of obstructing an inspector carrying out duties under the Act.

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 (c.33)

provided powers to make offences by regulation for failures to comply with the scheme to be created.

The Water Act 2003 (c.37)

made it an offence under Part one to fail to comply with a notice served by the Environment Agency requiring work to be carried out on facilities for impounding water or a licence application to be made for unlicensed impounding works.

Where abstraction or impounding takes place without a licence or does not comply with the terms of a licence, the Act made it an offence to fail to comply with an enforcement notice issued by the Environment Agency.

Part two created the offence of introducing water to or supplying water from a water undertaker's supply system without being a water undertaker or a licensed supply person. Under Part three it is an offence for an owner of manager of a large raised reservoir to fail to prepare a flood plan when required to do so. Part three also extended the offence of supplying water unfit for human consumption to apply to persons including employees of the water undertaker and self-employed people involved with the supply of water.

During the 2003–04 session the following Acts created criminal offences:

The Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 (c. 11)

makes it an offence for any person to act as an unlicensed gangmaster and for any other person to enter into arrangements with an unlicensed gangmaster.

The Act also created other offences in relation to forgery of documents.

The Highways (Obstruction by Body Corporate) Act 2004 (c.29)

extended the offence of obstructing a highway under the Highways Act

1980 so that the directors, managers and other company officers of a guilty

company may also be found guilty of the obstruction if it was committed

with their consent, connivance or attributable to their neglect.

The Hunting Act 2004 (c.37)

made it an offence under Part one to hunt a wild mammal with a dog, except in some circumstances such as where the dog is being used for stalking and flushing-out only, or to participate in, attend or knowingly facilitate a hare-coursing event.

Part one also makes it an offence for the owner of a dog to permit it to be used for hunting or hare-coursing or for the owner of land to allow the land to be entered or used for hunting or hare-coursing.

During the 2004–2005 session the following Act created criminal offences:

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (c.16)

Created offences in relation to "nuisance parking" which is the selling or repairing of vehicles on a road by persons in business. Part six of the Act created offences in relation to breach of "Dog Control Orders", which in relation to specified land may exclude dogs from the land, or prohibit the fouling of the land, or require dogs to be kept on leads when on the land or may limit the number of dogs a person may take onto the specified land. In relation to certain premises in an "Alarm Notification Area" Part seven of the Act created offences of failing to nominate a key-holder where an audible intruder alarm is present.

The Act also made many existing offences punishable by a fixed penalty notice.

Dairy Farming

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many persons are employed in dairy farming in England; and how many were so employed on the same date in 1997. [27363]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The following figures show the number of workers and total labour force on holdings in England where dairy is the predominant activity. The employee figures include salaried managers, casual and family workers. Total labour force includes farmers, partners, directors and their spouses (if working on the holding) in addition to the number employed.

	Number employed	*Total labour force*
1997	23,394	58,498
2004	13,592	41,665

Notes:
1. Figures prior to 2000 show main holdings only. From 2000 onwards minor holdings are included.
2. Due to a register improvement exercise in 2001 labour figures prior to this are not directly comparable with later results.

Source:
June Agricultural Survey

Departmental Consultants

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* private finance initiative and *(b)* public private partnership external consultants used by her Department and each of its agencies in each of the last two years; and what the (i) nature of the work and (ii) cost was in each case. [27920]

Jim Knight: Information about the external consultants used by the Department and its agencies to advise on PFI and PPP is set out in the following tables. Details of the companies with whom PFI and PPP deals themselves have been agreed are available on Partnerships UK's (PUK) website.

PFI

	Agency	*Consultant*	*Nature of work*	£ *Cost*
2003	Defra	Davis Langdon and Everest	Cambridge Eastbrook PFI contract—financial advice	28,000
2003	Defra	Gardiner and Theobald	Cambridge Eastbrook PFI contract—project management	13,000
2003	Defra	Pannell Kerr Foster Associates	Cambridge Eastbrook PFI contract—financial advice	10,000
2003	Defra	Eversheds	Cambridge Eastbrook PFI contract—legal advice	17,000
2003	Defra	Ernst and Young	Financial assessment of Lancashire waste PFI project	40,000
2003–04	Defra	PUK	Development of guidance on PFI outline business case review in the waste sector	20,000
2003–04 2004–05 2005–06	Defra	PUK	Training on waste PFI outline business case review	[1]5,000
2003–04	Defra	PUK	Review of barriers to bank participation in PFI in the waste sector	9,000
2003–04	Defra	Deloitte	Financial assessment of Northumberland waste PFI project	23,000
2004	Defra	Ernst and Young	Waste sector PFI project support	19,000
2004	Defra	KPMG	Financial assessment of Shropshire waste PFI project	26,000
2004	Defra	KPMG	Financial assessment of Wakefield waste PFI project	19,000
2004	Defra	Deloitte	Financial assessment of LB Southwark waste PFI project	31,000
2004	Defra	Deloitte	Financial assessment of Greater Manchester waste PFI project	23,000
2004	Defra	Ernst and Young	Financial assessment of Cambridgeshire CC waste PFI project	40,000
2004	Defra	PwC	Advice on encouraging entry into the waste PFI market	26,000
2004	Defra	Davis Langdon and Everest	Cambridge Eastbrook PFI contract—estate management	32,000
2005	Defra	Davis Langdon and Everest	Cambridge Eastbrook PFI contract-estate management	30,000
2004–05	Environment Agency	PUK	Membership of project board reviewing performance of PFI projects	10,000
2004–05	Environment Agency	PA Consulting/Arup	Review of performance of existing PFI contracts and potential for future PFI support in flood defence work	195,000
2005	Defra	4Ps	Consultancy on various PFI projects in the waste sector	94,000
2005	Defra	Deloitte	Advice on Greater Manchester waste PFI project	9,000
2005	Defra	AEA Tech	PFI stage 2 waste model	4,000
2005	Defra	PUK	Support Defra in providing guidance to authorities preparing PFI outline business cases in the waste sector	27,000
2005–06	Defra	PUK	Provide support to Notts CC in negotiation of their waste PFI preferred bidder	33,000

PFI

	Agency	Consultant	Nature of work	£ Cost
Current and ongoing	Defra	PUK	Guidance development and strategic support to Defra in respect of two potential waste PFI deals in Notts and Cornwall	210,000
Current and ongoing	Defra	PUK	Development of PFI value for money guidance	20,000

[1] per annum.

PPP

£	Agency	Consultant	Nature of work	Cost
End 2003 to February 2005	British Waterways		Waterside Pub Partnership:	
		Nabarro Nathanson	Legal advice	527,000
		Ernst and Young	Financial advice	356,000
		PUK	Government liaison and strategic advice	64,000
		Alan Newman	Project manager	159,000
		Gerald Eve	Property adviser	79,000
		Other	Other smaller items	85,000
End 2003 to March 2005	British Waterways		Wood Wharf PPP:	
		Good Relations	PR/negotiation advice	189,000
		Denton Wilde Sapte	Legal advice	140,000
		Atis Real	Property adviser	451,000
		Berwin Leighton Paisner	Legal advice	762,000
		Deloitte	Financial advice	983,000
		Big Picture Consulting	General project advice	48,000
2005	Environment Agency	PUK	Development of a commercialisation strategy	25,000

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the external consultants used by her Department and each of its agencies, excluding public private partnership and private finance initiative contracts, in each of the last two years; and if she will provide details of the *(a)* nature of the work and *(b)* cost in each case. [27921]

Jim Knight: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Finance

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the latest estimate is of underspend by her Department *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of departmental budget for financial year 2004–05. [18307]

Jim Knight: For details of the Department's underspend in the 2004–05 fiscal year, I refer the hon. Member to the information contained in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (PEOWP) 2004–05 (Cm 6639). Table 1 of PEOWP 2004–05 gives provisional outturn against Final Resource DEL and Table 1A gives Provisional outturn against Final Capital DEL. A percentage figure can be calculated from the tables.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the 10 highest-paid employees in her Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27434]

Jim Knight: The posts held by the 10 highest paid employees in Defra as at 1 November 2005 were (in alphabetical order):

Acting Permanent Secretary

Chief Operating Officer

Chief Scientific Adviser and Director General Science, Economics and Statistics

Chief Veterinary Officer and Director General, Animal Health and Welfare

Director, Climate, Energy and Environmental Risk

Director General, Environment

Director General, Natural Resources and Rural Affairs

Director General, Sustainable Farming, Food and Fisheries

Director, Rural Policy

Solicitor and Director General, Legal Services.

One is an inward secondment to Defra and the remainder are direct employees. Their salaries are in the range £113,000 to £152,000 including bonus awards.

The salaries of Chief Executives of Defra's executive agencies are in their individual annual reports, placed before Parliament.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff each year since 1997. [27454]

Jim Knight: Defra was created in June 2001 and this answer relates to the period since then.

(a) Information on the number of civil servants in Defra is contained in Civil Service Statistics 2004 which is available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp.

Table C of Civil Service Statistics 2004 shows permanent staff numbers between 1998 and 2004. Table A in each year's publication shows the number of both permanent and casual staff for that year.

(b) and *(c)* Records of the number of contractors and other non-civil servants employed in the Department are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Transport

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what percentage of journeys have been made using public transport in her Department in each year since 2001. [27562]

Jim Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 23W.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 22W, on departmental vehicles, how many vehicles used by her Department use hybrid environmentally friendly technologies. [27561]

Jim Knight: The Defra and Executive Agencies fleet has eight vehicles powered by hybrid environmentally friendly technologies. In addition, the London-based taxi contract, Green Cars, uses only cars that are powered by LPG, or hybrid technologies.

It is not possible to provide information on the number of private cars used for official business that use hybrid environmentally friendly technologies. The Government Car Despatch Agency provides five cars that use hybrid environmentally friendly technologies for ministerial use. These are not part of the Defra fleet.

Direct Mail

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many contracts for direct mail were signed by her Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27896]

Jim Knight: In the financial year 2004–05, two contracts for direct mail were let, and the financial values of each contract were £111,000 and £163,000 respectively. No contracts for direct mail have been let in 2005–06 to date.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what data her Department has collected since 2003 on the percentage of recipients of Warm Front who are fuel poor. [29013]

Mr. Morley: We do not collect specific data on the fuel poverty status of Warm Front recipients. The eligibility criteria for Warm Front are specifically designed to use receipt of one of a number of qualifying benefits as an indication that a particular householder may be vulnerable and so at risk of fuel poverty.

Households not in receipt of a qualifying benefit at the time of application are offered a benefit entitlement check, which is designed to provide both the potential of increasing household income and to establish eligibility of households to benefit from measures under Warm Front.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the future funding requirements of *(a)* Warm Front and *(b)* other programmes to combat fuel poverty; and if she will make a statement. [29014]

Mr. Morley: In the last Spending Review we announced an additional £140 million to tackle fuel poverty, taking our total fuel poverty funding to £251 million by 2007–08.

We are currently working with colleagues across Government to review the level of resources and associated activity required to meet our 2010 target of eradicating fuel poverty, as far as reasonably practicable, in vulnerable households in England. This work is being carried out taking into account current projections on fuel prices and household incomes to 2010.

The Decent Homes Standard and the Energy Efficiency Commitment will continue to make a contribution toward the achievement of our target.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many central heating systems have been fitted for people aged over 65 years under the Warm Front Scheme in each year since the scheme started; and what percentage this represents of the total systems fitted. [29016]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, central heating systems were only available to those aged 60 or over. During this period the following number of new gas central heating systems were installed:

Aged 60+

	Number installed
2000–01	5,118
2001–02	26,915
2002–03	14,492
2003–04	9,546
2004–05	8,643

Of these systems, the following number were installed for applicants over the age of 65:

Aged 65+

	Number installed	*Percentage of total installed*
2000–01	4,148	81
2001–02	18,369	68
2002–03	11,445	78
2003–04	7,828	82
2004–05	7,393	86

Environmental Health Officers

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to encourage local authorities to recruit more environmental health officers. [28236]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

It is the responsibility of individual authorities to address recruitment and retention issues within the workforce.

The Local Government Association and the Employers Organisation for Local Government have identified shortage of environmental health officers within the sector. They are working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (OPDM) to raise the profile of the profession.

The ODPM Capacity Building Funding provided £780,000 in the year 2004–05 to promote the provision of practical training placements of Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers within local authorities in England.

A further £760,000 of ODPM Capacity Building Funding has been allocated for 2005–06 to promote further practical training placements and work experience opportunities within local authorities in England.

Environmental Protection

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is part of the European Union Acquis that countries are required to have an environmental protection agency or similar organisation separate or at arm's length from Government; and if she will make a statement. [29616]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* There is no such requirement within the acquis. The administrative structure adopted is a matter for each member state.

Farming

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the impact of regulations on farm businesses; and if she will make a statement. [29395]

Jim Knight: Defra is developing a new approach to farming regulation and will be publishing more details on this at the end of November. This will be supported by an economic analysis of the impact of the major regulatory proposals on the horizon between now and 2015.

We are also taking part in a major exercise across Whitehall, led by the Better Regulation Executive, to develop a database of our current regulations. This is the starting point for measuring administrative burdens and identifying areas for change.

In its Five Year Strategy published in December 2004, Defra made a commitment to reduce the administrative burdens imposed by its regulations on business, including farming, by at least 25 per cent. by the end of 2009.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the speed with which awards under the Single Farm payments scheme are made. [22163]

Jim Knight: Ministers regularly assess the likely timing of Single Payment Scheme awards with officials at the Rural Payments Agency, which is responsible for the administration of the scheme in England. RPA remains on course to commence payments in February 2006 and complete 96 per cent. of payments by the end of March, in line with announcements made at the start of the year.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the National Farmers' Union about the impact of fuel prices on the farming industry; and if she will make a statement. [23164]

Jim Knight: In addition to the Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food's regular meetings with the NFU, the Secretary of State and other DEFRA Ministers meet the NFU to discuss a wide range of issues of relevance to rural communities and food producers.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many new entrants into farming there were in each year since 1997, broken down by type of farm. [27994]

Jim Knight: There is little robust data on the numbers of new entrants by type of farming.

Figures from the June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey indicate the number of holdings in England by farm type in June each year. These figures show the net change in the number of holdings but it is difficult to infer specific information from the figures in terms of new entrants. Please see the following table.

A recent source of information about new entrants to farming is the report into Entry to and Exit from Farming in the UK that was commissioned by DEFRA in 2003. This is available on the DEFRA website at http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/entrvexit/default.asp. Among the more significant findings from this research were that the rate of entry into farming was lower than the rate of exit and that both the rate of entry and the rate of exit were lower than in other sectors. The research found that some 2 per cent. of farmers had entered the industry in the five years up to and including 2003, while up to 18 per cent. of farmers had retired over the same period.

Although the study did not look at rates of entry by farm type, there were indications from the research that the proportion of decision makers who have been farming for 20 years or less was highest in the poultry, horticulture and dairy sectors and lowest in the pig and cereals sectors.

Broader information about new UK businesses in the agricultural sector registering for VAT is given in table 2. VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004. Therefore, although the figures show an overall decline in the numbers of businesses registering for VAT in the agricultural sector between 1997 and 2004, this does not necessarily mean that there was a decline in the numbers of new entrants over the same period.

Total registered holdings in England by farm type 1997 to 2004

Farm type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Cereals	21,085	21,473	20,905	20,996	21,340	21,258	21,538	22,879
General Cropping	11,696	11,239	11,119	9,861	9,991	9,200	8,901	9,369
Horticulture	8,566	8,380	8,192	9,643	9,488	9 520	9,030	9,592
Pigs and Poultry	5,347	5,463	5,461	6,122	6,791	6,991	6,950	—
Specialist Pigs (From 2004)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,160
Specialist Poultry (From 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,536
Dairy	18,007	17,014	16,313	15,219	14,106	14,342	13,556	13,264
Cattle and Sheep (LFA)	9,645	10,555	10,647	10,097	10,705	11,763	11,577	—
Cattle and Sheep (Lowland)	30,878	29,893	31,269	32,816	31,306	33,778	34,787	—
LFA—Grazing Livestock (From 2004)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11,366
Lowland—Grazing Livestock (From 2004)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36013
Mixed	11,333	11,279	10,752	10,915	10,656	10,284	10,097	11,000
Other Types	28,220	29,797	32,562	52,186	63,551	70,735	74,251	71,645
All Types	144,777	145,093	147,220	167,855	177,934	187,871	190,687	192,824

Note:
Figures prior to 2000 show main holdings only. From 2000 onwards minor holdings are included.
Source:
June Agricultural Survey.

UK VAT registrations the agricultural sector 1997 to 2004

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Growing of crops; market gardening; horticulture	440	385	320	300	300	245	295	270
Farming of animals	1,130	985	780	765	705	860	910	990
Mixed farming	1,370	1,055	970	855	735	940	710	470
Total	2,940	2,425	2,070	1,920	1,740	2,045	1,915	1,730

Note:
Excludes most of the very smallest one-person businesses.
Source:
Department of Trade and Industry

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* dairy, *(b)* arable and *(c)* mixed farms there are in Northamptonshire; and how many there were in each category in (i) 1975, (ii) 1980, (iii) 1990 and (iv) 2000. [29022]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* The number of holdings by farm type in Northamptonshire are as follows:

	(a) Dairy	*(b) Cereals*	*General cropping*	*(c) Mixed*
(i) 1990	107	689	80	219
(ii) 2000	55	683	29	209

Note:
Comparable data for earlier years are not available. Farm type categories have changed over time.
Figures prior to 2000 cover main holdings only. Figures from 2000 onwards include all holdings.
Source:
June Agricultural Survey

Flooding

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list communities recorded by the Environment Agency as being subject to flooding in 2000, giving in each case the number of *(a)* commercial and *(b)* residential properties flooded; and for how many and what percentage of properties in each community (i) flood defences have been improved, (ii) flood defence improvements have been approved but not yet implemented and (iii) flood defences improvements have been approved. [27892]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has provided as much information as possible, subject to disproportionate cost limitations, and a copy will be made available in the Library of the House.

As I explained in my answer to a similar previous question from the hon. Member on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1662W, I regret it has not been possible, without incurring disproportionate cost, to categorise the properties flooded in 2000 by commercial and residential use, or to provide other exact details in response to these questions.

Flower Imports

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what was the total *(a)* volume and *(b)* value of flowers imported into the UK from Kenya for each year since 2001; what discussions her Department has had relating to the involvement of UK companies in the import or production of flowers produced overseas using chemicals banned in the EU; and if she will make a statement. [27831]

Mr. Morley: The total volume and value of imports of fresh cut flowers into the UK from Kenya since 2001 is set out in the given table.

The Department has had no discussions on the use of chemicals in the production of flowers overseas. However, my noble Friend, the Lord Bach, met with a major importer of cut flowers from Kenya on 13 July this year to discuss the impact of changes to plant health import regulations, the resulting increase in inspections of cut flowers to check for the presence of quarantine plant pests, and the charges which have been introduced to cover the cost of those inspections.

0511k009: UK imports of cut flowers from Kenya 2001 to August 2005

Description	2001		2002		2003		2004		January-August 2005	
	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000	Tonnes	£000
Fresh cut flowers: other	2,300	6,946	3,934	12,012	5,549	15,705	10,304	28,416	6,356	17,794
Fresh cut flowers: roses	4,273	14,388	4,746	16,054	5,068	16,264	4,855	14,077	4,333	11,535
Fresh cut flowers: carnations	2,470	6,673	1,831	4,873	961	2,271	1,581	2,810	1,751	4,911
Cut flowers: prepared	1,095	3,786	572	1,998	45	171	8	31	8	37
Fresh cut flowers: gladioli	7	12	120	156	143	485	220	646	22	61
Fresh cut flowers: chrysanthemums	3	18	10	66	25	166	21	133	3	18
Fresh cut flowers: orchids	37	35	8	10	0	17	—	—	—	—
Grand total	10,183	31,859	11,221	35,171	11,792	35,078	16,989	46,112	12,473	34,357

Source:
HM Revenue and Customs
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, Defra
2005 data are subject to amendments.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what controls are placed on the import of flowers into the UK in relation to the use of *(a)* pesticides and *(b)* environmentally unsustainable practices; and if she will make a statement. [27832]

Mr. Morley: We do not monitor imported flowers for pesticides residues nor do we have any power to insist that the material is produced in an environmentally sustainable way. However, EU common quality standards require that marketed cut flowers must be free of pesticide residues that affect the visual quality of the product and the Plant Health Order requires that they must also be free from certain plant pests, which do not normally occur in the UK.

The Pesticides Safety Directorate is providing technical assistance to Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Uganda as part of the EC-funded Pesticides Initiative Programme, which covers the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific group of states. Activities include visits to assist the regulatory authorities with capacity building of their structures and processes, and delivering training programmes covering the technical, policy and procedural requirements of pesticides regulation.

Food Security

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is towards food security; what recent discussions she has had with the EU on food security; and if she will make a statement. [28030]

Jim Knight: Our food security policy ensures consumers have access to a stable and adequate supply of food. Our domestic agriculture industry has an important contribution to make to the continuity of food supply by improving its ability to produce what the market requires. The reformed CAP, in breaking the link between subsidy and production, is encouraging farmers to produce what the market requires, rather than what subsidies dictate. Our farmers are well placed to produce foodstuffs that Europe's climate is suited to, but we cannot grow all the agricultural products our consumers might want to buy.

However, the UK has long been a net importer of food and national and international food security is best facilitated through improved trading relationships based on more open international markets and reductions in trade distorting subsidies.

The Secretary of State has had no recent discussions with the EU on the subject of food security.

Forests

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to encourage more private sector ownership of forests by extending tax concessions to those purchasing forest land. [30992]

Jim Knight: I do not plan to make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on tax concessions for private land purchases. The sector benefits from all income and profits from timber sales being free from corporation tax and income tax. Commercial woodlands continue to be able to attract relief on inheritance tax and there is no capital gains tax on the increase in value of standing timber. In addition, government continues to support sustainable forest management for the provision of public benefits through direct grants from the England woodland grant scheme.

Freedom of Information

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to her Department which have been passed to the FOI clearing house for evaluation, broken down by *(a)* subject and *(b)* date of request. [28943]

Jim Knight: Information about the handling of Freedom of Information requests is published in "Freedom of Information Statistics on Implementation in Central Government". The most recently published report was 30 September 2005 and copies were placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Additional information about the role of the Clearing House can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/index.htmt#2. Departments do not release information about the internal handling of requests, such as details of which requests were referred to the Clearing House for guidance.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to identify older people in fuel poverty who are not in receipt of benefits. [29015]

Mr. Morley: The Warm Front Scheme is the Government's main tool for tackling fuel poverty in the private sector. Eligibility for the scheme is via the receipt of one of a number of qualifying benefits.

Those not in receipt of a qualifying benefit at the time of application are offered a benefit entitlement check, which is designed to provide both the potential of increasing household income and to establish eligibility of households to benefit from measures under Warm Front.

Hunts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether hunts which purchase birds of prey are obliged to register the *(a)* purchase, *(b)* sale, *(c)* death and *(d)* loss of such birds; and if she will make a statement. [29841]

Jim Knight: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it a requirement that any bird listed on a Schedule to the Act that is kept in captivity must be ringed and registered with Defra. The list includes some, but not all, species of bird of prey that are likely to be used for hunting. The Act is a possession control, and does not regulate the purchase or sale of specimens. We request that registered keepers of birds notify the Department of the death or loss of a registered bird, but this is not a legal requirement.

The sale (or commercial use) of certain species of birds of prey is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), applied by EC Regulations, which requires the use of a certificate issued under Article 10 of Council Regulation. An individual or organisation which purchased or sold listed birds of prey without complying with the regulations would be committing an offence. However, the possession of such a certificate is sufficient. There is no requirement to register individual sales under that certificate with my Department.

Litter Abatement Orders

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many litter abatement orders have been served in Hertfordshire in each of the last five years. [26356]

Mr. Bradshaw: None.

Milk Price

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what encouragement she is giving to ensure that a competitive market exists for the price of milk paid to farmers. [23703]

Jim Knight: Competition issues are a matter for the Office of Fair Trading. The Government believe that as long as competition rules are respected, it should not seek to intervene in matters of pricing.

My noble Friend Lord Bach and I will nevertheless be discussing a range of competition issues with colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry next month. And, through the Dairy Supply Chain Forum, which my noble Friend chairs, we are working with the industry to help it secure a competitive and sustainable future.

Ministerial Travel

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within her Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if she will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27801]

Jim Knight: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27894]

Jim Knight: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Nappies

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money the Department has spent on encouraging the use of washable nappies; and if she will make a statement. [25453]

Mr. Bradshaw: The cost of the reusable nappy programme managed by the Waste and Resources Action Programme is £2.8 million for the three years from 2003–06.

Nuclear Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what volume of *(a)* low level, *(b)* intermediate level and *(c)* high level nuclear waste went missing in 2004; and what percentage was recovered. [29144]

Mr. Morley: Further to my previous reply to the hon. Member on 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1040W, the Department is not aware of any radioactive waste that has gone missing.

Palm Oil

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to discuss new regulations with EU colleagues on preventing the importation of palm oil for food production whose production has damaged the habitat of the orangutan. [29029]

Mr. Morley: There have not been any specific discussions concerning the destruction of orangutan habitats for palm oil plantations to date.

DEFRA are commissioning research work into the impacts of internationally sourced commodity production on biodiversity. This work will seek to identify the range of commodities with the largest effects on global biodiversity; palm oil will be one of the commodities investigated. The outcomes of this work will inform future policy development in the UK and abroad. Further research is also being undertaken under the auspices of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. This was established in 2004 and is running a pilot programme in sustainable palm oil production in Malaysia.

Notes:

The RSPO is an international organisation which has a range of members from across the globe, (NGOs, businesses and public sector), who recognise the importance of establishing a legal and sustainable international trade in palm oil. Further information on it can be found at: http://www.sustainable-palmoil.org

Single Payment Scheme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the timing of payments being made under the Single Payment Scheme. [23166]

Jim Knight: Ministers regularly assess the likely timing of Single Payment Scheme awards with officials at the Rural Payments Agency, which is responsible for the administration of the scheme in England. RPA remains on course to commence payments in February 2006 and complete 96 per cent. of payments by the end of March, in line with announcements made at the start of the year.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what public service agreements are in place with local authorities in England for the management of sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) in their areas; and what funding has been allocated to each relevant local authority in relation to the management of SSSIs in 2005–06. [30638]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: Currently two councils, Cornwall and Essex, have in place local public service agreements (LPSAs) which cover progress towards meeting agreed biodiversity objectives, which can include the management of SSSIs. To the extent that these are met, the councils will receive the standard funding awards that are open to all councils for LPSAs.

English Nature estimate that overall local authorities own or manage about 4.88 per cent. of England's SSSI land. SSSI landowners and managers, such as local authorities, are able to access, subject to condition, a variety of funding streams which can benefit SSSIs, including from English Nature, agri-environment schemes and from lottery or EU sources. The overall funding requirements of local authorities is a matter for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by her Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if she will make a statement. [27408]

Jim Knight: DEFRA was created in 2001. In respect of consultants I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 35–36W, and on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1962–63W.

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House. Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many employees have been dismissed by her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29127]

Jim Knight: The numbers of employees dismissed from core-defra for each calendar year since it was created on 9 June 2001 are as follows:

	Number
2001	2
2002	5
2003	15
2004	9
2005	13

These dismissals were the result of staff undergoing procedures for misconduct, unsatisfactory attendance and unsatisfactory performance (including probation).

Stewardship Scheme

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the higher level stewardship scheme to be introduced; and if she will make a statement. [26210]

Jim Knight: Environmental Stewardship was launched by the Secretary of State on 3 March 2005. The first applications under the higher level strand of the scheme have been lodged over the summer and continue to be received. Development of the supporting IT has taken longer than hoped but I now expect the first higher level stewardship agreements to come into effect from 1 February next year.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the reason for the delay to the commencement, due on 1 November, of payments to applicants to the Higher Level Stewardship scheme; and if she will arrange for such applicants to be paid the entry level scheme payment by means of an interim arrangement. [27911]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* Testing of the IT system required to support the development of Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreements has proved more challenging than expected. It is essential that the system is sufficiently robust to develop complete and accurate agreements that fully satisfy our regulatory obligations. While we had hoped to issue the first agreements from 1 November this year, delayed delivery of the IT system will now mean the first HLS agreements will commence early in the new year. Payments for the scheme commence from six months after the start of an agreement and at six monthly intervals thereafter.

In recognition of the delay we are looking at a mechanism to support the early participation in the Entry Level strand of Environmental Stewardship without applicants having to go through the application process a second time. Officials are currently working on guidance to support this process.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been given under the *(a)* higher and *(b)* entry stewardship scheme in each year since they were introduced. [27992]

Jim Knight: Environmental Stewardship was launched by the Secretary of State on 3 March 2005, however the first Entry Level agreements were not scheduled to come into effect until 1 August 2005. Under the scheme the first payments are made to agreement holders six months from the agreement start date, therefore, the first grants do not become payable until February 2006.

The first Higher Level Stewardship agreements are now expected to come into effect from early next year. The first payments for these agreements also fall due some six months following the agreement start date and at six monthly intervals thereafter

Sugar Regime

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the reasons industrial purchasers of sugar in the EU pay more than the institutional price for sugar. [27629]

Jim Knight: The main reason for the difference between institutional and market prices is the current system of national sugar quotas. The limitation of production by quota has produced a fragmented EU market which provides little incentive for competition between sugar processors in different member states. The EU Commission's proposals for reform of the sugar regime are expected to increase trade between member states and competition between beet processors and cane refiners. Further analysis of these issues is given in the Government's regulatory impact assessment of options for reform of the EU Sugar Regime.

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will recommend to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that she refer the UK sugar processing sector to the Competition Commission. [27630]

Jim Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 492W.

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether tradable sugar quotas, as proposed in the European Commission's Communication of July 2004, would be beneficial to UK *(a)* industry, *(b)* agriculture and *(c)* consumers. [27948]

Jim Knight: The European Commission's Communication of July 2004 was a further discussion of options for reform, preparatory to the tabling of formal legislative proposals in June this year. In making its definitive proposals the Commission decided not to proceed with a tradable quota scheme. The analysis relating to this was summarised in the explanatory material and impact assessment studies which the Commission published at the time. A further discussion of these issues is contained in the Government's own regulatory impact assessment, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Vulnerable Persons Regulations

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the take up of the Vulnerable Persons Regulations tariff was in 2004–05, broken down by water company. [28493]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The take-up of the Water Industry (Charges) (Vulnerable Groups) Regulations tariff is set out in the table, broken down by company area.

Number of successful applications under the Vulnerable Groups Regulations—2004–05

	Number of successful applicants
Anglian	682
Dwr Cymru	319
United Utilities	1,114
Northumbrian	483

Number of successful applications under the Vulnerable Groups Regulations—2004–05

	Number of successful applicants
Severn Trent	916
South West	1,645
Southern	258
Thames	1,323
Wessex	481
Yorkshire	1,059
Bournemouth and West Hampshire	73
Bristol	93
Cambridge	81
Dee Valley	10
Folkestone and Dover	12
Mid Kent	138
Portsmouth	24
South East Water	91
South Staffs	39
Sutton and East Surrey	38
Tendring Hundred	87
Three Valleys	251
England and Wales	9,217

TRANSPORT

A19

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 597W, on the A19, (1) what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of personal injury accidents on the A19 between Tyneside and Teesside; [28757]

(2) what steps his Department has taken to identify specific points of increased risk of personal injury accidents on the A19 between Tyneside and Teesside. [28759]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency carried out a Route Management Strategy, on the A19 in 2003 that included an assessment of accident rates and identified specific lengths of carriageway where there was an increased risk of personal injury accidents. While this road is better than the national average for 'A' roads in terms of personal injury accidents, a number of improvement schemes were carried out in 2003–04. These included improved lighting, road markings and safety fencing schemes. The Highways Agency will continue to monitor accident trends regularly.

The strategy also identified a need to undertake a Central Reserve Gaps study that has been recently completed. Any high priority gap closure schemes identified in this study will be included in the Highways Agency forward programme of safety improvements subject to funds being available.

Biofuels (Carbon Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* practicality of converting aircraft to run on bio-ethanol and *(b)* carbon emission implications of such a switch. [30085]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The UK project "The Potential for Renewable Energy Sources in Aviation" produced by Imperial College Centre for Energy, Policy and Technology in 2003 for DTI, studied the options for potential renewable fuels for civil aviation. The study examined a whole range of alternative fuels and energy sources including bio-ethanol. Bio-ethanol was found to be inherently unsuitable as it does not contain sufficient energy for a jet fuel, in either mass or volume terms. The practical implications of these two factors are that aircraft range would be reduced compared to conventional fuels, and even if air-frames were redesigned with significantly larger fuel capacity, their take-off weight would be too high.

Buses

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that adaptation of buses to facilitate wheelchair access does not involve incorporating steep steps. [30783]

Ms Buck: The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (as amended) require new buses first used on or after 31 December 2000, with a capacity of more than 22 passengers, used on local or scheduled services to be accessible to disabled people including wheelchair users. The regulations allow operators to provide access for wheelchair users by means of a lift or a ramp, and regulated vehicles also require improved access for all passengers through better step dimensions, provision of handrails and colour contrast markings. The end dates by which time all such vehicles are required to meet the regulations depends on vehicle type and range from 2015 to 2020. It is entirely a matter for bus and coach operators to select the most appropriate vehicle type for their operations.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will amend the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations such that public service vehicles will be equipped by 2012 to be accessible to people with a range of different disabilities. [30987]

Ms Buck: The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (as amended) make comprehensive provision for improved access for passengers with a wide range of disabilities. The regulations are kept under review and will be developed in line with technology, while taking account of the effect on all stakeholders and the financial implications of any changes.

Carbon Emissions (Aircraft)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the likely percentage change in carbon emissions per aircraft arising from technological advances to aircraft design by *(a)* 2020 and *(b)* 2050. [30921]

Ms Buck: The Air Transport White Paper acknowledges European targets for a 50 per cent. improvement in fuel efficiency (which translates to reduced CO_2 emissions) by 2020 based on advances in technology and operational developments. The UK industry has adopted this target—set by the Advisory Council for Aerospace Research in Europe (ACARE) in 2002—in its recently published 'Sustainable Aviation' strategy. The Government have welcomed this commitment. Aviation fuel efficiency targets for 2050

have not been specified though scenarios for aviation environmental performance in 2050 have been produced through collaborative European work.

Cycling

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the expansion of the UK's cycle network has led to an increase in the number of cyclists *(a)* arrested, *(b)* charged and *(c)* convicted for disobeying traffic signals; and whether the Government plan to introduce tougher measures in this respect. [28086]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Information is not collected centrally on the number of cyclists arrested and charged with disobeying traffic signals The table provides the latest available data on cyclists convicted of neglect of traffic directions or failure to obey a signal.

Number of offenders found guilty for selected cycling offences, England and Wales 1999–2003[1]

	Found guilty
Offence: Neglect of traffic directions. Statute: Road Traffic Act 1988 ss.35 and 36	
1999	60
2000	47
2001	34
2002	16
2003	31
Offence: Failing to obey signal. Statute: Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s.28(3)	
1999	41
2000	5
2001	8
2002	7
2003	4

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Departmental Staff (Literacy and Numeracy)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23768]

Ms Buck: Recruitment into and within the Department for Transport is carried out on the basis of competency assessment. Except for recruitment for specialist posts, specific qualifications are not a requirement, and the Department does not therefore maintain comprehensive data in this area.

Light Pollution

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate has been made of the amount of light pollution created by street lights; [28081]

(2) what steps are being taken to limit light pollution from street lights. [28088]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport has made no estimate of the amount of light pollution caused by street lights.

The Department contributed to advice published by the Government on good street lighting practice to reduce sky glow and light pollution generally. The Institution of Lighting Engineers (ILE) has also published advice.

Light pollution is often a result of the use of low-pressure sodium lighting units. Newer technologies, and in particular high-pressure sodium lighting units, allow much finer control of the light distribution and a reduction in the amount of light directed towards the sky.

The Government support the installation of improved street lighting for new schemes, or for updating older ones. £300 million in PFI credits were made available to local authorities outside London in 2003–04 to help modernise street lighting, and over the following three years a further £85 million in PFI credits has been made available for local authorities in London for this purpose, in addition to the support available through the revenue support grant. This month I announced that an additional £600 million of PFI credits will be made available to authorities in England.

Approximately 30 per cent. of the Highways Agency's road network is lit. All new lighting schemes are designed using efficient luminaries containing high-pressure sodium light sources that place the light where it is needed, carefully limiting spillage to the adjacent environment and the night sky. The less environmentally sensitive low-pressure sodium lighting is generally no longer installed by the Agency.

Major Improvement Projects

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list decisions on major transport projects over £5 million made by the Department since May, broken down by region. [27942]

Ms Buck: Outside London the only decisions taken on major transport projects over £5 million since May relate to Local Transport Plan major projects and schemes on the strategic road network. There are broadly two different types of decisions taken on major transport projects—decisions whether to grant funding and whether to grant statutory powers. Within the category of funding decisions, we would include decisions on programme entry, conditional approval and full approval. In terms of the statutory powers, these include Transport and Works Act orders, local road and trunk road orders.

These two types of decisions are taken separately, through independent processes and one decision does not pre-empt the other. We have included both types of decision in this answer, and have set out the information on a regional basis, as follows. Where the project has been approved, the figures quoted relate to the cost to the Department. All figures have been rounded to the nearest £ million.

East of England

Funding decisions

On 18 October, the Papworth Everand Bypass (Cambridgeshire CC) was granted full approval at a total cost of £9 million.

Statutory powers decisions

On 25 August, Luton borough council had orders confirmed in respect of East Luton Corridor Improvement A1081/A505 Airport Way and Connecting Roads and A505 Kimpton Road.

East Midlands

Funding decisions

On 26 July, the Oakham Bypass (Rutland CC) was fully approved at a cost of £10 million.

Statutory powers decisions

On 5 July, Derbyshire county council had orders confirmed in respect of Ilkeston-Awsworth Link Road/Erewash Canal Bridge.

On 28 July, Nottinghamshire county council had orders confirmed in respect of A612 Gedling Transport Improvement Scheme.

On 31 October, Lincolnshire county council had orders confirmed in respect of the A158 Burgh le Marsh Bypass.

North East

Funding decisions

The Pegswood Bypass (Northumberland CC) was given full approval on 18 October at a cost of £8 million.

Statutory powers decisions

The River Tyne (Tunnels) Order 2005, was made on 5 August, and authorises a new road tunnel across the river Tyne.

On 8 June, the City of Sunderland had orders confirmed in respect of the Central Route scheme—A182 and A1191.

North West

Funding decisions

On 17 October, the Blackbrook Diversion (St. Helen's) was granted full approval at a cost of £9 million.

Conditional approval granted on 30 June for funding renewals and capacity enhancements on the existing system of Manchester Metrolink. Government are funding up to £58 million towards total cost of £102 million for the scheme.

On 13 June, a decision was announced which was that full approval could not be given to Merseytram Line 1, due to cost increases, but that £170 million of Government funding remained available if the scheme could be delivered for that cost.

Statutory powers decisions

The Greater Manchester (Leigh Busway) Order 2005 was made on 13 July, and this authorises a new guided busway between Leigh and Ellenbrook in Greater Manchester.

South East

Funding decisions

On 26 July, East Kent Access Phase 1 (Kent CC) was granted full approval at a cost of £18 million.

Statutory powers decisions

On 26 September a decision authorised the making of published draft orders issued on 2005 in respect of the A2 Widening (Phase 2) Pepperhill to Cobham.

On 8 June a decision was issued which authorised the making of part Orders outstanding from the main decision issued on 27 August in relation to the A2/A282/M25 (J2)—Dartford Improvement.

South West

Funding decisions

No funding decisions on transport projects have been taken in the South West since May.

Statutory powers decisions

No statutory powers decisions on transport projects have been taken in the South West since May.

West Midlands

Funding decisions

No funding decisions on transport projects have been taken in the West Midlands since May.

Statutory powers decisions

On 1 July, the Midland Metro (Birmingham City Centre Extension) Order 2005 was made, which authorises an extension of the existing Midland Metro from Snow Hill to Edgbaston.

On 10 June, Herefordshire county council had orders confirmed in respect of A4103 Roman Road/A480 Skew Bridge Stretton.

Yorkshire and Humber

Funding decisions

On 3 November, decision announced that the Government could not support proposals to re-instate the Leeds Supertram scheme that have been put forward by West Yorkshire PTE following the withdrawal of funding for the tram proposal in July 2004. (The schemes value is estimated at £486 million at current prices.)

On 26 July, the A165 Reighton Bypass (North Yorkshire CC) was granted full approval at a cost of £7 million.

On 15 June, the Barnsley Interchange (SYPTE) was granted full approval at a cost of £18 million.

Statutory powers decisions

No statutory powers decisions on transport projects have been taken in Yorkshire and Humber since May.

The Department has not taken any funding decisions on national transport projects in London since May. However, Transport for London would have information about other transport projects in London. There have been two decisions on statutory powers which are listed:

On 4 November, The Docklands Light Railway (Capacity Enhancement) Order 2005 was made, which authorises works to upgrade the DLR between Bank and Lewisham to take three car trains.

On 20 June, an Order that sought authorisation to reconstruct Camden Town underground station in London, the proposed 'London Underground (Camden Town Station) Order 1, was rejected.

Ports Policy

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when Ministers expect *(a)* to complete their considerations on individual applications for major port developments and *(b)* announce their decisions. [30432]

Dr. Ladyman: Ministers announced in July 2005 that they were minded to approve the proposal for the London Gateway port development at Shellhaven, subject to clarification of a number of issues. The outcome of our consideration of these issues will be announced in due course. The Department has received reports of public inquiries into proposed ports developments at Bathside Bay, Harwich, and at Felixstowe South. These are under consideration, and announcements will be made as soon as possible.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what data sets will be used to measure progress against the need to tackle the significantly higher incidence of road accidents, deaths and injuries in disadvantaged communities as required in 2004 public service agreement target number 5. [29804]

Dr. Ladyman: Performance against the target is measured using the police data on all reported road accidents that involve human injury. The measure used will be the percentage reduction in the number of road

deaths and injuries for the 88 local councils that are eligible to receive Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF), compared to that for England as a whole.

The baseline is the average for the period 1999 to 2001, and the target will be judged against 2005 casualty data.

Railways

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on plans for next-generation trains. [22842]

Derek Twigg: The next generation of trains must aim for improved energy efficiency and reliability, without compromising safety and comfort. The new trains just ordered for high speed commuter services into Kent will bring some of the technologies used successfully in Japan. The high speed trains on Great Western, East Coast and Midland lines will need replacing within the next 10–15 years, and the specification for these is being developed. Beyond that, a large number of diesel and electric trains for regional and local services all built in the late 1980s will need replacing by the mid 2020s.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what total costs have been incurred by the Government and Government agencies in the franchising and tendering of passenger rail services since April 2004. [29262]

Derek Twigg: Costs incurred in the specification and tendering of passenger franchise services since April 2004 are £14.4 million.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rail carriages on average were attached to a passenger train in the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* train operating company where applicable. [29035]

Derek Twigg: This information is not held centrally by the Department and can be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many train warranties expired in each year between 1994 and 2004; how many train warranties will expire in each year between 2005 and 2010; and if he will make a statement. [29036]

Derek Twigg: Warranties on new trains cover a wide range of systems and components, often with differing warranty periods. It is not therefore possible to say simply that the warranty on a particular train expires on a specific date.

Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what measures he is taking to ensure that the production of ethanol to meet obligations under the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation *(a)* is environmentally friendly, *(b)* is sustainable and *(c)* does not lead to significant carbon dioxide output; and if he will make a statement; [30363]

(2) what estimate he has made of the quantity of feedstock used in the production of ethanol to meet obligations under the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation which is *(a)* imported into the United Kingdom and *(b)* grown in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement; [30364]

(3) what estimate he has made of the change in UK carbon dioxide emissions as a result of the introduction of the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation. [30365]

Dr. Ladyman: As set out in the Secretary of State's Written Statement of 10 November, we anticipate that the Obligation will deliver around one million tonnes of carbon saving per annum once it reaches 5 per cent. of all transport fuels. We are developing carbon and sustainability assurance schemes and companies will be required, to report on the sustainability and carbon savings associated with the fuels they have used to fulfil their requirements under the Obligation.

We anticipate that the feedstocks for the biofuels will come from both the UK and abroad. The relative proportions will depend on a range of factors including international supply and demand and support systems in other countries. The UK currently exports around three million tonnes of wheat per annum, which, if it were processed into bioethanol, could make up 5 per cent. of all petrol sales.

Analysis on the anticipated costs, benefits, risks and opportunities associated with an obligation are set out in a detailed feasibility study and regulatory impact assessment. These are both available in the House Library and via the Department for Transport's website.

Road Accidents

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated total cost of road accidents in England was in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30372]

Dr. Ladyman: While the Department for Transport does not hold information on actual costs incurred as the result of road accidents, it does estimate the value of prevention of road accidents in its annually published "Highways Economics Note No.1". Estimates for the total value of prevention of all road accidents 1994 to 2004 are as follows:

	Estimated total cost (£ million)
2004	18,004
2003	18,094
2002	17,760
2001	17,420
2000	16,959
1999	16,280
1998	15,960
1997	14,814
1996	13,920
1995	13,280
1994	13,030

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his most recent estimate is of the average cost to public funds of *(a)* a non-fatal and *(b)* a fatal road traffic accident. [30399]

Dr. Ladyman: The values used to estimate the benefits of the prevention of road accidents are set out in the "Highways Economic Note No. 1: 2002 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of Road Accidents and Casualties" which can be found on the DfT website at:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/divisionhomepage/030763.hcsp

The average values, based on 2002 casualty data, were (*a*) serious injury £168,260 and slight injury £16,750 and (*b*) fatal £1,447,490. These amounts are the values to be used in the appraisal of road traffic schemes. They take account of lost output (which includes any non-wage payments paid by the employer), medical and ambulance costs, human costs based on willingness to pay values representing pain, grief and suffering, the costs of policing, insurance and administrative costs and damage to property.

Included within these vales are the costs to public funds for medical, ambulance and police costs. In 2002 prices the average cost was for fatal £6,860, serious £11,900 and slight £1,020. Some element of the lost output cost would also be considered as a cost to public funds. In 2002 prices the average costs were £479,750, £19,520 and £2,320 for fatal, serious and slight accidents respectively.

Up-rating these figures using 2004 casualty data to 2004 prices gives average values for the prevention of accidents as (*a*) serious injury £184,269 and slight injury £18,496 and (*b*) fatal £1,573,217. The average cost in 2004 prices of the lost output element of accident prevention costs were for fatal £522,639, serious £21,379 and slight £2,550. The average medical, ambulance and police costs in 2004 prices were for fatal £7,076, serious £13,025 and slight £1,131.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in how many (*a*) road accidents and (*b*) fatal road accidents (i) speed and (ii) drink driving was (A) the leading contributory factor and (B) a contributory factor in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30446]

Dr. Ladyman: Prior to 2005, information regarding contributory factors to accidents was not routinely collected as part of the accident report process. However under a pilot scheme, 15 police forces have collected data on contributory factors to accidents from 1999 onwards allowing an estimate of the presence of these factors in accidents Great Britain to be made. Up to four contributory factors can be assigned to an accident but are given equal merit, and as such we do not have data on leading contributory factors to accidents. The table shows the estimated proportion of fatal and all accidents where excessive speed was deemed to be a contributory factor, based on accidents occurring in the 15 police force areas.

Estimated[1] proportion of fatal and all accidents with excessive speed assigned as a contributory factor

	Fatal accidents	*All accidents*
1999	29	12
2000	26	12
2001	27	12
2002	30	13
2003	30	14
2004	34	13
1999–2004	29	13

[1] Estimates are based on data from the pilot contributory factors scheme.

The estimates for the number of fatal and all personal injury road accidents involving illegal alcohol levels for 1999–2004 are given in the table. The estimates for 2004 are provisional.

	Fatal accidents	*All accidents*
1999	400	11,050
2000	450	11,800
2001	470	12,270
2002	480	13,150
2003	500	12,400
2004[1]	530	11,220

[1] Provisional data. The sample of fatality data from Coroners for 2003 has now been finalised but 2004 estimates are based on a reduced sample of coroners' returns and may be biased. They remain provisional until more complete information for 2004 is available.

Road Freight Traffic

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of road freight traffic was the transport of food products in each of the last five years. [30862]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table contains estimates for transport of food products as a proportion of total kilometres travelled by GB freight.

Food industry HGV kilometres

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*Billion 2004*
Total HGV Kms	23.0	22.2	22.2	22.2	22.3
Food Products Kms	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.2
Food Products/Total Kms (percentage)	20	19	19	19	19
Packaging Kms	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1
Packaging/Total Kms (percentage)	4	5	5	5	5
Fertiliser and Animal Fodder Kms	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Fertiliser and Animal Fodder/Total Kms (percentage)	1	1	1	1	1
Total Food Industry Kms	6.0	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.6
Total Food Industry/Total Kms (percentage)	26	25	26	25	25

Source:
Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport, DfT

Road Gritting

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has issued on *(a)* how frequently roads should be gritted during a prolonged period of cold weather and *(b)* the trigger for gritting to take place; and if he will make a statement. [29106]

Dr. Ladyman: The guidance on how frequently roads should be gritted, and when, is the same during a period of prolonged cold weather as it is at any other time in winter.

The starting point for the Highways Agency's service providers on the motorway and trunk road network is the Trunk Road Maintenance Manual, which gives advice on the method and timing of treatment to prevent ice forming and on dealing with snow. Service providers have the opportunity to use different methods and timings providing they can demonstrate an improved service to achieve the overall objective of keeping the roads free from ice and snow.

For local roads, there is detailed advice on winter service in Section 13 of Well-Maintained Highways; Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, published by the UK Roads Liaison Group in July this year. Among other things, this code advises authorities to formally approve, adopt, and publish, in consultation with users and key stakeholders, a Winter Service Operational Plan, based on the principles of the code. The Department of Transport strongly recommends the code to local authorities.

Road Safety

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average fatality rate was of pedestrians involved in a motor vehicle accident where the vehicle was moving at *(a)* 30 mph and *(b)* 40 mph for each year between 1994 and 2004. [29893]

Dr. Ladyman: In 1979 Aston and Mackay calculated that, as a general rule, an adult pedestrian hit by a vehicle travelling at 30 mph has a 1 in 5 (20 per cent.) chance of being killed, and that a pedestrian hit by a vehicle travelling at 40 mph has a 9 in 10 (90 per cent.) chance of being killed, A child pedestrian hit by a vehicle travelling at 40 mph has a 4 in 5 (80 per cent.) chance of being killed.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what percentage of persistently high risk roads, as defined by the European Road Assessment Programme, speed cameras were installed in each year between 1994 and 2004. [29895]

Dr. Ladyman: The results of the European Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP) 2004 report on British roads identified 11 stretches of road as being "persistently high risk" based upon casualty data for 1997–99 and 2000–02. The length of these stretches varies between 13 kmh and 56 kmh.

Our records show that cameras operating within the National Safety Camera Programme have been deployed at individual locations on 10 out of 11 of the persistently high risk roads identified.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of whether clearly marked speed cameras are reducing *(a)* road accidents and *(b)* fatalities. [29896]

Dr. Ladyman: The objective of the national safety camera programme is to reduce excessive speeds, injuries arid crashes at camera sites. All cameras operating within the programme have been required to be highly visible and clearly signed since 1 June 2002. No specific assessment has been made of the extent to which this change has contributed to the effectiveness of the programme. However the independent 3-year evaluation report of the programme covering all cameras operating between April 2000 to March 2003 concluded that there had been a 33 per cent. reduction in personal injury collisions and a 40 per cent. reduction in fatalities at camera sites Assessment of the programme over the period April 2000 to March 2004 will be contained in the 4-year evaluation report which will be published shortly.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the criterion is for the percentage of drivers exceeding the speed limit, excluding congestion periods, before *(a)* a fixed speed camera is installed and *(b)* a mobile speed camera is used. [29903]

Dr. Ladyman: The criteria for the percentage of drivers exceeding the speed limit, excluding congestion periods, before either a fixed or mobile safety camera is installed is that at least 20 per cent. of drivers are exceeding the speed limit. In addition speed surveys must show that free flow 85th percentile speed is at or above the ACPO enforcement threshold.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact on road safety of speed cameras between 1994 and 2004; and what *(a)* long-term trends and *(b)* seasonal variations have been recorded. [29904]

Dr. Ladyman: The following independent evaluations have been undertaken for the Department and are available in the Library of the House, and on the Department's website:

A cost recovery system for speed and red-light cameras—two year pilot evaluation (11 February 2003), and

The national safety camera programme—Three year evaluation report (15 June 2004).

West London speed camera demonstration project (5 August 2003)

A four year evaluation report has also been commissioned and is expected shortly.

The two evaluations of the national programme assessed the effectiveness of cameras using a statistical model, in which the effects of long-term trends and seasonal variations were among many different parameters. Full details of the modelling approach are included in the Appendices to these reports.

In respect of the two year report, the statistical model shows that in Great Britain prior to the study period there was a national trend of over 4.5 per cent. per

annum reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) and a 0.75 per cent. per annum reduction in personal injury collisions (PIC). The assessment concluded that even after taking these national trends into account there was a 35 per cent. reduction in the number of KSIs and a 6 per cent. reduction in the number of PICs at camera sites.

The statistical model also shows that the frequency of KSI casualties for the whole of Great Britain increases from quarter to quarter through the year, with those during the first quarter of each year (January to March) being about 10 per cent. less than that during the last quarter (October to December) of the same year. The model did not assess seasonal variations relating directly to the camera sites.

In respect of the three year report, the statistical model shows that in Great Britain over the study period there was a national trend of a little over 4 per cent. per annum reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) and a 1.5 per cent. per annum reduction in personal injury collisions (PIC). The assessment concluded that even after taking these national trends into account there was a 40 per cent. reduction in the number of KSIs and a 33 per cent. reduction in the number of PICs at camera sites.

The statistical model also shows that in urban areas the frequency of KSI casualties for the whole of Great Britain increases from quarter to quarter through the year, and that rural areas have a peak in quarter three. The model did not assess seasonal variations relating directly to the camera sites.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fixed speed cameras the Government intend to install in England in each of the next five years. [29905]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government do not intend to install any fixed speed cameras in England in each of the next five years. Speed cameras are installed by the local highway authority as the appropriate solution to a road casualty problem following their investigation of that problem. It is not possible to predict in advance where these road casualty problems may arise. Any speed cameras proposed as part of the national safety camera programme will need to meet the site selection rules that apply at the time before being considered for approval as part of the programme.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from *(a)* road safety groups and *(b)* police authorities about the reduction of speed limits in villages and outside schools; and what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the reduction in speed limits *(a)* in villages, (ii) outside schools and (iii) in residential areas from 30 mph to 20 mph on the incidence of accidents. [30182]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department receives occasional representation from road safety groups in support of reduced speed limits, including in villages and outside schools. No such representations have been received from the police at the national level, although we are aware that many police authorities support these measures at the local level.

The Department has not undertaken specific assessment of the reduction of speed limits in villages and outside schools. However, research shows a clear link between reducing vehicle speed and accident reduction, with a 1 mph reduction in average speed expected to lower accident frequency by 5 per cent. It also shows that 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits can be effective at reducing collisions and injuries in the right situation, in particular when accompanied by traffic calming measures.

Local authorities already have the powers under section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to introduce local speed limits, including 20 mph, if they believe it appropriate to do so. The Department encourages their implementation in areas where vulnerable road users are present, particularly around schools.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of the road network in England had its speed limits enforced by active speed cameras in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30371]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not hold this information.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* fixed speed cameras and *(b)* mobile speed cameras; and what criteria he uses to assess effectiveness. [30373]

Dr. Ladyman: The independent 3-year evaluation report of the national safety camera programme assessed the effectiveness of both fixed and mobile cameras using the criteria of reductions in speed and casualties at camera sites. The evaluation concluded that both types of camera were effective in both respects. Fixed cameras had, on the whole, a greater effect in reducing speeding than mobile cameras, reflecting the fact that fixed cameras affect driving behaviour all the time, whereas mobile cameras operate periodically at each location.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Safety Camera Partnerships there were in England in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30375]

Dr. Ladyman: The first Safety Camera Partnerships were formed in 2000. Their numbers for England for each year are as follows:

	Number
April 2000	6
October 2001	12
April 2002	20
October 2002	26
Ap[illegible]03	33
A[illegible]05	36

[illegible] Avon Somerset and Gloucestershire which joined in 2002
[illegible] Avon and Somerset, and Gloucestershire.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he issues on the minimum number of persons that must be killed or seriously injured at a given site before *(a)* a fixed speed camera and *(b)* a mobile speed camera can be installed. [30376]

Dr. Ladyman: The casualty criteria that must be met before a fixed or mobile speed camera is installed is set out in the Handbook of Rules and Guidance for the National Safety Camera Programme for England and Wales for 2005/06. For fixed camera sites this is at least four killed or seriously injured collisions per site kilometre in the 36 months that forms the baseline period. For mobile camera sites it is at least two killed or seriously injured collisions per site kilometre in the baseline period.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the criteria are for the placement of a fixed speed camera. [30447]

Dr. Ladyman: The handbook of Rules and Guidance for the National Safety Camera Programme for England and Wales 2005/06 sets out the rules for core fixed speed camera sites operating within the Programme. Definitions of terms used are contained in the handbook but in summary the rules are:

Rules for proposed core sites	*Fixed camera sites*
Site length requirements	Between 0.4 and 1.5 km
Number of fatal and serious collisions (KSIs)	At least 4 KSI collisions per km in the baseline period
85th percentile speed at proposed sites	Speed survey shows free-flow 85th percentile speed is at or above ACPO threshold
Percentage over the speed limit	At least 20 per cent. of drivers are exceeding the speed limit, excluding congestion periods
Site conditions that are suitable for the type of enforcement proposed	Loading and unloading of camera can take place safely
No other engineering solutions can be implemented	There has been a site survey carried out by a road safety engineer confirming that no other cost effective engineering solution can be implemented to improve road safety along this stretch of road.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many and what percentage of fixed speed cameras were located on roads with (i) a 30 mph speed limit and (ii) a 40 mph speed limit in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30449]

Dr. Ladyman: The number and percentage of fixed speed cameras newly installed in each year on roads with a 30 mph or 40 mph speed limit from 1994 to 2004 is shown in the following table:

	Number of fixed speed cameras installed in each year			*Percentage of fixed speed cameras installed in each year*	
	In a 30 mph speed limit	*In a 40 mph speed limit*	*Total for all speed limits*	*In a 30 mph speed limit*	*In a 40 mph speed limit*
1994	27	20	54	50	37
1995	78	34	133	59	26
1996	86	37	146	59	25
1997	83	43	160	52	27
1998	117	56	221	53	25
1999	94	59	183	51	32
2000	108	41	172	63	24
2001	139	34	200	70	17
2002	160	39	245	65	16
2003	227	50	312	73	16
2004	230	43	304	76	14

Stone Mastic Asphalt

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost is of a top dressing of grit on newly-laid stone mastic asphalt. [30398]

Dr. Ladyman: Some local authorities use stone mastic asphalt material (SMA) with a top dressing of grit on their roads at their discretion. The costs of application are not held centrally.

The Highways Agency does not allow the use of SMA on trunk roads including motorways.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on whether stone mastic asphalt reacts with (i) diesel, (ii) oil (iii) hydraulic fluid and (iv) pre-wetted salt. [30400]

Dr. Ladyman: No specific research has been commissioned nor any evaluation carried out on how stone mastic asphalt reacts with *(a)* contaminants such as diesel, oil and hydraulic fluids and *(b)* with the use of pre-wetted salt. However, a report on research into the affects of contaminants on road surfaces in general, jointly funded by the Highways Agency and the Institute of Accident Investigators entitled 'Friction Tests on Contaminated Surfaces' is planned for publication in late December 2005. The Highways Agency does not allow the use of stone mastic asphalt on trunk roads including motorways.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent research his Department has undertaken on the coefficient of friction of stone mastic asphalt with regard to motorbikes. [30867]

Dr. Ladyman: No specific research has been undertaken on the coefficient of friction of stone mastic asphalt with regard to motorbikes. Development of the UK standards for the measurement of road surface friction has been based on research that is applicable to motorised vehicles in general.

Transport Staff (Abuse)

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many reported incidents of *(a)* verbal abuse and *(b)* physical attack on bus drivers and conductors there have been in each year since 1997. [31177]

Ms Buck: The Department does not collect statistics on the number of incidents of verbal assault. The following table shows the reported number of assaults on bus crews, including conductors and inspectors, in Great Britain up to 2003. The Department no longer collects data on such assaults outside London given serious problems with the quality and robustness of the data received. We are working to find more reliable methods of monitoring and recording incidents of crime on buses.

Assaults on bus crews, Great Britain

	Number
1993	1,492
1994	1,562
1995	1,938
1996	2,154
1997	1,899
1998	1,594
1999	1,680
2000[1]	1,260
2001	2,638
2002	2,874
2003	2,295

[1] Data considered unreliable owing to poor level of reporting.

Sources:
London: TfL reports for the bus operators under its contracts.
Outside London: a panel of large bus operators selected by DfT.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the development of a new Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity. [27717]

Mr. Plaskitt: The UK, along with other member states, supports the need for this successor EU-level spending programme for the period 2007–13, which will provide financial support for the implementation of the Community's objectives for employment and social affairs and the achievement of the Lisbon goals. It will replace existing programmes to: promote measures to combat direct or indirect discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; promote gender equality; support analysis, research and cooperation between member states in employment and labour market matters; and encourage cooperation between member states to combat social exclusion. The new programme does not propose a range of specific projects, but rather provides a framework to support EU-level actions under the areas covered, such as developing statistical tools, sharing of best practice, awareness-raising campaigns and support for organisations operating in the relevant fields.

Pensions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to make an announcement on the application of the Financial Assistance Scheme to those not covered in the first tranche of awards who have lost their pension due to the liquidation of their company pension fund. [24696]

Mr. Timms: The departmental website is continually updated to show pension schemes which are assessed as qualifying for the Financial Assistance Scheme. We have made a commitment to review the operation and funding of the Financial Assistance Scheme, alongside other spending priorities, in the next spending review.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the expenditure on national insurance rebates for those contracted out of the state second pension for *(a)* the next five years, *(b)* 2020, *(c)* 2030, *(d)* 2040 and *(e)* 2050. [29987]

Mr. Timms: The information is in the table:

Estimated cost of national insurance contribution rebates

£ million

	Occupational schemes			
Tax year	*Defined benefit*	*Defined contribution*	*Personal pension and stakeholder pension schemes*	*Total*
2006–07	7,000	600	3,600	11,200
2007–08	6,300	600	3,600	10,500
2008–09	6,300	600	3,700	10,500
2009–10	6,300	600	3,700	10,600
2010–11	6,300	500	3,700	10,600
2020–21	6,100	400	3,900	10,400
2030–31	6,000	400	3,500	9,900
2040–41	6,300	400	3,700	10,400
2050–51	6,300	400	4,400	11,300

Notes:

1. Figures are based on the December 2004 'Update of the Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund' and are therefore based on the latest published figures which are projected far enough into the future.
2. Figures use rebate rates calculated on the assumptions underlying the current rebates which have now been superseded by the Government Actuary's consultation document published in September.
3. Figures cover Great Britain only.
4. Due to rounding figures in the 'Total' column do not always sum.
5. Figures are rounded to the nearest £100 million.
6. Figures are on an accruals basis and are in constant 2005–06 price terms.

Source:
Government Actuary's Department.

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints have been received against the Pensions Ombudsman in each of the last three years. [28349]

Mr. Timms: The Pensions Ombudsman's aim in response to a complaint is to send a full reply within seven working days. Where a complaint cannot be resolved it may be referred by an hon. Member to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The number of complaints that were referred is in the following table:

	Number of complaints referred
2002–03	11
2003–04	6
2004–05	13

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether enough information was gathered on the Universal Vehicle Group Pension Scheme during the 2004 data collection exercise to determine whether or not its members were eligible for the Financial Assistance Scheme; and if he will make a statement; [30074]

(2) whether current information held by his Department on the Universal Vehicle Group Pension Scheme is sufficient for its members to qualify for the Financial Assistance Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [30075]

Mr. Timms: No. Minimal information on the Universal Vehicle Group Pension Scheme was provided during the 2004 data collection exercise. The Department sent the scheme administrators a notification and qualification form on 1 September 2005, which needs completing, signing and returning before the Department can decide whether the scheme is a qualifying pension scheme for the purposes of the Financial Assistance Scheme. The Department has since been in contact with the administrators who have confirmed that the form has been forwarded onto the trustees, who have until the end of the notification period—28 February 2006—to return part A (notification details) of the form.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet Meetings

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria will be used to decide which Cabinet Minister in his Department will speak on issues concerning his Department at meetings of the Cabinet. [28744]

Jim Fitzpatrick: As members of the Cabinet, both my right hon. Friends can and do speak on a wide range of issues discussed by Cabinet.

Council Tax

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of council tax increases on pensioners; and if he will make a statement. [29263]

Mr. Woolas: The Government recognise the concerns of many pensioners, particularly those on low or fixed incomes, about council tax. This Government have already taken action to improve pensioner incomes, spending nearly £11 billion extra on pensioners in 2005–06 compared to 1997 as a result of measures we have introduced since then. On average, after allowing for inflation, pensioner households are about £1,500 better off this year than they would have been under the system which operated in 1997. The least well-off third of pensioner households are, on average, £2,000 better off.

Help with council tax bills is available for those who are least well off through council tax benefit (CTB). Nearly two and a half million people aged 60 or over now benefit, though the Government are concerned that many pensioners do not claim their entitlement. The Department for Work and Pensions is taking active measures to ensure that people are made aware of CTB and are encouraged to take up their entitlement.

The Government are providing additional money to pensioners specifically to help them pay their council tax bills. We gave £100 to households with someone 70 or over in 2004–05. In 2005–06 households with someone aged 65 or over are receiving £200, usually with their with winter fuel payment, unless they are receiving; the guarantee credit element of pension credit (people getting the guarantee credit element of pension credit are already entitled to up to a 100 per cent. rebate on their council tax bills). Households with someone aged 70 or over getting the guarantee credit element of pension credit are receiving £50 to help with living costs.

While no decisions have been taken on capping in 2006–07 and beyond, we will not hesitate to use our capping powers to protect council taxpayers from excessive council tax rises in the future. In 2003–04, the last year in which capping was not undertaken, the average council tax increase in England was 12.9 per cent. This fell to 5.9 per cent. in 2004–05 and again to 4.1 per cent. in 2005–06.

Sir Michael Lyons is currently conducting an Inquiry into the financing of local government in the context of its wider functions and future role. He is aware of the widespread concerns about how the current council tax system affects pensioners and others on low and fixed incomes. Sir Michael is due to report before the end of 2006 and the Government will carefully consider his recommendations.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of spending by *(a)* Hertfordshire county council and *(b)* Dacorum borough council has been financed from council tax in each year since 1st January 1996. [29568]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of Revenue Expenditure by Hertfordshire county council and Dacorum borough council that has been financed from council tax in each financial year since 1 January 1996 is tabled as follows:

Percentage

	Hertfordshire	*Dacorum*
1996–97	26.6	32.4
1997–98	27.4	30.2
1998–99	29.7	42.3

Percentage

	Hertfordshire	*Dacorum*
1999–2000	30.7	28.0
2000–01	29.9	37.6
2001–02	29.9	33.7
2002–03	31.5	39.7
2003–04	33.3	39.6
2004–05	32.2	45.0
2005–06	31.7	46.3

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from Revenue Summary (RS) returns for 1996–97 to 2003–04, and Revenue Account budget (RA) returns for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The definition of council expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from Aggregate External Finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (Financial Reporting Standard) 17 basis while the outturn data for 2003–04 has been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. The budget data for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are a mix of FRS 17 and non-FRS 17. This is because for their 2004–05 and 2005–06 budget forms local authorities, after consultation, were given the option to complete their forms either on a non-FRS 17 basis or on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether former residents of a dwelling can be required to give information about that dwelling for the purposes of a valuation of a property for council tax purposes.[30658]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Under Section 27(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 former owners or occupiers of a dwelling can be required to give valuation officers information about that dwelling.

However, in practice, listing officers of the Valuation Office Agency will only need to discuss information about a dwelling with a former owner or occupier if *(a)* that person has an outstanding council tax appeal relating to a dwelling he or she previously owned or occupied or *(b)* to find out when a dwelling was constructed or adapted into a separate dwelling if this took place before the present occupier took up occupation.

Firefighters

Ed Balls: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what protection is available for firefighters in England who are attacked in execution of their duty. [29178]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Firefighters enjoy the same legal protection from violence as anyone else. The criminal law already contains a wide range of power to deal with violent behaviour. There is a hierarchy of offences against the person where injury results, ranging from grievous bodily harm through actual bodily harm to common law offences of assault and battery, depending on the injuries inflicted. Courts have the power to impose the appropriate sentence, taking into account all the circumstances of a particular case. It is to be expected that the Courts would regard attacks on emergency personnel in the execution of their duty as being particularly serious offences. Maximum penalties for offences of violence range from six months for common assault to life imprisonment for causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

The Fire and Rescue Services seek to assess and manage the risk of potential attack in the execution of their duties. Fire and Rescue Services will ask the Police to attend any incident that would be considered threatening to the fire crew and are encouraged to report any incidents so that prosecution can be brought forward where appropriate.

Fire and Rescue Services are also introducing preventative measures such as video cameras in the cabs of appliances to help identify offenders.

Housing

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many registered social landlord properties were sold on the open market other than to tenants in each of the last five years *(a)* in London and *(b)* in each English region. [24270]

Yvette Cooper: The following table gives the numbers of homes disposed of by Registered Social Landlords on the open market or at auction each year for the past five years. These data are not recorded on a regional basis and may include open market disposals to tenants. However all these sales were at market value, that is, they do not include any disposals made to tenants at any discount under schemes such as Right to Buy or Right to Acquire.

Financial year	*Number of homes*
2000–01	3,563
2001–02	2,974
2002–03	2,083
2003–04	4,111
2004–05	5,950
Total	18,681

Source:
Housing Corporation

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require English Partnerships to make a commitment to deliver social rented housing on the 17 sites being made available under the London Wide Initiative. [28893]

Yvette Cooper: Any development undertaken on the sites used for the London Wide Initiative will be subject to the normal planning regime. Work is continuing between English Partnerships, its development partners and the relevant local authorities on the total mix of houses on each site. This will be in accordance with respective local authorities' planning policies and agreed planning obligations. The sites will therefore provide social rented housing in accordance with housing need.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library copies of each regional housing board's recommended investment strategy for 2006 to 2008. [28743]

Yvette Cooper: Copies have been made available in the Library of the House.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1121W, when the information to which the answer refers will be placed in the Library. [31085]

Mr. Woolas: The information has now been deposited in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Meetings

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many meetings concerning issues for which his Department is responsible *(a)* he has, *(b)* the Minister of Communities and Local Government has and *(c)* both have attended since May. [28745]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Both of my right hon. Friends have a wide range of meetings in their roles as departmental Ministers and constituency MPs. The topics covered by these meetings are many and varied.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* have a statutory base, *(b)* publish their advice to Government, *(c)* publish an annual report and *(d)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether this is under a statutory requirement in each case. [29749]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Advisory Panel on the Beacon Scheme *(a)* does not have a statutory base and *(b)* does publish its advice to Government. The Advisory Panel on Standards for the Planning Inspectorate *(a)* does not have a statutory base and *(b)* does publish its advice to Government. The Building Regulations Advisory Committee *(a)* does have a statutory base which is Section 14 of the Building Act 1984 and *(b)* does not publish its advice to Government. The National Community Forum *(a)* does not have a statutory base and *(b)* does not publish its advice to Government.

All four bodies *(c)* publish annual reports and *(d)* none of the four lay those annual reports before Parliament. None of the four are under a statutory requirement to do any of the above.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of Members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether this is under a statutory requirement in each case. [29750]

Jim Fitzpatrick: None of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's four advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) *(a)* hold public meetings or *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises.

The Advisory Panel on the Beacon Scheme *(c)* conducts consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* does not publish a register of Members' interests and *(e)* and *(f)* does not publish either agendas for or minutes of meetings. It would consider what could be made available on request.

The Advisory Panel on Standards for the Planning Inspectorate *(c)* consults professional organisations on the Planning Inspectorate's performance, *(d)* does not publish a register of Members' interests and *(e)* and *(f)* does not publish either agendas for or minutes of meetings although both would be made available on request.

The Building Regulations Advisory Committee *(c)* does not conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests. While it does not publish *(d)* a register of Members' interests and *(e)* and *(f)* agendas for and minutes of meetings, it makes all available on request.

The National Community Forum *(c)* does not conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests and *(d)* publishes a register of Members' interests. It does not publish *(e)* and *(f)* either agendas for or minutes of meetings.

None of the four bodies is under a statutory requirement to do any of the above.

Planning Applications

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications recommended for refusal in the last five years following a full public inquiry have subsequently been approved. [27009]

Yvette Cooper: In the last five years in England there have been 1,106 called in planning applications and recovered planning appeals decided by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister the First Secretary of State. Of these, 22 were planning applications where an Inspector had recommended a refusal of planning permission following a public inquiry, but which were subsequently approved by the First Secretary of State.

Public Service Agreements

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many public service agreements have been entered into with local authorities covering Hemel Hempstead constituency in the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [29569]

Mr. Woolas: The Government have signed a local public service agreement with Hertfordshire county council which runs from April, 2003 to March, 2006. Local public service agreements have now become the 'reward element' of Local Area Agreements (LAA), and the Government are currently negotiating an LAA with Hertfordshire county council and its partners to run from April, 2006 to March 2009, which will include this reward element.

South West Regional Assembly

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to public funds was of the South West Regional Assembly in 2004–05. [30351]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 817W to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman).

Tree Maintenance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department has given to local authorities on tree maintenance near highways. [29728]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

Guidance on the inspection, condition and maintenance of trees on or near highways is given at sections 9 and 10 of "Well-maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management" published by the UK Roads Liaison Group in July this year. The Department for Transport strongly recommends this code to local authorities.

Unitary Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research the Government *(a)* have conducted since 1997 and *(b)* is conducting on unitary local government in England. [26903]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was created in May 2002. Since then (and indeed since 1997 as the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and then the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR)) we have undertaken one piece of research specifically on unitaries as part of its annual Local and Regional Government Research Programme. This was commissioned from PricewaterhouseCoopers and sought to produce a financial model for the calculation of potential costs associated with the creation of unitary authorities in those regions where referendums for elected regional assemblies were due to be held. The model considered a limited range of well-defined costs—the 'costs of being in business'—and is available on the Boundary Committee for England website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many forces have been contributed by each country contributing to the International Security Assistance Force; and if he will make a statement. [27162]

Mr. Ingram: International Security Assistance Force currently numbers about 10,000 troops from 36 NATO and non-NATO troop contributing countries. Individual contributions by each country change on a regular basis due to the rotation of troops. Information on numbers of troops currently deployed is a matter for the troop contributing nations.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for how long the UK plans to continue to embed troops within the Afghan national army. [29681]

Mr. Ingram: The United States has the lead in training the Afghan National Army. Currently, the United Kingdom does not embed trainers with the Afghan National Army, but does provide support by training its Non-Commissioned Officers, a commitment we have recently agreed to extend to September 2006.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his *(a)* United States and *(b)* European Union counterparts on the deployment of additional British troops to Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [29887]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has regular discussions with our Allies, including US and EU counterparts, on the deployment of additional troops to Afghanistan. We have made no final decisions on a deployment to Southern Afghanistan next year, but we are making some timely, prudent and common sense preparations for a potential deployment. A statement will be made to the House when a decision has been made.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to extend the training period for recruits with the Afghan National Army; and what discussions he has had with UK allies on this. [29598]

Mr. Ingram: The training period for recruits within the Afghan National Army is a matter for the United States, who lead in this area. The United Kingdom currently supports training for Non-Commissioned Officers and we have recently agreed to extend this commitment to September 2006. We continue to discuss the requirement for training the Afghan National Army with the US and other partner nations.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the strength is of *(a)* the Afghan army and *(b)* the Afghan police; and what he estimates the required establishment to be in each case. [29600]

Mr. Ingram: The United States is the lead nation for developing the Afghan National Army (ANA); the current target strength for the ANA is 70,000 personnel. Germany is the lead nation for developing the Afghan National Police (ANP); the current target strength for the ANP is 62,000 personnel. The ANA is about 30,000 strong and the ANP some 50,000 strong.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are in Afghanistan, broken down by service and regiment; and what levels of deployment are expected once the UK takes on the leadership of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. [29608]

Mr. Ingram: As of 16 November 2005, there were approximately 1,060 British personnel in Afghanistan, broken down as follows:

Service	*Number*
Royal Navy/Royal Marines	30
Army	790
Royal Air Force	240

All personnel from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines are individual augmentees, as are some from the other Services. The principal Army unit serving in Afghanistan is the First Battalion, The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry, while that for the Royal Air Force is 4 Squadron.

The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) is the British-led High Readiness Force (Land) Headquarters, one of six NATO possesses. These headquarters currently command the International Security Assistance Force in turn. Final decisions on the size of the ARRC's deployment have not been made.

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 374W, on aircraft crashes, why the radar altitude hold was not cleared for use on the Chinook HC1; and if he will make a statement. [25113]

Mr. Touhig: The radar altitude hold was not cleared for use on the Chinook HC1 because, during acceptance trials, a small number of technical problems were identified with its use. However, the non-operation of the radar altitude hold did not affect overall safety of the aircraft as the altimeter could be set to give both visual and audio indications of a drop in altitude.

Armed Forces

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes in the rules of engagement are being made as the UK takes on leadership of the Allied Rapid Reaction Force. [29680]

Mr. Ingram: The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) is the British-led High Readiness Force (Land) Headquarters, one of six NATO possesses. These headquarters command the International Security Assistance Force in turn. The Headquarters Group of the ARRC will operate under Rules of Engagement compatible with those agreed by NATO, but it has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment in detail on the Rules of Engagement under which our armed forces operate.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints about inappropriate kit have been recorded in the recent campaigns in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan. [27615]

Mr. Ingram: I understand that this question refers specifically to clothing and backpacks. There have been no officially reported complaints within the chain of command about inappropriate clothing or backpacks from either Iraq or Afghanistan during the last 12 months for which records are maintained. The equipment provided to armed forces personnel is sufficient and appropriate for the tasks they are required to undertake.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons applications from Fiji to join the armed services are on hold. [28929]

Mr. Touhig: The recruitment of Fijian Nationals is not on hold. Fijian nationals may still apply to join the armed services in the same way as applicants from any other Commonwealth Country.

However, the practice of the Commonwealth Selection Team visiting Fiji has been placed on hold pending a review of the procedures used to select and support Fijians in the British Army.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department last reviewed the duty free status of cigarettes for armed service personnel. [29275]

Mr. Touhig: Service personnel are able to purchase duty free cigarettes when on board HM Ships in international waters and normally when overseas, although quantities may be limited by local agreements. The arrangements are well established and have not been subject to review.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the prevalence of smoking among armed service personnel. [29276]

Mr. Touhig: The most recent completed assessment of prevalence of smoking amongst armed service personnel was carried out by the Defence Dental Services as part of their annual dental inspections for the year 2004–05. It recorded smoking prevalence of 23 per cent. for the Royal Navy., 33 per cent. for the Army and 19.6 per cent. for the RAF.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of the armed forces' entitlement to duty free cigarettes on the prevalence of smoking among service personnel. [29277]

Mr. Touhig: There has been no assessment specifically relating to the impact on the prevalence of smoking of the availability of duty free cigarettes to Service personnel serving abroad.

Army Recruitment Campaigns

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of the British Army recruitment campaigns in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [30223]

Mr. Touhig: The regional recruitment marketing costs for Commander Regional Recruiting Northern Ireland, one of the nine Commanders Regional Recruiting within the United Kingdom, for the last five financial years are detailed in the table. These cover activities including: local marketing, newspapers, printing and local Regimental Recruiting Team marketing, but exclude staff costs. They also exclude national advertising, television, radio, response handing, magazines, education and citizenship, national events and exhibitions and Camouflage (Youth programme), which are funded centrally by Headquarters Recruiting Group, a part of the Army Training and Recruiting Agency. It is not possible to apportion these national costs to regional areas of the United Kingdom.

Financial year	*Cost of marketing (£ million)*
2000–01	0.360
2001–02	0.311
2002–03	0.371
2003–04	0.262
2004–05	0.641

The reduction in the costs for 2003–04 was due to a general redeployment of regional marketing funds to Headquarters Recruiting Group's national recruiting operation.

Additional funding was provided to Northern Ireland in 2004–05 to fund a bespoke television advertising campaign on Ulster Television to counter the difficult recruiting environment, which nationally grew towards the end of the year.

Harrier Aircraft

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Harrier aircraft fleet. [30344]

Mr. Ingram: By April 2006, the Joint Force Harrier (JFH) will have migrated to an all Harrier Ground Reconnaissance force, comprising GR7, GR9 and T10 aircraft, following the withdrawal of the Sea Harrier aircraft from service. The Harrier GR force will remain in service until it is replaced by the Joint Combat Aircraft around the middle of the next decade.

Courts Martial

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* soldiers and *(b)* officers in the British Army have resumed their military careers after being found not guilty by a court martial in each of the last 10 years. [29775]

Mr. Touhig: All soldiers and officers who are found not guilty at a court martial may, in principle, continue their military career. However, if it is deemed appropriate, subsequent administrative action could be taken which could result in discharge from the Army. Service personnel might also choose to seek premature voluntary release.

The figures in the following table indicate the numbers in each of the last 10 years who have been found not guilty at court martial.

	Number acquitted
1995	30
1996	40
1997	34
1998	70
1999	65
2000	82
2001	145
2002	65
2003	70
2004	57

The numbers of those discharged as a result of administrative action after having been found not guilty at court martial, or who choose to leave voluntarily, could not be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces were *(a)* charged and *(b)* found guilty at courts martial for each category of serious crimes of violence up to that of murder in cases where all proceedings are complete in each of the past 10 years; and how many of those found guilty were (i) sent to prison, (ii) dismissed, (iii) dismissed in disgrace and (iv) retained in the forces following a period of imprisonment in each year. [30227]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Decorations

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the theatres for service in which General Service Medals and Clasps have ceased to be awarded, broken down by *(a)* date and *(b)* reasons for the decision in each case. [30535]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* There is currently only one General Service Medal (GSM) in issue, for service in Northern Ireland. GSMs no longer in issue would have been terminated because the operation ended or the risk and rigour diminished. It must be noted that medals and clasps are not in the gift of the Ministry of Defence—this Department only makes recommendations through the Cabinet Office to the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (HD Committee), which in turn makes recommendations to HM The Queen.

The following GSMs have been awarded since the end of the Second World War:

General Service Medal 1918–62 with clasps for:	
a. South East Asia 1945–46	3 September 1945 to 30 November 1946
b. Bomb and Mine Clearance 1945–49	3 September 1945 to 31 December 1949
c. Bomb and Mine Clearance 1945–56	3 September 1945 to 10 November 1956
d. Palestine 1945–48	27 September 1945 to 30 June 1948
e. Malaya	16 June 1948 to 31 July 1960
f. Canal Zone	16 October 1951 to 19 October1954
g. Cyprus	1 April 1955 to 18 April 1959
h. Near East	31 October to 22 December1956
i. Arabian Peninsula	1 January 1957 to 30 June 1960
j. Brunei	8 December to 23 December 1962
The General Service Medal 1962 with clasps for:	
a. Borneo	24 December 1962 to 11 August 1966
b. Radfan	25 April to 31 July 1964
c. South Arabia	1 August 1964 to 30 November 1967
d. Malay Peninsula	17 August 1964 to 11 August 1966
e. South Vietnam	24 December 1962 and 29 May 1964
f. Northern Ireland	14 August 1969 to a date to be decided
g. Dhofar	1 October 1969 to 3 September 1976
h. Lebanon	7 February 1983 to 9 March 1984
i. Mine Clearance (Gulf of Suez)	15 August to 15 October 1984

General Service Medal 1918–62 with clasps for:	
j. Gulf	17 November 1986 to 28 February 1989
k. Kuwait	8 March to 30 September 1991
l. Northern Iraq/Southern Turkey	6 April to 17 July 1991
m. Air Operations Iraq	16 July 1991 to 18 March 2003 (Op Resinate (South)) or 30 April 2003 (Op Resinate (North)).

Diego Garcia

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the UK's military commitment is to Diego Garcia; what other overseas forces are stationed there; and if he will make a statement. [30346]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom's military commitment to Diego Garcia, in the British Indian Ocean Territory, is to maintain and exercise UK sovereignty over the territory, including its territorial waters and airspace. In total, 41 UK military personnel are based there. United States forces are also stationed on the island.

Iraq

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the status of British troops in Iraq following the approval of the Iraqi constitution. [29687]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom's armed forces continue to assist the Iraqi Government in providing security and building the capability and capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces so that they may take responsibility for their own security.

UK forces remain in Iraq under the UN mandate set out in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1546. Following a written request by the Iraqi Government, on 8 November the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1637, which comes into effect on 31 December 2005. This extends the mandate of the Multi-National Force in Iraq (MNF-I), if required, until 31 December 2006. UNSCR 1637 includes the same guarantees as UNSCR 1546, including a commitment on the part of the UN Security Council to review these provisions no later 15 June 2006 and to terminate the mandate of the MNF-I if requested by the new Iraqi Government.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 98W on departmental staff literacy and numeracy, how many and what proportion of new recruits to the army in the last 12 months had *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills at or below (i) entry level 3, (ii) entry level 2 and (iii) entry level 1. [27877]

Mr. Touhig: Consolidated literacy and numeracy initial assessment figures for recruits to the army in the period 1 November 2004 to 31 October 2005, are provided as follows.

	Literacy			*Numeracy*		
	Entry level 1	*Entry level 2*	*Entry level 3*	*Entry level 1*	*Entry level 2*	*Entry level 3*
Percentage	0.71	7.81	32.51	0.19	7.65	37.11
Number of recruits	72	795	3310	19	770	3737
		10,180				
Total number of recruits[1]		10,070				

[1] Numeracy figures are lower because numeracy assessments were not initially recorded at all locations.

Operation Maturin

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what commitment the UK made to Operation Maturin to help the earthquake victims in Pakistan and Kashmir; how many flights were made by the RAF; how many personnel were involved; what tonnage of *(a)* food and *(b)* other supplies were transported; and where. [29609]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom commitment to Operation Maturin has been both bilateral with Pakistan and through NATO. Bilaterally, the RAF have deployed three CH-47 Chinooks, which have flown and combined total of more than 200 flying hours and delivered nearly 900 tonnes of aid to date, comprising food, tents and blankets, but also tools, plastic sheeting, corrugated iron and baby care equipment. The breakdown of tonnage by individual items is not available. Up to 16 November, they had also evacuated some 325 personnel, 32 of whom were casualties. The number of personnel involved in this deployment is 81 (77 deployed as part of the Support Helicopter Force and four medics).

A six-person Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (ORLT) deployed to Islamabad on 19 October to provide support to the UK operation. A two-man Mobile Air Operations Team deployed to Chaklala airbase, on the weekend of 29 and 30 October, where they carried out a successful reconnaissance of a Forward Operating Base to the north of Islamabad. Four logistic planners deployed to Islamabad on 26 October to assist the UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC), where they are assisting in the development of a UN relief plan, including making more effective use of available aircraft. The MOD has also provided 23,000 vegetarian and halal ration packs, while a four person Joint Media Operations Team is providing coverage of the UK response and assisting NATO where possible.

Four C-17 flights have provided strategic lift, including: the transportation of two civilian Puma helicopters to Pakistan on behalf of DfID and the International Committee of the Red Cross; the transportation of one CH-47 Chinook helicopter and its crew and equipment (two flights); and, on behalf of NATO, the transportation of a medical team of three accompanied by equipment and

a Land Rover. Each flight required a crew often. A total of 57 passengers were transported. Details of the total tonnage carried on these flights is not available.

The United Kingdom has contributed to the NATO relief effort in a number of ways. Four RAF C130 Hercules with six crews, and supporting Specialist Deployed Operating Base elements from RAF Lyneham have been made available to NATO. Three have been deployed to Incirlik, Turkey to deliver aid via the NATO airbridge. One remains in the UK at 48 hours notice to deploy. As of 14 November, they had carried out 30 flights, delivering 288 tonnes of aid (37 per cent. of the total moved by NATO), comprising tents, mattresses, stoves, blankets and medical items. The breakdown of tonnage by individual items is not available. The number of personnel involved in this deployment is currently 91 (84 in Incirlik, and seven in Baku, Azerbaijan).

A RAF Mobile Medical Team of four people (one GP, two Medical Technicians and one Environmental Health Technician) deployed to the region on 16 November. One RAF officer is in Islamabad as part of NATO's own Operational Liaison Reconnaissance Team (OLRT). A seven person UK Liaison party from the UK Joint Force Air Component HQ has joined the French-led Joint Force Air Component HQ and are deployed in France and Pakistan.

In addition to our standing NATO commitments, a sub-unit 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers, supported by personnel from 42 Commando Royal Marines, has been offered to NATO. If the offer of this capability is taken up it will comprise 86 personnel deploying to Pakistan.

Royal Navy

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Navy personnel are based in *(a)* Gibraltar and *(b)* the Falklands. [29166]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to Tri Service Publication 6, Global Location of UK Regular Forces (TSP 6). Data are provided for the Naval Service, which include the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines.

TSP 6 is published quarterly; the most recent publication shows the numbers of Service personnel at 1 July 2005.

Copies of TSP 6 are held in the House of Commons Library and also available on www.dasa.mod.uk.

Royal Ordnance Factory (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much land at Royal Ordnance factory *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Heapey is owned by Royal Ordnance. [28012]

Mr. Ingram: BAE, now known as BAE Systems Land Systems, took over Royal Ordnance and their sites in 1987. Land holdings are a matter for the company.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 380W, on military personnel, how many of the Territorial Army personnel who collected their bounty in 2004–05 were *(a)* first-year bounty, *(b)* second-year bounty, *(c)* third-year bounty and *(d)* over three years bounty; and how many voluntary leavers had not passed phase 1 and 2 of basic training. [29537]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Veterans' Badges

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many veterans' badges have been allocated to ex-service personnel in Pudsey constituency. [19758]

Mr. Touhig: The scheme was launched in May 2004. There are no accurate records of geographical issue available prior to April 2005.

A total of 16 badges have been issued to ex-service personnel in the Pudsey constituency since April 2005.

On 13 November my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced that eligibility for the badge was being extended to those who served between the two world wars, and from the end of the second world war until the end of 1954

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many veterans' badges have been allocated to ex-service personnel in West Lancashire constituency in the last five years. [27697]

Mr. Touhig: The scheme was launched in May 2004. There are no accurate records of geographical issue available before April 2005.

A total of 47 badges have been issued to ex-service personnel in the West Lancashire constituency since April 2005.

On 13 November my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced that eligibility for the badge was being extended to those who served between the two world wars, and from the end of the second world war until the end of 1954.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Domestic Violence (Wales)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Solicitor-General how many domestic violence prosecutions were undertaken in Wales in each year since 2002, broken down by region. [30786]

The Solicitor-General: The following table shows the number of Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutions for domestic violence offences, finalised in Wales, in the last two financial years, together with comparable figures for each of the four CPS areas located in Wales. The table also shows the number and proportion resulting in conviction and in unsuccessful outcomes.

The CPS does not have comparable full records of domestic violence proceedings before 2004.

Proceedings for domestic violence—Wales: 2004–06

	Convictions	Percentage	Unsuccessful outcomes	Percentage	Total
2004–05					
Dyfed Powys	138	58.5	98	41.5	236
Gwent	268	60.2	177	39.8	445
North Wales	297	67.7	142	32.3	439
South Wales	621	52.5	561	47.5	1,182
Total	1,324	57.5	978	42.5	2,302
2005–06 (1 April 2005 to 17 November 2005)					
Dyfed Powys	119	63.0	70	37.0	189
Gwent	188	60.6	122	39.4	310
North Wales	313	68.0	147	32.0	460
South Wales	455	51.8	424	48.2	879
Total	1,075	58.5	763	41.5	1,838

Serious Fraud Office

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Serious Fraud Office will investigate the allegations concerning British companies contained in the Volcker report into the UN Oil-for-Food operation in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [29685]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office is reviewing the Volcker report to determine whether any circumstances mentioned in the report justify involvement of the Serious Fraud Office.

As part of our responsibilities under the OECD convention against corruption the Serious Fraud Office will review all allegations of corruption referred to it against United Kingdom companies or individuals in overseas jurisdictions to determine whether an investigation is warranted.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment the Attorney-General has requested the Serious Fraud Office to produce of the difficulties the Serious Fraud Office faces in detecting, investigating and prosecuting corruption. [31181]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General routinely meets with the Director of the Serious Fraud Office and other senior SFO officials. A standing agenda item at these meetings are case updates and significant allegations reported to the SFO. The updates include briefing on difficulties faced by the SFO at any stage of an investigation or prosecution, for any type of case.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Royal Prerogative

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals in this Session of Parliament to modernise and improve the parliamentary scrutiny process of ministerial decisions made using the royal prerogative. [29797]

Mr. Hoon: The Government have no plans to alter the present procedures for parliamentary scrutiny of ministerial decisions involving the royal prerogative. The Government accepts and welcomes scrutiny of any of their actions, including those taken under the prerogative. Ministers are already accountable to Parliament for action taken under prerogative powers, as for anything else.

I refer the right hon. Member to the Government Response to the Fourth Report of the Public Administration Committee (HC422) of session 2003–04.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Care Home Closures (Legal Challenges)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the policy is of the Legal Services Commission on the granting of legal aid to those seeking to challenge closure of local authority care homes on human rights grounds; and if she will make a statement. [29721]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission assesses applications for Community Legal Service funding, including those on human rights grounds, on a case by case basis against the criteria set out in the Funding Code, as established under the Access to Justice Act 1999. This involves consideration of the client's means, the prospects of success for the case, the likely cost, and the benefit to the client and wider public as a whole.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will require the Crown Prosecution Service to reply to the letter dated 28 September to the Secretary of State from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton which was forwarded to the Crown Prosecution Service on 7 October. [29108]

Ms Harman: The Crown Prosecution Service sent the right hon. Member a substantive reply on 16 November about prosecution aspects of the case. The Lord Chancellor will reply about other aspects of the right hon. Member's letter.

Legal Aid

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men received legal aid in respect of care and custody proceedings in each of the last three years for which information is available. [31020]

Bridget Prentice: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27788]

Bridget Prentice: A year-by-year and travel class breakdown cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost. However, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the Chief Executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published annually the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year. All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Drug Crimes

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* recorded cases of, *(b)* prosecutions for and *(c)* convictions for drug crimes there have been for (i) illegal importation of drugs, (ii) illegal cultivation of drugs, (iii) possession of drugs with intent to supply, (iv) possession of drugs, (v) money laundering-related drugs offences and (vi) other drugs offences in each of the last five years, in each district command unit in Northern Ireland. [28880]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested by the hon. Gentleman has been placed in the Library.

Public Bodies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the public bodies in Northern Ireland which *(a)* fall within the remit of (i) the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and (ii) the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments and *(b)* are outwith the remit of either body. [30245]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested by the hon. Gentleman has been placed in the Library.

CABINET OFFICE

Government Car and Despatch Agency

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many cars in the fleet purchased each year since 1997 by the Government Car and Despatch Agency have been converted to alternative environmentally friendly fuels; [30918]

(2) what plans are in place to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Government Car and Despatch Agency; [30919]

(3) pursuant to page 24 of the Government Car and Despatch Agency Annual Report 2004–05, which Government Departments which are now using the Green Car Service; [30920]

(4) if he will list all those other than Ministers who are entitled to a car and driver supplied by the Government Car and Despatch Agency. [30922]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its chief executive Mr. Roy Burke to write to the right hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Nuclear Inspectorate

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* complaints, *(b)* court actions and *(c)* fines there have been in each year since 1995 against the nuclear industry for problems related to (i) odours, (ii) water pollution, (iii) air pollution and (iv) human health impact, (A) in total, (B) in each region and (C) per site. [27794]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to provide a reply that fully answers the hon. Member's question without entailing disproportionate cost.

However, details of cases and fines against the nuclear industry have recently been made available in the House of Commons Library following the hon. Member's recent question to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

As the Environment Agency's National Enforcement Database was commissioned in 1999, data are only available from that date. The Database identifies pollution cases by their effects on air, water and land and does not include "complaints".

Radioactive Material

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many accidents there have been in each year since 1975 involving the transportation of radioactive material *(a)* by air, *(b)* by road, *(c)* by rail and *(d)* by ship. [27665]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

Details of all events involving the transport of radioactive material in the UK since 1989 have been published in a series of annual reports. The latest report in this series is "Radiological Consequences Resulting from Accidents and Incidents Involving the Transport of Radioactive Materials in the UK—2004 Review (HPA-RPD-007)". This report is on the internet at the following address:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/publications/hpa_rpd_reports/2005/hpa_rod_007.htm

Details of all the previous reports in the series are contained in the reference section of the latest report. A report detailing events occurring during 2005 will be published in late 2006.

Two reports analysing trends in events have also been published, these are: "Review of the Radiological Consequences Resulting from Accidents and Incidents Involving the Transport of Radioactive Materials in the UK from 1964 to 1988 (NRPB-M206)" and "Review of the Radiological Consequences Resulting from Accidents and Incidents Involving the Transport of Radioactive Materials in the UK from 1958 to 1994 (NRPB-R282)".

The reports contain information concerning all abnormal events involving the transport of radioactive material which have been reported to or have otherwise come to the attention of the Department for Transport. The total number of events for each year and mode of transport are:

	Air	*Road*	*Rail*	*Ship*	*Airport*[1]
1975	2	7	0	3	18
1976	1	3	7	1	23
1977	1	5	7	1	20
1978	1	4	6	1	16
1979	1	4	3	1	10
1980	0	3	7	1	11
1981	2	5	6	0	7
1982	1	2	3	0	9
1983	1	5	0	0	2
1984	0	3	4	3	1
1985	1	7	4	0	0
1986	2	2	2	2	0
1987	3	5	5	1	0
1988	1	9	4	3	2
1989	2	6	4	2	0
1990	2	6	7	3	1
1991	4	5	9	3	3
1992	4	8	3	1	0
1993	2	8	6	0	3
1994	5	3	11	0	1
1995	6	16	5	1	1
1996	4	9	4	2	9
1997	7	13	3	1	2
1998	11	13	11	0	9
1999	12	13	6	2	5
2000	7	20	15	1	2
2001	3	12	20	1	0
2002	6	10	0	3	1
2003	4	4	3	0	0
2004	3	14	3	0	0

[1] These are events that occurred in airport warehouses and usually involved packages falling from fork-lift trucks. These have been included separately because to classify them as either air or road events would be misleading.

The events in this table include all abnormal events, howsoever minor, and covers all movements of radioactive material, however small and for whatever reason, usually in connection with medical diagnosis/treatment, research or industrial radiography. The list includes events clearly identifiable as accidents (e.g. dropped packages or road traffic accidents), however, the majority are events such as stolen packages, incorrectly prepared packages or packages transported without the correct labelling/paperwork. Most of these events were minor with no radiological consequences and in some cases were false alarms. Very rarely was radioactive material released to the environment or did people receive significant radiation doses.

Examination of the reports referred to earlier in this answer will give a fuller understanding of the frequency, severity and consequences of accidents involving the transport of radioactive material in the UK. Copies of all these reports are available in the House of Commons Library.

WALES

Business Rates

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was raised in business rates from *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Pembrokeshire in each year since 1990. [29498]

Nick Ainger: The information is in the following table. Details of contributions to the pool between 1990–91 and 1995–96 are taken from the publication "Welsh Local Government Financial Statistics". Details from 1996–97 are taken from the StatsWales website table 00466.

Pembrokeshire county council became a billing authority in 1996.

£000[1]

	Wales	*Pembrokeshire*
1990–91	345,309	n/a
1991–92	401,100	n/a
1992–93	378,745	n/a
1993–94	367,147	n/a
1994–95	354,244	n/a
1995–96	399,535	n/a
1996–97	427,156	16,615
1997–98	460,306	17,608
1998–99	464,848	17,124
1999–2000	489,705	7,082
2000–01	566,400	21,771
2001–02	588,531	21,794
2002–03	562,831	22,099
2003–04[2]	567,085	17,036
2004–05[3]	633,511	21,930

n/a = Not available.

[1] Contribution to non-domestic rating pool.

[2] Unaudited.

[3] Provisional.

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether *(a)* computer-assisted mass appraisal and *(b)* the automated valuation model was used in the council tax revaluation in Wales. [29726]

Nick Ainger: No

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to the answer of 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1167W, on Council Tax (Wales), what criteria the Valuation Office Agency used in deciding whether to make use of private sector firms during the council tax revaluation in Wales. [29734]

Nick Ainger: The Valuation Office Agency's listing officers in Wales have a statutory duty, under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Local Government Act 2003), to compile and maintain valuation lists for council tax purposes. The Valuation Office Agency did not make use of private sector firms during the council tax revaluation in Wales, as it was fully resourced to carry out this task.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27738]

Mr. Hain: Since the Wales Office was established in July 1999, no claims for damages have been paid.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many contracts were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05 for direct mail; and what the value was in each case. [27670]

Mr. Hain: Since the Wales Office was established in July 1999 we have never signed any direct mail contracts.

Hospital Provision

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Minister for Health to discuss funding for the provision of new hospitals serving patients in Wales. [25939]

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Minister for Health on funding for the provision of new hospitals serving patients in Wales. [23672]

Nick Ainger: I regularly meet with the Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services to discuss a range of issues, including funding for the provision of new hospitals in Wales.

Capital expenditure for building hospitals is detailed within the Welsh Assembly's Capital Investment Plan. This includes a major rebuilding scheme aimed at modernising health and social care and increasing capacity. It will be delivered by investment in the NHS infrastructure in Wales increasing from £120 million in the current financial year to £309 million in 2007–08.

There are currently 55 schemes of which 30 have either on-site development or fully approved business cases 25 which are actively progressing through the business case process, in addition there are 47 schemes in the planning stage.

Of the current schemes, the funding already approved for the first three years of the Capital Investment Plan includes the following projects where work is already ongoing:

2nd Rhondda Community Hospital (Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda)

Porthmadoc Community Hospital

Orthopaedic Surgery facilities in Newport and Llandough

Tenby Community Hospital

Carmarthen Accident and Emergency

South Pembrokeshire Hospital

And the following schemes, where it is anticipated that work will start within the next two years:

Caerphilly Local General Hospital

Ebbw Vale Hospital for Blaenau Gwent

Holywell Community Hospital

Cynon Valley Neighbourhood Hospital

Bro Morgannwg—Modernisation of Mental Health

Gwent Main Delivery Unit

Gwent Clinical School (Health Science Institute)

In addition, work is currently taking place with the NHS to develop a 10-year capital investment plan to 2014–15.

Ministerial Travel

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many journeys he has made between London and Cardiff on official business since 2002 by *(a)* car, *(b)* train, *(c)* bus, *(d)* coach, *(e)* helicopter and *(f)* aeroplane; and what the costs of travel were in each year. [30856]

Mr. Hain: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Details on the number of journeys made by car could be provided only at disproportionate cost. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

I have made 428 journeys by train.

The total cost of train journeys per calendar year were:

	£
2002	11,593
2003	9,568
2004	8,400

I have not used any other method of transport between London and Cardiff.

Ministerial Visits

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the dates and venues of visits he has made to armed forces' bases in Wales since October 2002. [30857]

Mr. Hain: I visited Maindy Barracks in February 2004 and Brecon Barracks in July 2004.

NHS Hospital Beds

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had in Cabinet on the number of NHS hospital beds in Wales. [30858]

Mr. Hain: The provision of access to NHS treatment in Wales is the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government. In my role as Secretary of State for Wales, I discuss issues relating to health service delivery regularly with the First Minister.

I also regularly discuss matters relating to health services in Wales with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health. For example, in the current Session, my right hon. Friend has introduced two Bills, the Health Bill and the NHS Redress Bill, which contain provisions relating to Wales.

I will continue to raise such matters with Cabinet colleagues when it is appropriate to do so.

Rural Workers (Pay)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent assessment he has made of levels of pay for workers in rural Wales; and if he will make a statement. [25940]

Nick Ainger: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes details of pay and earnings within Wales for employees in all industries and occupation by unitary authority that is taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

This information is published on the ONS website: www.statistics.gov.uk

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ambassadors

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what additional amount the frais allowance was increased in this financial year in respect of the United Kingdom's ambassador to the United States; and for what purposes. [26867]

Mr. Straw: The Frais provision of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the United States of America was slightly lower at the beginning of the current financial year compared to the previous one. This reflected movements in the exchange rate of the US Dollar to the Pound and in the cost of living index comparing Washington with the UK. However Frais was underspent by £29,000 the previous financial year and it was agreed that, that amount could be carried over to this financial year to be available for possible additional expenditure in respect of the EU and G8 presidencies, as well as the visit of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall. This expenditure will need to be accounted for in the usual way.

Assets Recovery Agency

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received any complaint from the Assets Recovery Agency in respect of any overseas territory failing *(a)* to comply with requests from the Agency and *(b)* to legislate to facilitate the Agency's work; and if he will make a statement. [30086]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Assets Recovery Agency has not raised any complaints with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary with regard to any Overseas Territory failing to comply with Agency requests or to legislate appropriately.

The Assets Recovery Agency is currently exploring with some countries and Overseas Territories how the civil recovery part of the UK legislation could be enforced in their jurisdictions. Police and Her Majesty's

Revenue and Customs also continue to liaise and co-operate with other jurisdictions in their application of the criminal confiscation and cash seizure aspects of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Brazil

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the trial and conviction in Brazil of Craig Alden; and if he will make a statement. [29873]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* In the light of concerns about the fairness of the trial proceedings that led to Craig Alden's conviction in 2002, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) offered Mr. Alden the services of a member of the FCO pro bono lawyers panel, Jeremy Richardson QC, to review the conduct of his case. The decision to offer Mr. Alden this assistance was made without prejudice to the fact that the Government, as in all cases of British Nationals subject to trial proceedings overseas, takes no position as to the guilt or innocence of the accused.

Jeremy Richardson produced two reports on Mr. Alden's case. Mr. Richardson concluded that the trial proceedings in the case were flawed, and that this raised doubts about the fairness of Mr. Alden's conviction. The Government supported Mr. Alden's application to the Brazilian Government for Presidential Expulsion. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Brazilian Foreign Minister in March 2005, highlighting the concerns about the trial process raised in Mr. Richardson's reports. In August 2005, the Brazilian authorities informed British Embassy officials of their intention to reject Mr. Alden's request for Presidential Expulsion. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has recently received a formal written response from the Brazilian Foreign Minister confirming the rejection. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO raised that matter with the Brazillian ambassador on 16 November. Mr. Alden has been on hunger strike since 1 November.

We have strongly urged Mr. Alden to reconsider this course of action. Consular officials are in regular contact. The British Embassy nurse visited him on 11 November to assess his condition. We continue to make daily checks on Mr. Alden's health.

Consular officials in London have regular contact with Mr. Alden's family and supporters, and met them most recently on 14 November.

China

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Chinese Government about the forced repatriation of North Korean asylum seekers in China. [29161]

Ian Pearson: We have raised concerns about the forced repatriation of North Korean border crossers on a number of occasions with the Chinese Government. We did so most recently at the UK China Human Rights Dialogue in June 2005. There was also a discussion of this issue at the EU China Human Rights Dialogue in October 2005.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations were made to the Chinese delegation during the recent state visit regarding *(a)* reports of religious persecution in China and *(b)* the status of Tibet. [29169]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister raised human rights with President Hu but not specifically religious persecution or the status of Tibet. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and the Chinese Foreign Minister discussed the issue of Tibet and the international parliamentary convention to be held in Scotland later this month. Freedom of religion was a focus for the recent EU China Human Rights Dialogue, held in Beijing on 24 October 2005.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29076]

Mr. Straw: Expenditure on external consultants in general is reported annually in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Departmental Report, copies of which are available in the Library of the House and on the FCO's website at www.fco.gov.uk.

Information on expenditure on individual projects is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The vast majority of the work undertaken for the FCO by consultants in each year since 2000 was associated with our major Information Communication Technology and estate construction programmes.

Overall expenditure on external consultants since 2000 is:

	£ million
2000–01	17.9
2001–02	20.1
2002–03	23.7
2003–04	23.2

Expenditure for 2004–05 is in the process of being collated and will be published in the FCO's Departmental Report in April 2006.

Egypt

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Egyptian authorities that provision should be made for Egyptian citizens who are not members of the three official faiths to enable them to receive identity cards; and if he will make a statement. [29303]

Dr. Howells: As stated in the Egyptian constitution, all Egyptian citizens should be treated equally, regardless of religion. We agree that provision should be made for all Egyptian citizens to enable them to receive identity cards.

The UK, along with Australia, the USA, Canada and Ireland, took part in a demarche on the Egyptian Government in December 2004 on the topic of identity cards. We plan to raise our concerns again with the Egyptian Government before the end of the year.

EU Legislation

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list EU legislation in force which cites as its legal basis Article 308 of the treaties *(a)* wholly and *(b)* in part. [29454]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Article 308 requires, in order for it to be used as a legal base for action, that a proposal be necessary for the attainment of a Community objective, and have unanimous support at the Council. The Government have given an undertaking that, where the Commission puts forward a legislative proposal citing Article 308 as its legal base, the Commission's justification of this choice of legal base will be provided to the Scrutiny Committees.

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* directives, *(b)* regulations and *(c)* decisions have been adopted in the EU in each month in 2005. [29458]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Directives, regulations and decisions adopted in the EU are published in the *Official Journal* of the European Union, which can be found at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* directives, *(b)* regulations and *(c)* decisions have been repealed in the EU in each month in 2005. [29459]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold this information centrally. Information for this year could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Details of legislation repealed in previous years is available in House of Commons Standard Note SN/IA/2888.

As part of the Better Regulation agenda, the European Commission has expressed a firm commitment to the repeal of irrelevant or obsolete legislation. The UK is a strong supporter of the Better Regulation agenda. We welcome the Commission's recent communication on the simplification of the regulatory environment which is available in the House of Commons Library and includes proposals to repeal, codify, recast or modify 222 pieces of legislation, affecting more that 1,400 related legal Acts.

Falun Gong

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to address the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. [29142]

Ian Pearson: We raised the matter of human rights abuses against Falun Gong practitioners at the UK China Human Rights Dialogue in June 2005. Falun Gong cases have been included among individual cases of concern on which we have sought responses from the Chinese authorities. Cases of Falun Gong practitioners were also raised at the EU China Human Rights Dialogue in October 2005. We will continue to raise such cases where appropriate.

Forced Labour (China)

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of China on forced labour in China. [29141]

Ian Pearson: We have regularly raised concerns about the practice of re-education through labour (RTL) in China with the Chinese Government. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed reform of RTL with the Chinese Foreign Minister during his visit to China in January 2005. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister raised this issue during his visit to China in September 2005. RTL was also discussed at the EU China Human Rights Dialogue in October 2005

Iran

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Iranian Government regarding the al-Qaeda operatives they claim are in their custody. [29588]

Dr. Howells: We continue to press Iran to take effective action against members of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups using Iran as a base, transit route or refuge. We have also sought information about members of al-Qaeda that Iran is reportedly detaining. We want to see Iran co-operate actively with the rest of the international community against these groups. It is vital for all states to work closely together to defeat terrorism.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of how many private military contractors have been killed in Iraq since March 2003. [28405]

Mr. Straw: From our consular records, we are aware of at least 21 British nationals who have been killed in Iraq since March 2003 while working as private military or security contractors. However, this figure is not definitive as our records do not as a formality include details of employers of those British nationals who die abroad. We are also aware of a number of private military and security contractors of other nationalities who have been killed in Iraq during this period. However, we are unable to provide any figures on these as we do not keep statistics on deaths of foreign nationals abroad.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will conduct an inquiry into the implications for the UK of the manipulation of the UN oil-for-food programme in Iraq following the final Volcker report, with particular reference to *(a)* British citizens identified in the report and *(b)* those who received oil concessions from Iraq. [29603]

Dr. Howells: The Government have no plans to hold a separate inquiry into allegations surrounding the Oil-for-Food Programme. The Government believe that the UN and member states need to learn the lessons from the comprehensive investigation carried out by the Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC), chaired by Paul Volcker. The Government co-operated fully with the IIC throughout its investigation and the IIC's findings have been brought to the attention of the relevant UK investigative authorities. Since the publication of the IIC's final report, the Government have also asked the IIC for any further information it holds on British companies and individuals named in the report and will promptly pass any information received on to the relevant UK authorities to consider what further action is required.

Scrutiny Reserve Resolution

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions on which the Government have overridden the scrutiny reserve resolution in each year since 1980. [29453]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Figures were only collected from 2001.

	Number of overrides
2001	[1]80
2002	71
2003	75
2004	43
2005 (January to June)	[1]53

[1] Figures are higher for 2001 and 2005 to date because for part of these years Parliament was dissolved and there were periods immediately after the opening of Parliament before the Scrutiny Committees could be re-appointed.

Senegal

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his position is on *(a)* Belgium's decision to charge Hissene Habre with crimes against humanity and torture and *(b)* the extradition of Hissene Habre to Belgium. [27028]

Ian Pearson: It is a matter for the Belgian authorities to decide whether to bring charges against Hissene Habre in accordance with Belgian law, and whether to request his extradition from Senegal. However, I can confirm that Mr. Habre was detained in Dakar on 15 November pending a Court of Appeal judgment on the merits of the Belgian extradition request. While the request is still under consideration, it is our policy not to pre-judge the outcome of the judicial deliberations.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action has been taken by his Department to support efforts to bring Hissene Habre to justice for crimes against humanity. [27030]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1270W, and to the answers I gave the hon. Member on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1591–92W and today (UIN 27028).

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29128]

Mr. Straw: Figures are not kept for staff who have been dismissed for reasons other than misconduct.

The numbers of staff who were dismissed for reasons of misconduct are as follows:

	Number
2001	1
2002	1
2003	5
2004	2
2005[1]	2

[1] To date.

In answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Andrew Mackinlay) on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1399W, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office stated that three members of staff had been dismissed as a consequence of misconduct in 2004. This figure included one member of staff who was dismissed for reasons of inefficiency and should not have been included in the 2004 total.

Uganda

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the arrest of opposition leaders in Uganda. [29807]

Ian Pearson: Following the arrest of Dr. Kiiza Besigye on 14 November, our high commissioner in Kampala, representing the EU presidency, called on President Museveni to express our concern and to press for an early and transparent trial. On 16 November, Dr. Besigye and 23 other opposition activists were charged with treason and additionally, in the case of Dr. Besigye, rape. My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, also spoke with the Ugandan Foreign Minister Kutesa on 17 November to express deep concern at these developments. We continue to urge the Ugandan authorities to ensure that due legal process and protection under the constitution are afforded to all those who have been indicted and that a fair and transparent trial is held as soon as possible.

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the arrest in Uganda of Dr. Kizza Besigye. [30379]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mark Simmonds) today (UIN 29807).

United States (European Detention Centres)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has

received reports of detention centres for terror suspects run by the US Central Intelligence Agency in Central and Eastern Europe. [28729]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave the right hon. Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1592W.

West Papua

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of UK-supplied military equipment currently deployed in West Papua; what guarantees he has from the Indonesian government concerning the use of UK-supplied military equipment in West Papua; what measures he has taken to ensure that UK-supplied equipment in West Papua is used in compliance with guarantees given by the Indonesian government; and if he will make a statement. [26136]

Ian Pearson: We are not aware of any UK-supplied equipment currently deployed in Papua. We have consistently made clear to the Indonesian authorities that no British-supplied equipment, or indeed any other equipment, should be used in any human rights abuses.

All export license applications for Indonesia are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the EU Consolidated Criteria taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time. We no longer seek guarantees or assurances over and above these Criteria for the use of British built equipment. If a licence application is not consistent with these Criteria it stands to be refused. Assurances are not enforceable and cannot override the assessment of the application against the criteria.

TREASURY

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24461]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) currently has contracts with two companies for telecommunications services, including non-geographic number provision (eg 0870). In the former Inland Revenue, 0870 numbers have been used mainly to provide international access to a range of customer contact services and helplines, including for example, the international Self Assessment orderline, IR35, and Construction Industry Scheme orderline, as well as new tax credits. In the former HM Customs and Excise, 0870 numbers have been used mainly in the law enforcement area.

On average HMRC receives around 50,000 calls from the public to 0870 numbers every month. A detailed breakdown of calls to these numbers over the last five years would be available only at disproportionate cost. HMRC does not make any profit from the use of 0870 numbers.

HM Treasury does not use 0870 numbers.

Average Annual Wages

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average yearly wage was in each region of the United Kingdom in 2004. [30226]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Dr. William McCrea, dated 22 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the average yearly wage in each region of the United Kingdom was in 2004. I am replying in her absence. (30226)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates of pay who have been in the same job for more than one year. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The attached table shows the Average Gross Annual Earnings for full time employees in all regions of the UK for 2004. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=13290&More=n. Table 7 is earnings by region for place of work; Table 8 is earnings by region for place of residence.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross annual pay for full-time employee jobs[1]

£

	2004			
	Work region		*Home region*	
	Median	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
United Kingdom	22,100	27,000	22,100	27,000
Great Britain	22,100	27,200	22,100	27,200
England and Wales	22,300	27,500	22,300	27,600
England	22,400	27,800	22,500	27,800
North East	19,200	22,400	19,300	22,400
North West	20,700	24,500	20,900	24,700
Yorkshire and The Humber	20,400	24,100	20,500	24,000
East Midlands	20,700	23,700	20,900	24,500
West Midlands	20,800	24,400	20,800	24,500
South West	20,700	24,500	21,000	25,200
East	22,300	26,700	23,700	29,400
London	28,800	39,600	27,100	37,000

Gross annual pay for full-time employee jobs[1]

£

	2004			
	Work region		*Home region*	
	Median	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
South East	23,700	28,600	24,700	31,000
Wales	20,100	22,800	20,300	22,800
Scotland	20,600	23,900	20,600	24,000
Northern Ireland	19,600	23,100	19,600	23,100

[1] Employees on adult rates that have been in the same job for more than one year.

Notes:

1. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, (ASHE), carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees.
2. Average gross annual earnings for employees on adult rates who have been in the same job for more than a year.
3. Northern Ireland unit level data are collected by DETINI under the same criteria as ASHE. The dataset is then passed to ONS.
4. The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Charity Collections

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether *(a)* guidance and *(b)* rules are in place on collections for charities within the Department and agencies for which he is responsible. [29465]

John Healey: Each Government Department determines its own policies towards collecting monies for charities. There is no explicit guidance, nor rules relating to collections for charities within the Treasury or its associated bodies, but across the Chancellor's Departments, charities are supported through practical means. For example, the Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have provided secondments to the Giving Campaign and the Princes Trust, have a payroll giving scheme which has been opened and promoted to staff and have also publicised particular charitable appeals.

Construction Industry Scheme

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of an exemption for charitable organisations from the construction industry scheme prior to the implementation of the remainder of the deferred scheme; and if he will make a statement. [31193]

John Healey: The regulations which were laid on 25 July 2005 exempt charities and others from the operation of the new scheme.

There are currently no plans to make any alterations to the existing scheme, which is now expected to continue until 5 April 2007.

Departmental Performance Reports

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library the guidance provided to Government Departments by his Department on what they should disclose in their 2005 autumn performance reports. [30682]

Mr. Des Browne: A copy of the guidance issued for the 2005 autumn performance reports has been placed in the Library.

EU's Financial Services Action Plan

Michael Gove: To ask Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the measures outlined in the EU's Financial Services Action Plan have been implemented in the UK; whether an impact assessment has been made of each measure; and what estimate he has made of *(a)* the financial costs and *(b)* the benefits of each measure. [29451]

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what cost impact assessment has been undertaken of the *(a)* EU Markets in Financial Instruments Directive, *(b)* EU legislation agreed under the Financial Services Action Plan and *(c)* EU Capital Adequacy Directive implementing the Basel 2 Accord; and if he will place copies of such assessments in the Library; [29765]

(2) whether the Department has conducted cost impact assessments in relation to the Prospectus Directive; [30230]

(3) whether his Department has conducted cost impact assessments in relation to the EU Market Abuse Directive. [30274]

John Healey: Of the 42 measures in the Financial Services Action Plan, 16 are Commission communications or recommendations which do not require transposition into member states' national law and regulations. For a further seven measures the deadline for transposition has not yet been reached. The UK has transposed the remaining 19 measures, although only partially in the case of the Directive on Occupational Retirement Provision. The Government expect the legislation required to complete its transposition to be in place before the end of 2005.

The impact, financial costs and benefits of FSAP measures, including the Market in Financial Instruments Directive, the Capital Requirements Directive, Prospectus Directive and Market Abuse Directive, which require transposition and have a regulatory impact have been assessed in the documents listed as follows.

FSAP measure	*HMT regulatory impact assessments*	*FSA cost-benefit analysis*
Prospectus Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1EA/06/20050519_Final_RIA.pdf	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp04_16.pdf http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp05_07.pdf
Market Abuse Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4A1/1D/MAD_RIA240205.pdf	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/other/eu_mad.pdf
Transparency Directive (partial RIA)	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/B66/3B/transparency_dir_180305.pdf	—
Financial Collateral Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/49B/A0/idfca_ria_0104.pdf	—
Insurance Mediation Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/B85/A6/RIA03_insurance_51.pdf	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/Pages/Library/Policy/CP/2002/160.shtml http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp174.pdf http://www.fsa/gov.uk.pubs/cp/cp187.pdf http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/CP201.pdf
2nd Money Laundering Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4B7/B5/fullriamlr03_80.pdf	http://www.fsa/gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp199.pdf
3rd Money Laundering Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5E8/8F/200509RIA1.pdf	—
Electronic Money Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/ria/consult_ria_electronic.cfm	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp117.pdf http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp172.pdf
Directive on Winding Up of Insurance undertakings	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/39E/90/lloyds_ria210705.pdf	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp177.pdf
Distance Marketing Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/BF2/C9/ACF13FE.pdf	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp196.pdf
Fair Value Accounting Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D72/B6/Fair_Value_RIA.pdf	—
Capital Requirements Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/F10/BF/CRD_RIA.pdf	http://www.fsa/gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp189.pdf http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp05_03.pdf
International Accounting Standards (IAS) Regulation	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D72/39/IAS_Regulation_RIA.pdf	—
Accounts Modernisation Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D72/88/Modernisation_Directive_RIA.pdf	—
Credit Institutions Winding Up Directive	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/26D/6B/cir_ria_16.pdf	—
UCITS Amending Directive	—	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp135.pdf
UCITS Management Directive	—	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp163.pdf
Settlement Finality Directive	—	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/policy/P27.pdf
Solvency 1 Directives	—	http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/cp/cp181.pdf
Financial Groups Directive	—	http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./consultations_and_legislation/financial_groups/consult_financialgroups_index.cfm
Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (partial RIA)	Explanatory Memorandum 14796/02 (a copy is in the Library of the House)	—
Other Government Departments		
Occupational Retirement Provision Directive	www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2004/orp/final_ria.pdf	
European Company Statute Regulation	http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/em2004/uksiem_20042326_en.pdf	

Financial Ombudsman Service

Justine Greening: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints were made to the Financial Ombudsman Service in relation to life insurance policies in each year between 1997 and 2005; and how many were resolved *(a)* at the assessment stage, *(b)* after investigation by an adjudicator and *(c)* by final decision of an ombudsman in each case. [29874]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) gained statutory powers on 1 December 2001. Composite data for life insurance related disputes (incorporating complaints about both whole of life policies and endowments other than those linked to mortgages) are only available from the year ending 31 March 2001.

Also, FOS statistics do not record a distinction between the assessment stage and the initial investigation by an adjudicator.

The percentages for life insurance cases resolved from this date at the assessment and investigation and the ombudsman stages are as follows:

	Percentage
Assessment and investigation	
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	89.05
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	90.35
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	93.35
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	91.95
Ombudsman	
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	10.95
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	9.65
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	6.65
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	8.05

Insurance Premium Tax

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps are being taken to combat fraud by insurance companies paying the insurance premium tax. [29815]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs continues to develop its risk-based compliance strategy for all taxes to ensure that resource is targeted most effectively at key risk areas.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform the insurance premium tax. [29820]

John Healey: The Government keeps all taxes under review.

Low-income Households

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he uses *(a)* income before housing costs and *(b)* income after housing costs when calculating the number of children in relative low income households for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 PSA Target 7. [30058]

Mr. Des Browne: The methodology for measurement of 2004 PSA target 7 is set out in the technical note for the target, published by HM Treasury in July 2004. This is available online at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/EFF/68/julytechnicalnote_300704.pdf

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29613]

John Healey: HM Treasury has not spent any money on external media relations in the years from 2002–03 through to 2004–05. Due to a change in accounting system, information on spending, if any, on external media relations in earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ministerial Decisions (Dissent)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the instances since 1990 when an accounting officer has passed a Note of Dissent to the Comptroller and Auditor General in respect of a ministerial decision. [28099]

John Healey: The following table lists the ministerial directions that the Treasury has been informed of since 1990.

	Department	*Subject of direction*	*Category of direction*
1990	Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD)	Sale of British Aerospace (now BAe Systems) Hawk jets to Kenya	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1991	Ministry of Defence (MOD)	Chieftain Tank replacement	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1991	The former Overseas Development Agency (ODA)	Pergau Dam project	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1992	MOD	HMS Endurance replacement	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1992	MOD	Closure of depot at Royal Navy Stores Depot (RNSD) Copenacre	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1992	The former Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF)	Location of Divisional Offices	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1992	MOD	Image Intensifiers	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1993	ECGD	Guarantees for Export and Investments in Russia	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1995	MOD	Medium Support Helicopters	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1995	ECGD	ECGD support to Jordan	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1995	The former Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)	Re-examination of the wreck of the MV Derbyshire	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1995	DETR—the former Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (OPRAF)	Decision on Profit Purticipation in the passenger rail franchising programme	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1995	DETR-OPRAF	Decision on Revenue Risk sharing in the passenger rail franchising programme	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1997	DETR	Millennium Exhibition: Expenditure to regenerate the Greenwich Peninsula and to provide a site for the Millennium Exhibition	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1997	DETR	Channel Tunnel Rail Link and exceptional hardship	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1998	The former Department of Social Security (DSS)	Benefits Agency/Post Office Counters Ltd (BA/POCL) automation project	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness

	Department	Subject of direction	Category of direction
1998	DSS	Benefits Agency/Post Office Counters Ltd IBA/POCL) automation project	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1998	Northern Ireland Court Service	Concerns an individual's personnel records	Propriety/regularity
1998	MOD	Sale of Cadet Property in Moffat	Propriety/regularity
1998	DSS	Benefits Integrity Project	Propriety/regularity
1999	DSS	Benefits Integrity Project	Propriety/regularity
1999	DSS	Benefits Integrity Project	Propriety/regularity
1999	ECGD	Cashmere Exporters	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
1999	ECGD	ECGD Cover—Indonesia	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
2000	ECGD	ECGD Cover—Romania	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
2000	MOD	Use of public funds to provide financial assistance to meet cost of air flight to Croatia for member of public to attend trial of those accused of murder of his son, a British Serviceman	Propriety/regularity
2001	MOD	Roll-on, Roll-off (RoRo) ferries	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
2001	Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	Regional Selective Assistance (RSA)	Regularity/propriety
2002	DETR	A43 Silverstone bypass	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
2003	DTI	Regional Selective Assistance (RSA)	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
2003	MOD	Acquisition of BAe Hawk trainer aircraft	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness
2005	DTI	Bombardier C-series launch investment	Value for Money

Note:
This table consolidates all of the information given by Treasury Ministers in written answers on the subject of ministerial directions since the answer given by former Chief Secretary on 23 October 2000, *Official Report*, column 74W.

Ministerial Visit

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official* Report, columns 1519–1520W, if he will break down the total cost by individual and mode of transport; whether the costs include the costs incurred for the travel arrangements of special advisers; whether *(a)* his flights from Ramallah to the UK and *(b)* the subsequent return flight were (i) chartered flights, (ii) RAF flights and (iii) private flights; and if he will make a statement. [31183]

John Healey: I set out the costs in my answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1519–1520W. These costs related solely to scheduled flights leaving and returning to Tel Aviv. No costs were incurred by special advisers.

Non-EU Immigration

David Davis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total net immigration from non-EU countries was in each year since 1997. [30795]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. David Davis, dated 22 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the total net immigration from non-EU countries in each year since 1997. (30795)

Table 1, attached below, shows estimates of net immigration from non-EU countries by all citizenships. These data are only available up to 2003. The equivalent figures for 2004 will be published in spring 2006.

Table 1: Total International Migration[1]: time series 1997 to 2003, Net immigration from non-EU2 countries—United Kingdom

	All countries	Thousand Non-EU countries[2, 3]
1997	+ 46.8	+ 38.1
1998	+ 138.8	+ 114.8
1999	+ 163.0	+ 166.8
2000	+ 162.8	+ 170.4
2001	+ 171.8	+ 178.9
2002	+ 153.4	+ 189.1
2003	+ 151.0	+ 171.6

+ denotes a net inflow figure.
- denotes a net outflow figure.

[1] Data for 1997–2003 are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey. Includes adjustments for (1) those whose intended length of stay changes so that their migrant status changes; (2) asylum seekers and their dependants not identified by the IPS; and (3) flows between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

[2] Figures for all years show the non-EU as constituted at 1 January 1995. Therefore, up to and including 2003, the non-EU grouping includes the 10 accession countries of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

[3] Includes EU citizens coming in from non-EU countries.

Overseas Public Assets

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate his Department has made of the amount of money circulating in the UK financial system which is derived from the illicit acquisition of foreign states' public assets; [29691]

(2) what procedures his Department has in place for *(a)* identifying and *(b)* tracking money in the United Kingdom derived from the illicit acquisition of foreign states' public assets. [29692]

John Healey: The UK's anti-money laundering controls are supported by a robust and tested legal framework in relation to the identification and prevention of the movement of illicit funds through the country's financial system regardless of their origin.

Investigations generated by financial sector reporting to NCIS under this framework are a matter for law enforcement. It is not possible to comment on current investigations or amounts of funds concerned without the risk of prejudicing the outcome of those investigations.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what baseline shares he will use to measure a reduction in the illicit market share for spirits for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 2. [29858]

Mr. Des Browne: The PSA target 1.2 states that by 2007–08 the market share for illicit spirits will be reduced by half. The methodology used to measure performance is set out in "HM Customs: Public Service Agreement 2005–06 to 2007–08 technical note".

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* funding will be withheld from and *(b)* other action will be taken in his Department if public service agreement target number (i) one, (ii) two and (iii) three is not met. [30634]

Mr. Des Browne: Performance is taken into account in spending reviews, when the increased performance information and data provided through PSAs helps to inform those areas where policies are working well, and those where further reform might be needed.

SIPPs

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to restrict holders of self invested personal pensions from using their pension funds to purchase second homes in rural areas. [24100]

Tim Farron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to exempt rural homes from the provisions in the next Budget for the new self-invested personal pension scheme. [31086]

Dawn Primarolo: Pension simplification sweeps away the numerous existing tax regimes and replaces them with a single universal regime for tax-privileged pension savings from 6 April 2006. These changes have been widely welcomed by savers and the financial services and pensions industry.

The Government keeps all aspects of the tax system under review. Where there is evidence of abuse, it will take appropriate action to stop it.

Solar Photovoltaics Programme

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what provision the Treasury has made in its allocation of funding for the Department for Trade and Industry for the capital grant required to meet the Government White Paper commitment to a 10-year solar voltaics programme in line with that of Germany and Japan. [29978]

John Healey: Under the 2004 Spending Review, DTI received funding at departmental level for the three financial years to 2007–08. Allocation to programmes to support photovoltaics within the overall DTI budget is a matter for DTI Ministers.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the special advisers in post in his Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29416]

John Healey: For the list of special advisers in HM Treasury I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer provided by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29136]

John Healey: The number of employees dismissed by HM Treasury in each of the last five years for conduct and capability is as follows:

	Number
2001	0
2002	3
2003	4
2004	0
2005	0

Tax Credits

Miss Widdecombe: To ask Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been paid to claimants as a result of errors in the tax credit system; how much has been paid in compensation for distress caused by the errors; and how many claimants have been subject to tax credit errors. [23201]

Dawn Primarolo: For information on the amount paid as a result of errors, and the number of people affected by errors, I refer to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1056W.

The circumstances in which HM Revenue and Customs will make compensation payments to its customers are explained in the Department's Code of Practice 1 "Putting things right" which is available at www.hmrc.gov.uk. The Department will pay compensation for reasonable costs incurred as a direct result of its mistakes or delays and to recognise worry and distress caused by those mistakes and delays. It does not keep separate details of compensation payments made specifically due to errors or delays. For the value of compensation payments up to 31 May 2005, I refer to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 4 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 95–96W. The value of compensation payments made between 1 June 2005 and 30 September 2005 was around £410,000.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many copies of *(a)* notification of tax credit awards and *(b)* tax credit award guidance notes (TC602NOTES) are sent to each recipient. [26336]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is statutorily obliged to issue an award notice (TC602) to each claimant when a new claim is decided. An award notice is also sent to each claimant when their award is finalised, renewed or they report a change of circumstance. A copy of the guidance notes is issued with each award notice.

Where a claim is made through the tax credits online service, or if a claimant fails to sign their claim, they are sent an extra copy of their award notice when HMRC decide their claim. Where an unsigned claim is from a couple, HMRC send a joint award notice with an extra copy and only one set of guidance notes. The extra copy of the award notice has a declaration they should sign and return to HMRC to confirm the details on their award notice are correct.

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the largest single overpayment of working tax credit in Redcar and Cleveland was in the last 12 months. [30429]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* tax credit complaints and *(b)* other complaints relating to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs have been received by the Parliamentary Ombudsman in each month since March 2004; and if he will make a statement. [30546]

Dawn Primarolo: The Parliamentary Ombudsman, Ann Abraham, is an independent office-holder. She operates under the provisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (as amended).

The Parliamentary Ombudsman publishes information about the number of investigable complaints she has received in her annual report to Parliament. Her 2004–05 Annual Report, HC 348, was published on 20 July.

Wales

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much public money has been spent in Wales in each year since 1997; and how much public money will be spent in Wales in each year until 2010. [31045]

Mr. Des Browne: Identifiable public spending in Wales is published in Chapter 8 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (Cm 6521). PESA also includes the Wales departmental expenditure limit for the years up to 2007–08. Spending beyond then will be considered in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax revenue has been received from Wales in each year since 1997; and how much tax revenue he expects to receive from Wales in each year until 2010. [31059]

Dawn Primarolo: The following figures from the ONS 2005 publication of household income show estimates of income tax, council taxes and vehicle taxes paid by households in Wales and the United Kingdom for the period 1997 to 2003. They were produced by ONS for the estimation of sub-national gross disposable household income and were published in April 2005.

Estimates of taxes paid by households[1]

		£ million
	Wales	*United Kingdom*
1997	3,214	89,219
1998	3,696	104,820
1999	3,953	112,790
2000	4,148	122,967
2001	4,420	131,007
2002	4,543	132,222
2003	4,742	137,255

[1] Taxes paid by households and non-profit institutions serving households.

No corresponding information is available on taxes paid by organisations or on other taxes paid by households. Projected figures on tax revenue from Wales are not available.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol and Drug Misuse

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were convicted of *(a)* drunkenness, *(b)* driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs and *(c)* causing death by dangerous driving when under the influence of drink or drugs in West Lancashire in each year since 1997. [27917]

Paul Goggins: Data from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of persons convicted for drunkenness, driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs and causing death by dangerous driving when under the influence of drink or drugs in Lancashire police force area, 1997 to 2003, are given in the following table. It is not possible to identify those convicted in the West Lancashire area, as the data are not collected at this level of detail.

Court statistics for 2004 will be available late November.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts for various offences in Lancashire police force area, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Drunkenness (simple)[2]	*Drunkenness (with aggravation)*[3]	*Driving after consuming alcohol or drugs*[4]	*Causing death by dangerous driving or careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs*[5]
1997	224	1,237	3,003	11
1998	216	1,319	2,591	7
1999	182	1,444	2,349	3
2000	247	1,682	2,312	4
2001	181	1,815	2,059	7
2002	177	1,643	2,316	7
2003	74	1,574	2,393	6

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

[2] Includes offences under S.12 Licensing Act 1872, Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) Act 1985 SS.1(4), 1A(4), 2.(2) and S.12 Criminal Justice & Police Act 2001.
[3] Includes offences under S.91 Criminal Justice Act 1967. S.12 Licensing Act 1872, S.174 Licensing Act 1964, S.9(4) Late Night Refreshment Houses Act 1969, S.28 London Hackney Carriage Act 1843, SS.101(1)*(a)*/*(b)*, (4) & (5) Merchant Shipping Act 1995, S.2 Licensing Act 1902 and S.61 Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
[4] Includes offences under sections 4(1),4(2), 5(1)*(a)*, 5(1)*(b)*, 6(4) and 7(6) Road traffic Act 1988.
[5] Includes offences under Road Traffic Act 1988 S.1 as added by Road Traffic Act 1991 S.1 and Road Traffic Act 1988 S.3A as added by Road Traffic Act 1991 S.3 and amended by Criminal Justice Act 1993 S.6

Armed Police (Rules of Engagement)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the rules of engagement for armed police opening fire. [28555]

Hazel Blears: Operational tactics when using firearms are a matter for the police. All police use of firearms is subject to the usual law on the use of force. In particular, the Criminal Law Act 1967 provides that the police may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances to effect an arrest or to prevent crime.

Arson

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to reduce arson; and if he will make a statement. [29024]

Hazel Blears: The Government are fully committed to tackling arson through the achievement of our public service agreement targets to reduce deliberate fires, crime and the fear of crime and through our continued engagement in the work of the Arson Control Forum (ACF), which is led by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The ACF (established in April 2001) provides the strategic direction for the national fight against arson. The Forum has invested a total of £11.3 million in local arson prevention initiatives since its creation.

We have also recognised the important contribution of the fire and rescue service to multi-agency working. Since 1 April 2003, all fire and rescue service authorities have been statutory partners in local crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs). This is helping to ensure that the fire and rescue services play a full role in community safety and help local communities to tackle arson and the associated areas of crime.

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of families who would be affected by the national implementation of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004. [29486]

Mr. McNulty: Section 9 enables NASS support to be withdrawn from failed asylum seeking families who are failing without reasonable excuse to take reasonable steps to leave the UK voluntarily, or to place themselves in a position in which they can do so. A lengthy process has been developed which provides oral and written warnings that families' support may be withdrawn if they fail to take steps to leave. Whether support is actually withdrawn depends on the families' reactions, and it is not therefore possible to provide a realistic estimate of the number of families which might be affected by any national roll out of section 9.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time failed asylum seekers have been detained under the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 before being deported; how many people are being detained under the Act; and if he will make a statement. [29786]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Information on the average length of detention prior to the removal or deportation of failed asylum seekers is unavailable. It would be available by examination of individual case files only at disproportionate cost.

Quarterly snapshots are published showing the number of people detained under Immigration Act powers on the last Saturday of each quarter and these can be broken down by the length of detention. The latest published statistics on the number of asylum seekers detained covers the second quarter of 2005. Information on the number of persons detained, as at 25 June 2005 are published in the Quarterly Asylum Bulletin, table 13, on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how his Department *(a)* monitors, *(b)* records and *(c)* budgets for spending on transferring failed asylum seekers between detention centres in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [30079]

Mr. McNulty: The in-country escorting contract for immigration detainees is monitored by an escorting monitor who reviews performance by means which include regular meetings with the contractor, review of movement and other data and feedback from stakeholders.

A record is maintained of the number of inter detention estate transfers of all immigration detainees.

There is no budget allocation specifically for the transfer of failed asylum seekers between detention centres. The escorting contract price is inclusive of all moves.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to reduce the number of asylum applications to the UK; and if he will make a statement. [26466]

Mr. McNulty: We have already made real progress in reducing the number of unfounded asylum applications. The monthly number of asylum applications have fallen by 75 per cent. between October 2002 and September 2005. This reduction follows the implementation of a range of legislative and operational measures designed to reduce the number of unfounded asylum applications.

We have also dramatically reduced processing times. Around 80 per cent. of asylum claims now receive an initial decision within two months. At the same time the

number of failed asylum seekers being removed from the UK has risen significantly. In 2004 over 1,000 asylum seekers were removed each month, compared with around 400 per month in 1996.

In February 2005 we published our five-year strategy for asylum and immigration, "Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain". The strategy set out a range of measures to strengthen our border controls and reform our asylum system. We expect that the deterrent effect of these measures will further reduce the number of unfounded asylum applications in the United Kingdom. The 'New Asylum Model' will introduce faster tightly-managed processes for all new asylum claimants, including: a new screening process for asylum applicants that enables us to put them through a processing track tailored to the characteristics of their claim; a clear contact management strategy for each processing track including compulsory contact management for those not detained; and the introduction of specialist case managers who will manage each asylum case from application right through to integration or removal. Measures to strengthen our border controls include; the roll-out of fingerprinting of all visa applicants; expanding the network of airline liaison officers who advise check-in staff on forged documents; introducing electronic checks on all those entering and leaving the country; and the roll-out of new technology, including the e-borders programme, to create a fully integrated system of immigration control.

Court Orders

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* antisocial behaviour orders, *(b)* individual support orders, *(c)* enforced parenting orders and *(d)* voluntary parenting contracts have been issued in (i) West Yorkshire and (ii) Normanton constituency since each was established. [29175]

Hazel Blears: The available information, as notified to the Home Office, on the numbers of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued and the number of Individual Support Orders and Parenting Orders issued in tandem is given in the table.

The Youth Justice Board collect data on parenting contracts related to crime and antisocial behaviour from Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). These data are collected at YOT area level only.

The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs), individual support orders (ISOs) and parenting orders (POs) issued within West Yorkshire, as notified to the Home Office, from 1 June 2000[1] to 31 March 2005 (latest available).

Area	ASBOs issued	ISOs issued	POs issued [2]
West Yorkshire	399	—	—
of which:			
Wakefield metropolitan district council[3]	39	—	—

[1] From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data were collected on aggregate numbers only by police force area. During this period four ASBOs were issued within West Yorkshire.

[2] Parenting Orders issued along with an ASBO.

[3] In which the constituency of Normanton is located. Number of orders issued is based on those orders where prohibitions within the order relate to the local government authority area.

Crime

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on *(a)* levels and *(b)* detection rates of (i) violent crime, (ii) sexual crime, (iii) car crime, (iv) robbery and (v) burglary in Gravesham constituency. [30301]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to the number of offences recorded and the detection rates in the North Kent Basic Command Unit (BCD) and is given in the table.

Recorded crimes and detection rates in the North Kent Basic Command Unit—2004–05

Offence type	*Number of offences*	*Detection rate (%)*
Violence against the person	3,387	41
Sexual offences[1]	184	19
Robbery	355	15
Violent crime:	3,926	38
Domestic Burglary	1,125	15
Theft of a motor vehicle	1,471	10
Theft from a vehicle	2,893	3
Vehicle crime:	4,364	5

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded offences of *(a)* violence against the person, *(b)* sexual offences, *(c)* violent crime as a whole, *(d)* burglary, *(e)* robbery, *(f)* theft of a vehicle and *(g)* theft from a vehicle there were in each crime and disorder reduction partnership area in England and Wales in each year since the present recording system was established. [22406]

Hazel Blears: The present recording system was adopted following the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) on one April 2002. The NCRS was introduced with the aim of promoting greater consistency between police forces in the recording of crime and to take a more victim-orientated approach to crime recording.

The introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in May 2004 resulted in substantial changes to the sexual offences group. In particular, the redefining of the offences of exposure into the sexual offences group resulted in substantial increases in this category nationally.

I will arrange for copies of the tables to be placed in the Library.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many burglaries have been recorded in *(a)* B division and *(b)* the Worksop sub-division of Nottinghamshire police in each month since June 2001. [26574]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The requested information for Nottinghamshire 'Area B' Basic Command Unit (BCU) is given in the following tables. Monthly data can be subject to fluctuation and seasonality.

Figures for Worksop sub-division are included within the 'Area B' BCU and cannot be separately identified.

Table 1: Recorded offences of burglary in the Nottinghamshire 'Area B' Basic Command Unit (BCU)

Month/year	Burglary in a dwelling	Burglary in other building	Total burglary
June 2001	119	217	336
July 2001	127	237	364
August 2001	180	237	417
September 2001	147	187	334
October 2001	140	208	348
November 2001	154	242	396
December 2001	152	197	349
January 2002	180	217	397
February 2002	241	346	587
March 2002	166	291	457

Note:

The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later months.

Table 2: Recorded offences of burglary in the Nottinghamshire 'Area B' Basic Command Unit (BCU)

Month/year	Burglary in a dwelling	Burglary in other building	Total burglary
April 2002	147	297	444
May 2002	187	340	527
June 2002	164	319	4S3
July2002	122	282	404
August 2002	205	285	490
September 2002	149	236	385
October 2002	161	236	397
November 2002	141	248	389
December 2002	131	219	350
January 2003	168	221	389
February 2003	141	228	369
March 2003	163	261	424
April 2003	177	312	489
May 2003	178	339	517
June 2003	162	305	467
July 2003	151	340	491
August 2003	154	232	386
September 2003	135	252	387
October 2003	128	204	332
November 2003	122	206	328
December 2003	119	192	311
January 2004	163	212	375
February 2004	116	180	296
March 2004	114	213	327
April 2004	139	177	316
May 2004	99	205	304
June 2004	97	198	295
July 2004	84	225	309
August 2004	106	145	251
September 2004	81	172	253
October 2004	87	175	262
November 2004	79	167	246
December 2004	81	160	241
January 2005	71	201	272
February 2005	53	142	195
March 2005	74	150	224

Note:

The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier months.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* average and *(b)* maximum time was taken to process (i) a Criminal Records Bureau check, (ii) a full protection of vulnerable adults check (POVA) and (iii) a POVA first check in the last year for which figures are available. [24173]

Hazel Blears: The Criminal Records Bureau's (CRB's) performance for standard disclosures has consistently exceeded the target of 93 per cent. issued within two weeks. This is because the processing of a standard disclosure is entirely within the direct control of the CRB.

However, the performance for enhanced disclosures is currently below its target of processing 90 per cent. within four weeks. This is because enhanced disclosures involve an additional level of check by police forces and the CRB relies on forces to complete their checks efficiently.

During the period October 2004 to September 2005, the average processing time for a CRB check was 26.09 days. The average processing time has been calculated to include time out with the customer. The maximum length of time taken to process a check during this period was 356 days.

There are no data available to determine the average or maximum time taken to process a full POVA check or a POVA first check, because these figures are not collated centrally. However, during the aforementioned period, 95.1 per cent. of POVA first checks were completed within 48 hours and 97.5 per cent. were completed within 72 hours against service standards of 98 per cent. and 100 per cent. respectively.

Deaths in Custody

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deaths have occurred in police custody in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [16375]

Hazel Blears: The total number of deaths of those coming into contact with the police over the last five years of published figures is in the following table.

We recognise that a significant proportion of deaths occur outside the custody suite. That is why we have been working with the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Centre for Policing Excellence and other stakeholders to provide guidance on safer detention of detainees on the street, in transport to and from the police station and in the police station. The guidance is due for publication in spring 2006. In addition, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) launched a major research study in July 2005 into fatal police driving accidents. The findings are expected to be published in early 2007.

The revised categories which came into effect on 1 April 2002 are set out in Home Office Circular 13/2002.

Deaths from 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	Category A	Category B	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Number Total
1999–2000	27	43	—	—	—	—	70
2000–01	22	30	—	—	—	—	52

Deaths from 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	Category A	Category B	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Number Total
2001–02	21	49	—	—	—	—	70
2002–03	—	—	40	3	40	21	104
2003–04	—	—	38	1	38	23	100

Departmental Legislation

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department from May 1997 up to and including April 2005, broken down by Act. [27591]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The latest information available shows that between 1 May 1997 and April 2005 the Home Office created 404 new offences.

Criminal offences may be created for different reasons and do not necessarily extend the scope of the criminal law. For example the Sexual Offences Act 2003 created and repealed a large number of offences without significantly changing the overall coverage of the law.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 created two new offences. It also created nine racially-aggravated offences (amended by the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 to "racially or religiously aggravated offences"), but these are based on existing offences and do not render unlawful behaviour which would otherwise have been lawful. The Data Protection Act 1998 created four new offences.

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 created 12 new offences. The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 created four new offences. The Football (Offences and Disorder) Act 1999 created one new offence.

The Terrorism Act 2000 created 38 new offences. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 created four new criminal offences. The Football (Disorder) Act 2000 created two new criminal offences. The Licensing (Young Persons) Act 2000 created one new criminal offence. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 created three new criminal offences. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 created 69 new criminal offences. The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 created three new criminal offences. The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 created two new criminal offences. The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 created 15 new criminal offences. The Vehicle (Crimes) Act 2001 created 12 new criminal offences. The Private Security Industry Act 2001 created 10 new offences. The Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 created 19 new offences. The International Criminal Court Act 2001 created two new criminal offences.

The Mobile Telephones (Re-programming) Act 2002 created five new criminal offences. The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 created 19 new criminal offences. The Police Reform Act 2002 created 23 new criminal offences. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 created 28 new criminal offences.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 created, modified or re-enacted 61 criminal offences. The Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003 created one new criminal offence and modified another. The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 created 15 new criminal offences. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 created two new criminal offences.

The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 created two new offences. The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 created eight new criminal offences and modified six criminal offences.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 created three new criminal offences. The Drugs Act 2005 created two new criminal offences. The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 created 26 new criminal offences.

Domestic Violence

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many domestic violence incidents were recorded in each region in Wales in the last five years. [27928]

Hazel Blears: Details of the numbers of domestic violence incidents are collected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) at police force level only (see table).

The Government defines a domestic violence incident as:

"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are, or have, been intimate partners or family members".

This definition, commonly agreed in 2004–05, is wider than the previous Home Office definition and follows the definition already used by the Association of Chief Police Officers. Police forces are advised to count all incidents initially recorded as domestic violence regardless of the final outcome, e.g. if the incident is finally charged as an assault.

Between 1999–2000 and 2000–01 the definition covered current and former partners but did not include violence between family members over 18. The definition was:

"Any violence between current or former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional or financial".

Number of domestic violence incidents in Wales

Force name	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05[1]
Dyfed-Powys	2,841	3,261	3,356	3,775	3,960
Gwent	3,149	2,007	2,500	2,196	2,192

Number of domestic violence incidents in Wales

Force name	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
North Wales	3,436	4,553	6,606	4,930	n/a
South Wales	7,782	10,030	13,479	14,986	14,796
Wales	[2]17,208	19,851	25,941	25,887	n/a

[1] Change in definition.
[2] When considering the number of domestic violence incidents for Wales as a whole, there is a discrepancy between the 2000–01 figures for the number of domestic violence incidents provided by HMIC for this PQ and figures generated by HMIC for a PQ in 2002 (*Hansard* No. 56175 16/05/02). HMIC has advised that this may be due to the changes in the definition of a 'domestic violence incident' over this period which could have led to subsequent changes in the HMIC data.

Drink Driving

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for drink-driving resulted in custodial sentences in 2004, broken down by police authority. [26749]

Hazel Blears: The information is shown in the table:

'Driving etc. after consuming alcohol or taking drugs' by police force, 2004

England and Wales Police force area	*Sentenced*	*Immediate custody*
Avon and Somerset	2,457	70
Bedfordshire	987	45
Cambridgeshire	993	18
Cheshire	1,934	55
City of London	148	4
Cleveland	915	21
Cumbria	800	19
Derbyshire	1,659	72
Devon and Cornwall	2,340	52
Dorset	1,119	24
Durham	1,105	37
Essex	2,597	210
Gloucestershire	841	14
Greater Manchester	4,178	191
Hampshire	3,432	95
Hertfordshire	1,738	38
Humberside	1,425	47
Kent	2,746	74
Lancashire	2,427	57
Leicestershire	1,547	60
Lincolnshire	1,104	24
Merseyside	2,484	129
Metropolitan police	11,896	507
Norfolk	1,106	37
North Yorkshire	1,024	13
Northamptonshire	844	33
Northumbria	2,348	84
Nottinghamshire	1,467	48
South Yorkshire	1,956	51
Staffordshire	1,527	58
Suffolk	1,186	45
Surrey	1,369	25
Sussex	2,295	46
Thames Valley	3,283	94
Warwickshire	789	11
West Mercia	1,617	51
West Midlands	4,947	213
West Yorkshire	3,458	125
Wiltshire	903	14
England	80,991	2,811
Dyfed-Powys	872	18
Gwent	1,056	27
North Wales	1,190	32
South Wales	2,493	95
Wales	5,611	172
England and Wales	86,602	2,983

Source:
RDS-NOMS 09/11/05

Firearms

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the replacement to the Firearms Consultative Committee will be established. [26634]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* We will reconsider whether a two-tier firearms advisory committee should be established once we have determined how to deal with the review of firearms controls.

Fixed-penalty Notices

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers for truancy under Paragraph 1(2)(aa) of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last three years, broken down by police authority. [29343]

Jacqui Smith: I have been asked to reply.

My Department began collecting data on penalty notices (in cases of non-attendance at school) from local authorities in England in September 2004. These penalty notices may be issued by authorised local authority staff, head teachers and school staff authorised by them, police and community support officers. Between September 2004 and 31 July 2005 (the latest date for which information is available) local authorities have reported that 3,483 penalty notices have been issued. We do not collect data on who issues penalty notices. The data are broken down by local authority not police authority and are available on the school attendance section of my Department's website, www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when in 2006 he expects figures to be available on the number of prosecutions and fixed penalties issued in 2004 for each of the police forces in England and Wales for the offence of using a mobile phone while driving. [29347]

Paul Goggins: Motoring offences statistics are part of National Statistics. The pre-announced date for availability of data is March 2006.

Forensic Services

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether the forensic services have sufficient capacity available to facilitate the investigation of terrorist offences; and if he will make a statement. [28843]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Forensic services called upon to assist terrorism investigations come from a number of organisations including specialist services provided by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and the Forensic Science Service. These services have the capacity available to facilitate investigations of terrorist offences through the provision of a range of forensic services and techniques. These include the recovery and analysis of DNA, which can assist in the identification of offenders and victims, the analysis of explosives and the recovery of data from electronic devices. Resources are allocated by the organisations as needed, with priority given to terrorism investigations and prosecutions.

Hunting Act

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Association of Chief Police Officers on the enforcement of the Hunting Act 2004; and if he will make a statement. [26834]

Hazel Blears: The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has made it clear that the police will enforce the Hunting Act 2004. ACPO has issued guidance for police forces on the practical aspects of enforcing the Hunting Act and a training package.

IT Systems

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking to achieve the full connectivity between the probation and prison IT systems, referred to on page 100 of the 2005 Departmental Report. [26700]

Fiona Mactaggart: The departmental report includes the target of connecting the probation and prison OASys IT systems in the financial year 2005–06. Following successful piloting the rollout of connectivity is under way. Four probation areas are now connected to the Prison Service and we expect to achieve the target set in the Report.

Licensing Act

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications of the Licensing Act 2003 in determining the 2006–07 revenue support grant for police authorities in England. [30179]

Hazel Blears: Under the outgoing licensing law, the police are annually engaged in over 1.6 million administrative licensing processes which will be streamlined to around 170,000 under the Licensing Act 2003 resulting in a saving of up to £15 million annually. The Act will also give the police further powers to tackle alcohol related disorder, for instance through allowing temporary or permanent reductions in trading hours. The provisional grant settlement for 2006–07 will be announced in late November/early December.

Murder Investigations

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on the role of the media in investigations of murder; and if he will make a statement. [24377]

Hazel Blears: It is for individual senior investigating officers to decide on media handling for individual murder investigations. The media can play an important role in the detection of serious offences and advice on media handling in these offences is provided by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Centre for Policing Excellence.

National Sanction Detection Rate

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the change in the national sanction detection rate referred to on page 97 of the 2005 departmental report. [26776]

Hazel Blears: The departmental report 2004–05 refers to the aim to increase the national sanction detection rate to bring more offences to justice in order to deliver the SR04 PSA3 aim of bringing 1.25 million offences to justice by 2007–08 (with an interim target of 1.15 million for 2005–06). It is estimated that to bring 1.25 million offences to justice by 2007–08 will require a sanction detection rate of 25 per cent, a figure which was included in the National Policing Plan 2005–08.

The Government acknowledge the need to improve sanction detection rates across all police forces. For that reason, a major drive has been under way since last summer with the aim of achieving a significant increase in sanction detection rates. This includes a range of operational improvements intended to build the investigative capability of the police service, together with some targeted support for forces with performance concerns.

Data for 2004–05 show that this concerted effort is leading to performance improvements, with the sanction detection rate increasing from 19 per cent. in 2003–04 to 21 per cent. in 2004–05. Provisional data for 2005–06 (unchecked management information) indicates that there have been continued improvements in sanction detection rates nationally, and that performance is currently ahead of the estimated required trajectory to achieve both the interim 2005–06 target and the PSA3 target in 2007–08.

PACE and CPI Acts

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the codes of practice associated with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996; and what the reference numbers of the codes are in each case. [28437]

Hazel Blears: There are currently six Codes of Practice under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE):

PACE Code A—Exercise by: Police officers of statutory powers of stop and search; Police officers and police staff of requirements to record public encounters.

PACE Code B—Searches of premises by police officers and the seizure of property found by police officers on persons or premises

PACE Code C—Detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers

PACE Code D—Identification of persons by police officers

PACE Code E—Tape recording interviews with suspects

PACE Code F—Visual recording with sound of interviews with suspects

The current version of the Codes came into effect on one August 2004 and were introduced by SI 2004/1887 http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20041887.htm.

The current version of the Code of Practice under section 23(1) of the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 came into effect on four April 2005 and was introduced by SI 2005/985 http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20050985.htm.

Copies of these Codes of practice are available from The Stationery Office (PACE Codes—ISBN 0113412940/ CPIA Codes—ISBN0113413033) or can be found on the Home Office website:
PACE Codes—http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/operational-policing/powers-pace-codes/pace-codes.html CPIA Code—http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-publications/publication/operational-policing/Disclosure_code_of_practice.pdf

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Milton Keynes South West relating to General Almog tabled for answer on *(a)* 11 October 2005, ref 17028 and *(b)* 19 October 2005, ref 19756. [25695]

Mr. McNulty: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 21 November 2005.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to Question number 18971, tabled on 12 October and due for answer on 14 October. [30078]

Mr. McNulty: I replied to the hon. Member on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 987W.

Police

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to improve the quality of local policing in Hertfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [25801]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to a major programme of police reform, to help build safer and stronger communities. This will help to drive performance in every force and includes:

building a more responsive, citizen-focused police service with neighbourhood policing at its heart

reshaping the national policing landscape to ensure effective policing at district, force and national level

further modernising the police workforce.

This is building on the significant progress that has already been made:

overall crime is down by 35 per cent. since 1997 and the chance of being a victim of crime is at a 20-year low

police numbers are at an all time high. We now have over 141,000 police officers, 71,000 police staff and 6,300 community support officers

investment in policing has increased by over a quarter since 1997

We have also sought to instil a strong performance culture. This is taking hold delivering real and sustainable improvements.

In terms of Hertfordshire police's performance and how this is enhanced, as for any force this is principally a matter for the Chief Officer team and the Police Authority.

The Home Office has recently published assessments for every force in the country. Hertfordshire police received the following assessments from the Police Performance Assessments 2004–05.

Performance area	*Delivery*	*Direction*
Reducing Crime	Fair	Stable
Investigating Crime	Good	Improved
Promoting Safety	Fair	Stable
Providing Assistance	Good	Improved
Citizen Focus	Good	Stable
Resource Use	Good	Improved
Local Policing	Good	Stable

The force received a generally strong assessment, with five good gradings and three improved grades.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to increase the accountability of the police to elected representatives; and if he will make a statement. [26406]

Hazel Blears: The White Paper 'Building Communities, Beating Crime' published in November 2004, set out proposals for strengthening the accountability of police forces, including through changes to the membership and role of police authorities. We will review these proposals in the light of the establishment of strategic police forces, but elected representatives will continue to form the majority of police authority members. In addition, we are exploring ways to improve accountability at basic command unit level.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason the National Framework of Guaranteed Police Service Standards is not to be published until November 2006. [26696]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have worked together to develop national standards that set out the quality of service members of the public can expect whenever they have contact with the police.

The national Quality of Service Commitment is to be launched to the public in November 2006. This timescale has been agreed to give forces sufficient time to identify and implement change, to ensure they are compliant with the standards.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what residency qualifications are operated by the Hertfordshire Police when considering recruitment applications; what plans he has to review the qualifications; and if he will make a statement. [27826]

Hazel Blears: Hertfordshire Constabulary follow Home Office guidelines which are set out in Home Office Circular 54/2003, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Candidates who are not citizens of the United Kingdom or a member of the European Economic Community must have indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom.

Where recent time has been spent abroad, checks will need to be made through overseas police channels as part of the recruitment vetting process. Applicants who cannot be vetted cannot be appointed. This policy is reviewed regularly.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many fully trained police officers were allocated to the London borough of Wandsworth on 31 March in each year since 1997, broken down by rank; [28802]

(2) how many community support officers were allocated to the London borough of Wandsworth in each year since 1997. [28803]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* Information on the number of police officers in basic command units has only been collected since March 2002 and is not collected by rank. The same information for community support officers is only available from June 2005. Police officer and community support officer numbers for the Wandsworth borough operational command unit are set out in the following table. The deployment of police service personnel to each London borough operational command unit and to other specialist units in the Metropolitan Police Service is a matter to be determined by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Sir Ian Blair).

Wandsworth borough operational command unit. Police officer and community support officer numbers since 2002.

As at 31 March	*Police officer numbers*	*Community support officer (CSO) numbers*
2002[1]	563	[illegible]
2003[2]	557	—
2004	612	—
2005	582	46

[1] 2002 data collected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.
[2] 2003 onwards collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (except CSO data which has been especially collected for 2005 by Policing Policy Directorate.
[3] At 30 June.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces have a policy of attending every reported crime. [29195]

Hazel Blears: Attendance policy in respect of individual crime types is essentially an operational matter for chief officers and police authorities to determine. This information is not therefore collected centrally.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers use helmet-mounted video cameras; in which police forces such equipment is used; and what the cost thereof was for each constabulary in each of the last five years. [29464]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Home Office Scientific Development Branch has received no formal approach from ACPO to be involved in such development, so it has no knowledge of the current numbers of systems being developed piece-meal within Forces or being used by officers on the street.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers he has to merge police authorities. [30423]

Hazel Blears: Sections 32 to 34 of the Police Act 1996 make provision for the alteration of police force areas in England and Wales (other than the City of London police area) by secondary legislation. Under these provisions the Secretary of State may make an order either if he has received a request to make alterations from the police authorities for each of the areas affected by them (in which case the negative resolution procedure applies), or if it appears to him that it is expedient to make the alterations in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness (in which case the affirmative procedure applies). By virtue of section 34 of the 1996 Act, an order may include supplementary and transitional provisions, including provision as to the membership of a police authority for the police force for the new force area.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the possible impact of merging police forces on the accountability of chief constables to local communities. [30419]

Hazel Blears: Chief constables of strategic police forces will continue, as now, to be accountable to the communities they serve both directly and through their police authorities. As a consequence of restructuring, we are examining ways of strengthening the accountability arrangements both at force and Basic Command Unit level.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many abandoned vehicles have been removed by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers under paragraph 10 of schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29355]

Hazel Blears: These data are not collected centrally.

However, the proportion of people who think that abandoned or burnt out cars in their area is big/fairly big problem has dropped from 14 per cent. in 2003–04 to 11 per cent. in 2004–05. (British Crime Survey figures).

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) on how many occasions in each of the last four years *(a)* drugs have been seized from people and *(b)* names and addresses of those suspected of being in possession of drugs have been taken by (i) community support officers and (ii) police officers under paragraphs 7B and 7C of schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002, broken down by police authority; [29357]

(2) how many searches have been carried out on detained persons for dangerous items or items that could be used to assist escape by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers under paragraph 2A of schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29365]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally. These powers are not currently available to community support officers as they were introduced by the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 and have not yet been commenced.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many names and addresses of *(a)* drivers and *(b)* pedestrians have been taken by community support officers under paragraph 3A of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29364]

Hazel Blears: We do not hold this information centrally.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cycles have been stopped by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers for the purpose of issuing a fixed penalty notice under paragraph 1(2)*(b)* of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29368]

Paul Goggins: We do not hold this information centrally.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors led to the decision to request chief constables to produce implementation plans for police force re-organisation in December. [22106]

Hazel Blears: The 'Closing the Gap' report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary concluded that the existing 43 force structure was no longer fit for purpose. The report found that below a certain size there simply is not a sufficient critical mass to provide the necessary sustainable level of protective services that the 21st century increasingly demands. As a result, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked police authorities and chief constables to submit to him proposals for restructuring by 23 December 2005. There is a general recognition that, in order to minimise any disruption, restructuring should be implemented as quickly as possible once final decisions on its form have been made.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to draw conclusions on the pilot scheme into hand held computers for police officers on the beat. [27110]

Hazel Blears: The police have defined their requirements for using wireless technology to combat crime. These requirements are being fed into a number of trials with different police forces. The trials are expected to be completed by mid 2006, at which time the results will be circulated to all forces.

Prisons

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy on the early release of prisoners. [19054]

Fiona Mactaggart: Determinate sentence prisoners sentenced on or after 1 October 1992 to a term of imprisonment of four years or more in respect of offences committed prior to 4 April 2005 are entitled to be considered for early release on parole at any point after the half way point of their sentence. They will be on licence from the point at which they are released until the two thirds point of their sentence, and are then subject to recall for the remainder of their sentence if they commit a further offence. Prisoners sentenced to one year but under four years are released automatically at the half way point; on licence to the two thirds point and subject to recall if they commit a further offence for the remainder of their sentence. Prisoners sentenced to under 12 months are released automatically at the half way point and subject to recall if they commit a further offence during the remainder of their sentence.

Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 sexual or violent offenders who present a significant risk will receive an extended sentence, under which the entire custodial period set by the court may be spent in prison; or, depending on the offence, an indeterminate sentence, under which the offender must spend a minimum period of time in prison, and can be kept in prison indefinitely. Other offenders, who receive a standard determinate sentence, are released automatically at the half way point and remain on licence until the end of sentence.

The Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme enables suitable prisoners, primarily those serving sentences of between three months and under four years, to return to the community up to 135 days earlier than their normal release date (half-way point of the sentence). They are subject to an electronically monitored curfew, normally for 12 hours a day. If they breach the licence conditions they are liable to be returned to prison to serve the remaining custodial portion of their sentence in custody.

Certain categories of prisoners are statutorily excluded from HDC.

The Early Removal Scheme broadly mirrors the HDC scheme and provides for determinate sentence prisoners (who are due to be released under either the Criminal Justice Act 1991 or the Criminal Justice Act 2003) and who are liable to be removed or deported from the United Kingdom, to be removed up to 135 days before their release date.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what *(a)* assessment he has made of and *(b)* guidance he has issued on the need to adhere to the reception criteria of an institution when deciding to place a prisoner; [25848]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of overcrowding within the prison system on the placing of prisoners in suitable institutions; [25850]

(3) what assessment he has made of the criteria governing the suitability of prisoners for open conditions. [25859]

Fiona Mactaggart: Each prison has its own acceptance criteria, which are agreed between the governor and Prison Service operational manager (or director and operational manager for contracted prisons) and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). These protocols are reviewed regularly by NOMS.

The use of crowded conditions within the prison estate is kept under review. Prisoners are moved to suitable establishments as part of their sentence plan, following re-categorisation or where there is an operational need to do so. They can only move to those prisons with vacancies. There is no question of prisons being required to take unsuitable prisoners.

Guidance on prisoner security categorisation has been issued and is kept under ongoing review. Existing guidance allows for the re-categorisation of prisoners unsuitable for open conditions and their return to a

closed establishment. Work is under way to review and revise initial categorisation procedures, including the criteria for categorisation and allocation to open conditions.

Rape Cases

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what monitoring is being undertaken of the impact of the provisions in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 on the conviction rate in rape cases. [29441]

Paul Goggins: We are currently undertaking a stock take of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to ensure that it is working as intended and providing a framework that reflects the nature of sexual offending as it currently is committed and is capable of convicting and punishing the guilty. That stock take will be completed by the end of the year.

We have also sought to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape cases through the Rape Action Plan, which was published by the government in 2002. The plan followed a thorough inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI). It sets out a series of measures to improve the investigation of rape cases by the police; the quality of advice, decision making, case preparation and presentation at court by prosecutors; and the treatment of victims and witnesses in cases involving allegations of rape and sexual assault.

We have undertaken a stock take of the Rape Action Plan to find out how well these measures have been implemented, and what remains to be done. The results of the stock take will feed into a follow-up inspection by the HMIC and HMCPSI to take place early next year.

Safety/Speed Cameras

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many covert speed cameras there were in England in 2004; and how many covert speed cameras he expects to be installed in England in the next five years. [29897]

Paul Goggins: This information is not collected centrally.

Police forces have the operational discretion to undertake speed enforcement by visible or covert means anywhere within their force area. Covert enforcement is not supported by the national safety camera programme and it is likely to be only in exceptional circumstances that the police judge that covert enforcement is the most appropriate means of dealing with a situation.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what tests were carried out to investigate the accuracy of the LTI120/20 light-weight handheld speed camera before it was approved for use by police forces. [29288]

Paul Goggins: The detailed testing requirements are set out in The Speed Meter Handbook published by the Home Office Scientific Development Branch and available on the Home Office website at www.scienceandresearch.homeoffice.gov.uk/hosdb/publications.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the reliability of evidence produced by the LTI120/20 light-weight hand held speed camera. [29289]

Paul Goggins: The LTI 20.20 is self-calibrating with an internal fault-reporting system, but as with all devices, it is in addition required to undergo regular calibration checks. I am satisfied that evidence obtained from the LTI 20.20 is reliable.

Sexual Assaults

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the percentage of sexual assaults that are unreported; and what steps the Government are taking to encourage the reporting of sexual assaults. [26444]

Paul Goggins: According to the British Crime Survey Interpersonal Violence Module (2001), only 15 per cent. of rapes came to the attention of the police. Estimations of the proportion of sexual assaults that are unreported are unavailable.

The Government have undertaken a range of work to improve confidence in the police and criminal justice system, and to enhance the care of victims in the aftermath of a sexual assault, which we believe will encourage more victims to come forward.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a modern framework for prosecuting sex offences, giving the criminal justice agencies the tools to bring more offenders to justice, and better manage sex offenders.

The Rape Action Plan, published in 2002, sets out a series of measures to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape cases and the treatment of victims and witnesses. These include the introduction of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) rape policy, specialist rape prosecutors, guidance for police, and better provision of information to the victim. The Home Office has been working closely with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the CPS to implement the plan.

In order to improve the standard of victim care, the Government have supported the expansion of the network of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), where victims can receive medical care, counselling and a forensic examination. There are currently 13 SARCs in England and Wales with further SARCs under development supported by funding from the £4 million Victims Fund (2004–06), set aside to fund services for victims of sexual offending.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for *(a)* reckless and *(b)* deliberate transmission of sexually transmitted diseases have been (i) brought to court and (ii) succeeded in each year since 1997. [26016]

Paul Goggins: Information on the number of prosecutions and convictions for the reckless or deliberate transmission of sexually transmitted diseases is not available. Cases of this kind are likely to be dealt with as grievous bodily harm under Sections 18 or 20, Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and cannot be

separately identified from other cases of grievous bodily harm as the circumstances surrounding an offence are not centrally collected

Terrorism

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans he has to review the amount of Government compensation given to British victims of terrorism abroad; whether he intends to conduct a consultation on changes to the current system; and if he will make a statement; [21134]

(2) if he will make a statement on the compensation available to British victims of terrorist acts abroad. [21135]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Victims of terrorist incidents, and of other violent crime, within Great Britain are eligible for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. The scheme does not cover incidents abroad, though British victims of terrorism within the European Union are entitled to 'fair and appropriate' compensation from the member state in which they were injured. Some other countries also pay compensation to foreign nationals injured within their territory.

I refer the hon. Member to the response given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 839WS that officials are considering the possibility of introducing a scheme to provide compensation for, for example, UK victims of terrorism, wherever that may happen. That consideration is ongoing.

Ms Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms are in place to monitor the impact of the effects of the implementation of the Terrorism Acts *(a)* on the different ethnic groups and *(b)* on race relations. [21567]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) requires public authorities, including the police, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. These requirements apply to police operations to enforce the Terrorism Acts, as well as their other activities. Furthermore, the Secretary of State has made the police and many other public bodies subject to a further specific duty to produce a race equality scheme setting out how they intend to meet their general statutory duty. The Commission for Racial Equality is responsible for enforcing the Race Relations Act and has produced statutory guidance for public authorities on how to comply with the statutory duties.

The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) also requires all Government polices that are relevant to race equality to be fully impact assessed for any potential adverse impact on racial groups. Accordingly, a Race Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill in February 2005. This assessment laid out the procedures for monitoring the impact of the legislation. The Terrorism Act 2000 and Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 were introduced before this became a legal requirement.

Both the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 require the Secretary of State to lay reports before Parliament on the working of those Acts. The independent reviewer of both Acts, currently Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, is responsible for compiling these reports. His latest reports can be viewed on the Home Office website (www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

The Home Affairs Select Committee oversees and monitors various issues including the impact of counter terrorism legislation on communities. The Committee has taken evidence from Ministers, Government officials, police and independent stakeholders. The Committee published a report on Terrorism and Community Relations in June this year.

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* arrested, *(b)* charged and *(c)* convicted under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, broken down by (i) year, (ii) gender, (iii) ethnicity and (iv) religion. [16738]

Hazel Blears: There are no arrest powers under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001. My hon. Friend could be referring to the Terrorism Act 2000. The latest arrest figures are published on the Home Office website,www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act/

The statistics requested in parts *(b)* and *(c)* are only held by individual police forces and not by the Home Office.

Under-age Product Sales

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many businesses were prosecuted for selling *(a)* tobacco products and *(b)* lottery tickets and scratch cards to under 16s in Coventry, South in the last five years. [27238]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings database shows that between 1999 and 2003, there were two prosecutions in 2001 and one prosecution in 2002 of businesses having been proceeded against at magistrates' courts in the West Midlands police force area for the sale of tobacco etc. to persons under 16. There are no records of any prosecutions under s13a National Lottery etc. Act 1993. However, the lottery operator is required to ensure sufficient controls are in place to prevent sales to under 16s. Examples include test purchasing programmes and retailer training and education. It will also remove the lottery terminal if a retailer is found to have made repeat sales to people under 16.

It is not possible to identify those prosecutions in Coventry, South, as the data are not collected at this level of detail.

Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Visa Waiver Programme

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what time limits apply to information about minor convictions of UK citizens given to United States' authorities under their Visa Waiver programme. [29432]

Mr. McNulty: The UK does not provide the US authorities with criminal conviction information for visa application or similar purposes. Under the Data Protection Act 1984 an individual is entitled to obtain his criminal record details. It is a matter for the individual whether to disclose the information in support of a visa application or similar purpose.

Criminal conviction information is drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC). All offences that might attract a prison sentence on conviction are recorded centrally together with about 50 more minor, non-imprisonable offences. The time limits for retaining such information on the PNC are in accordance with the current ACPO "weeding" rules.

Wildlife Crime

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police forces in England which have designated wildlife crime units; and if he will make a statement. [30080]

Hazel Blears: The deployment of police officers and other staff in each force area is an operational matter for the Chief Officer concerned, based on operational priorities. Virtually every police force has a wildlife enforcement capability of some form, although this varies from force to force.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

"A Parent's Guide to Direct Payments"

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons "A Parent's Guide to Direct Payments", distributed by her Department, is no longer available in languages other than English; and if she will make it available in other languages. [29562]

Beverley Hughes: 'A Parents Guide to Direct Payments' was originally the responsibility of the Department of Health. It transferred to the Department for Education and Skills in June 2003 as part of the machinery of Government changes. Officials at DfES are arranging for the guide to be reprinted to reflect policy developments since the original version, and with the appropriate departmental changes. The reprinted guide will be available in the full range of languages from DfES Prolog 'reference 31213' by the end of January 2006.

Ability Grouping

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 444W, on ability grouping, if she will revise Ofsted inspection criteria to include monitoring of the proportion of classes that are banded by ability. [29556]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM chief inspector, David Bell, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his letter has been placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell to Mr. Nick Gibb, dated 21 November 2005:

Parliamentary Questions 29556/29557/29558: Setting and Banding by Ability

Your recent parliamentary questions have been referred to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, for reply.

In sum, you asked:

the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will revise Ofsted inspection criteria to include monitoring of the proportion of classes that are banded by ability (PQ 29556)

the Secretary of State of Education and Skills on what basis it was decided to remove the requirement for Ofsted inspectors to distinguish between setting and banding by ability in the information recorded about lessons (PQ 29557)

the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of lessons was recorded as banded by ability in *(a)* Year 7, *(b)* Year 8, *(c)* Year 9, *(d)* Year 10 and *(e)* Year 11 in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted in each year between 1995 and 2004 (PQ 29558).

In response to Parliamentary Question 29556, Ofsted introduced a new framework and guidance for inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 from September 2005. Although these will be kept under review, there are no plans to change them in the immediate future. The observation of lessons is no longer conducted in the same way as under the previous inspection regime (under section 10 of the School Inspections Act) and in Ofsted's view it would not be appropriate to ask inspectors to collect information about the proportion of classes that are grouped by ability on every section 5 inspection.

In response to Parliamentary Question 29557, changes were made in 2003/04 so that Ofsted had information about the level of ability of groups as well as whether pupils were grouped by ability for their lessons. The information about ability levels was not previously available. To avoid over-complexity, the distinction between banding and setting was removed. In making judgements, Ofsted felt that it was not important for inspectors to know whether pupils were grouped by ability or not, rather than knowing the precise arrangements through which this was achieved. In some schools the distinction between banding and setting is blurred.

In response to Parliamentary Question 29558, the table (see Appendix 1) includes the information you required for the years 1996/97 to 2002/03. The data were not recorded in 1995/96 and from September 2003 inspectors were not required to distinguish between setting and banding in the information they recorded about lessons.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 444W, on ability grouping, what percentage of lessons was recorded as banded by ability in *(a)* year 7, *(b)* year 8, *(c)* year 9, *(d)* year 10 and *(e)* year 11 in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted in each year between 1995 and 2004. [29558]

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A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

Appendix 1: Percentage of banded lessons, 1996 to 2003

	1996/97		*1997/98*		*1998/99*		*1999/2000*	
Year group	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*
Year 7	27,542	6.4	16,414	8.3	22,361	5.3	17,544	4.9
Year 8	27,431	8.1	16,341	9.6	21,792	6.3	16,769	6.1
Year 9	27,161	7.5	16,692	9.2	23,489	6.6	18,810	6.6
Year 10	24,651	3.9	17,047	5.2	24,481	4.0	18,536	3.3
Year 11	38,008	3.6	17,686	4.9	24,543	3.9	18,490	3.3
Total year 7–11	144,793	5.8	84,180	7.4	116,666	5.2	90,149	4.8

	2000/01		*2001/02*		*2002/03*	
Year group	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*	*Total number of lessons observed*	*Percentage of banded lessons*
Year 7	14,011	4.9	12,532	4.6	11,257	4.5
Year 8	13,416	6.1	11,552	5.1	10,255	5.5
Year 9	16,117	6.5	14,388	5.5	13,152	5.9
Year 10	14,802	3.7	13,212	2.7	12,073	3.1
Year 11	15,108	3.2	13,812	2.5	12,982	2.8
Total year 7–11	73,454	4.9	65,496	4.1	59,719	4.3

Notes:
1. Framework changes occurred in January 2000 and September 2003. Changes in the way groupings in lessons were recorded may mean that data are not directly comparable from periods of one framework to another.
2. From January 2000 to July 2003, the inspection arrangements included full and short inspections. The majority of lessons observed will have been in full inspections. The most effective schools had short inspections.

Academies

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the independently managed academies that are operational, broken down by local education authority. [27190]

Jacqui Smith: There are currently 27 open academies in England. The following table lists them, together with the local authority area in which they are sited.

Academy	*Local authority area*
The Academy at Peckham	Southwark
The Academy of St. Francis of Assisi	Liverpool
The Business Academy, Bexley	Bexley
Capital City Academy	Brent
The City Academy, Bristol	Bristol
The City of London Academy	Southwark
Dixons City Academy	Bradford
Djanogly City Academy Nottingham	Nottingham
Greig City Academy	Haringey
Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College Academy	Lewisham
Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy	Lewisham
Harefield Academy	Hillingdon
The King's Academy	Middlesbrough
Lambeth Academy	Lambeth
London Academy	Barnet
Macmillan Academy	Middlesbrough
Manchester Academy	Manchester
The Marlowe Academy	Kent
Mossbourne Community Academy	Hackney
Northampton Academy	Northamptonshire
Salford City Academy	Salford
St. Paul's Academy	Greenwich
Stockley Academy	Hillingdon
Trinity Academy	Doncaster
Unity City Academy	Middlesbrough
The Walsall City Academy	Walsall
The West London Academy	Ealing

Bridgewater Primary School

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 108W, on Bridgewater primary school, Northamptonshire, in what circumstances departmental school design and funding guidelines provide funding for kitchen facilities; in what circumstances departmental guidelines judge kitchen facilities to be required by the school or local authority; and if her Department will provide funding for kitchen facilities at the Bridgewater primary school. [29186]

Jacqui Smith: The Departments area guidelines are applicable to any school but are particularly aimed at new school buildings. The Department bases its allocations for specific central programmes such as Building Schools for the Future on these guidelines and so these allocations will be sufficient to enable kitchen and dining facilities to be included.

It is not a legal requirement for a school to have a kitchen. Schools and local authorities are expected to provide nutritious and freshly prepared meals. It is the Government's view that this would ideally be from an on-site kitchen, but it can be achieved off-site if the appropriate arrangements are in place.

Over the current three years, 2003–04 to 2005–06, the Department is providing direct capital grants to Northamptonshire schools of some £32 million, also formulaic funding allocations of £49 million. In addition, during this period, there was an allocation to the local authority of £100 million in respect of a Private Finance Initiative, and nearly £5 million in respect of the Targeted Capital Fund programme. It is for the local authority, acting in co-operation with Bridgewater primary school and other schools, to prioritise expenditure in accordance with asset management plans. This includes whether to invest in kitchens or other assets.

Children's Trusts

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children's trusts there are in England. [24533]

Beverley Hughes: Most local authorities, primary care trusts and their partners are in the process of establishing a children's trust in their local area and are on target to meet the Government's expectation that most areas will have a children's trust by 2006, and all by 2008. 35 pathfinders and many other local areas have already established their children's trust arrangements, and some 125 local authorities say that their directors of children's services have been or are being appointed.

Class Sizes

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size was in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) England, (ii) Staffordshire and (iii) Tamworth. [26167]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Maintained primary schools: average class size taught by one teacher[1]. England, Staffordshire local authority and Tamworth parliamentary constituency.

	1997		*Position as at January each year 2005*	
	Maintained primary[2]	*Maintained secondary[2]*	*Maintained primary[2]*	*Maintained secondary[2]*
England	27.5	21.7	26.2	21.7
Staffordshire local authority[3]	27.5	22.3	—	—
Staffordshire local authority[4]	—	—	26.0	21.5
Tamworth parliamentary constituency	27.5	21.5	25.7	21.0

[1] Classes taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the census in January.
[2] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[3] Before local government re-organisation.
[4] After local government Re-organisation.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size is in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in Brent. [27757]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: average class size. Taught by one teacher[1].

	January 2005	
	Maintained primary[2]	*Maintained secondary[2]*
Brent local authority	27.3	20.7

[1] Classes taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the census in January.
[2] Includes middle schools as deemed.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for her Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31036]

Jacqui Smith: The real terms percentage increase for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 was 89.4 per cent. For the period 2005–06 to 2007–08 the increase is planned to be 8.5 per cent.

The increases for the individual years over the previous year are shown in the following table.

Expenditure on education, training and children 1997–98 to 2007–08

	£ million in 2005–06 prices[1]	
	Number	*Percentage change*
Outturn		
1997–98	15,011	
1998–99	14,974	-0.2
1999–2000	16,035	7.1
2000–01	18,838	17.5
2001–02	21,268	12.9
2002–03	25,170	18.3
2003–04	27,391	8.8
2004–05[2]	28,431	3.8
Plans		
2005–06[3]	30,546	7.4
2006–07	31,822	4.2
2007–08	33,129	4.1

[1] The Department previously had responsibility for employment policies. These have been removed from the above figures for comparison purposes.
[2] Estimated outturn as supplied for the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper.
[3] Excludes take up of end year flexibility.

Education (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many recorded incidents of physical assault by students on staff there were in each secondary school in West Lancashire in each of the past five years. [27711]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available.

Education Act 1996

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of sections *(a)* 510 and *(b)* 511 of the Education Act 1996 in (i) Essex and (ii) Southend. [29849]

Jacqui Smith: The information you have requested is not collected by the Department for Education and Skills.

Education Funding

Mr. McFadden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure was per pupil in Wolverhampton in 1996–97; and what the equivalent figure was in 2004–05. [30653]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is contained within the following table:

Combined LEA and school-based expenditure1 per pupil2 in Wolverhampton LEA 1996–97 and 2004–053, 4

	£
1996–97	2,740
2004–05	4,210

[1] The combined LEA and school-based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school-based expenditure and all elements of central LA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).
[2] Pupil figures include all pre-primary pupils, including those under-fives funded by the LEA and being educated in private settings, pupils educated in maintained mainstream schools and other LEA maintained pupils. The pupil data for pupils attending maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools are taken from the DfES Annual Schools census. Private voluntary and independent (PVI) under-5 pupil numbers are taken from the Early Years census but are only available since 1999–2000. Other LEA maintained pupils includes all pupils attending schools not maintained by the authority for whom the authority is paying full tuition fees, or educated otherwise than in schools and pupil referral units under arrangements made by the authority drawn from the form 8b submitted to the DfES. Also included as other LEA maintained pupils are all pupils attending pupil referral units who are not registered at a maintained mainstream school drawn from the DfES Annual Schools census. All pupil numbers are adjusted to be on a financial year basis.
[3] 1999–2000 saw a change in data source when the data collection moved from the RO1 form collected by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the section 52 form from the DfES. 2002–03 saw a further break in the time series following the introduction of Consistent Financial Reporting to schools.
[4] 2004–05 data is regarded as provisional and is subject to change by the LEA.
Note:
Figures are as reported by Wolverhampton LEA and are rounded to the nearest 10.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has for increasing the education maintenance allowance. [29799]

Maria Eagle: There are currently no plans to increase the amount of education maintenance allowance payments.

Education Responsibilities (London)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the responsibilities in the field of Education and Skills are of *(a)* the Greater London Authority, *(b)* the Government Office for London and *(c)* the London Development Agency. [28557]

Jacqui Smith: The Greater London Authority (GLA) has no statutory role in the provision of education in London.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently reviewing the Mayor's powers and, in preparation for this, the Mayor submitted detailed proposals on subjects including skills to the Government on 20 July. Further details about this are available on the GLA website at: www.london.gov.uk/mayor/powers/index.jsp

The Government Office for London (GOL) works with key stakeholders to support the effective delivery of the Government's education and skills objectives in particular through ensuring proper linkage with regeneration policies and programmes. These stakeholders include the Learning and Skills Councils, local authorities, the London Development Agency, the voluntary and community sector and employer representatives. GOL also contracts with and funds the Connexions Service for young people.

GOL is working with partners to improve educational achievement and attainment and also carrying forward work with the London Skills Commission to improve the skills and employability of Londoners through the implementation of the Framework for Regional

Employment and Skills Action. Currently, a key responsibility is to ensure that the Government's Every Child Matters agenda is implemented effectively so that outcomes for London children are improved.

Further information about GOL's role in Education and Skills can be found at http://www.gos.gov.uk/gol/Education_skills/

Along with the other Regional Development Agencies, the London Development Agency's (LDA) responsibility for education and skills in the region is laid out in the 1998 RDA act as:

(1) to promote employment in it's area

(2) to enhance the development of and application of skills relevant to employment in its area.

To fulfill this role, the LDA acts to co-ordinate the activities of other education and labour market institutions to be in line with the regions economic development strategy—ensuring that the final outcomes of their interventions yield an increase in the employment rate.

To do this the LDA supports and shapes investments being made by the Learning and Skills Councils, Higher Education, Jobcentre Plus, European Funding, the Government Office for London, the local authorities and that delivered through charitable foundations (e.g. lottery).

The LDA are funding approximately £75 million of skills related activity this year, around £16 million over the next three years directly on joining up activity (the 'London Regional Skills Programme') and a planned further £40 million on supporting locally based skills initiatives ('Creating Opportunities Fund'). Much of the funds available for businesses and communities have attracted European additional money nearly doubling initial investment. The London Skills Commission 2005/06 action plan is designed to wrap round and shape the £5 billion (approximately) that is invested in adult skills, education post-14 and business support in London each year, making it more fit for business needs.

Free School Meals

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 728–9W, on free school meals, what steps she is taking to close the gap between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those taking free school meals *(a)* in Northamptonshire and *(b)* in England. [29310]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is aware that there is a gap between eligibility and take up of free school meals, and has funded research, commissioned by the Child Poverty Action Group, into the reasons children fail to take up their free school meal entitlement. The findings were published in a report entitled 'Improving the Take-Up of Free School Meals' in May 2001. The report showed that pupils and parents considered that the quality and choice of food on offer discouraged take up.

In March 2005, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced a package of measures designed to improve significantly the quality of school meals, by, among other things introducing improved school meals standards and a 'toolkit' for parents to inform them how to work with their schools to improve school meal provision.

Improving the quality of school meals may also improve the take-up of free school meals.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the criteria are for determining access to free school meals; when the definition of eligibility was last changed; and what the basis was for the change. [30467]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: Children whose parents are in receipt of income support; income-based jobseekers allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; child tax credit provided they are not entitled to working tax credit and have an annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) that from 6 April 2005 does not exceed 13,910; or the guaranteed element of state pension credit are entitled to free school meals. Children who receive income support of income based jobseekers allowance in their own right are also entitled to free school meals.

The definition of eligibility was last changed from 30 April 2005 whereby the guarantee element of state pension credit was introduced as an additional qualifying benefit for free school lunch eligibility purposes. This change was introduced to remove impracticality for LEA's and schools when checking free school meals entitlement for those parents in receipt of the guaranteed pension credit.

G3 Academy, Chelmsley Wood

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills why her Department has opposed the installation of fire sprinklers in the new G3 Academy in Chelmsley Wood. [28511]

Jacqui Smith: The Department did not oppose the installation of fire sprinklers in Grace Academy, Chelmsley Wood.

It is the Department's policy that each school plan, including that for Grace Academy, should be based on a fire risk assessment and where necessary incorporate the principles of fire engineering as an intrinsic part of its design. This is a statutory requirement of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations, (2003) with which Academies, as independent schools, must comply.

All schools, maintained or independent are designed in accordance with the highest industry specifications to meet the functional requirements of the Building Regulations on Fire Safety. Sprinkler systems are primarily incorporated for property protection whereas the Department's main concern is that

"the safe escape of the occupants in case of fire is reasonably assured".

It is therefore felt that the use of automatic sprinkler systems is unnecessary. There is no requirement in The Building Regulations 2000 or the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations, (2003) for the installation of sprinklers to be included.

The decision on whether or not to install a sprinkler system in Grace Academy rested upon the advice of the appointed independent fire consultant. The consultant's

expert view was that a sprinkler system was not a requirement for life safety. Based on this advice Solihull metropolitan borough council's building control department accepted the project without a sprinkler system.

GCSE Results

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of 15-year-olds achieved five or more grades at A* to C at GCSE or equivalent which included GCSEs in English and mathematics in each year since 1995; [25419]

(2) what proportion of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*to C or equivalent including English and mathematics, broken down by local education authority in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2005; [25671]

(3) how many and what proportion of non-selective schools had more than 70 per cent. of pupils achieving (i) five GCSEs at grade A*to C or equivalent and (ii) five GCSEs at grade A*to C or equivalent including English and mathematics in each year since 1995. [25672]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following tables:

Table 1: Percentage of 15 year old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C at GCSE or equivalent[2] including English and mathematics*

Academic year	Percentage
2004/05[4]	44.1
2003/04	42.7
2002/03[3]	41.9
2001/02	42.1
2000/01	40.7
1999/2000	40.0
1998/99	38.6
1997/98	37.0
1996/97	35.6

[1] Age at start of academic year i.e. 31 August.
[2] Figures from 1996/97 to 2002/03 include GCSE/GNVQs only, figures from 2003/04 include other equivalent qualifications approved pre-16.
[3] Figures decreased in 2002/03 because percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in Mathematics decreased.
[4] Figures for 2004/05 are provisional, all other figures are final.

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C at GCSE or equivalent[2] including English and mathematics by local authority*

Local authority	Percentage
Academic year 1996/97	
Barking and Dagenham	22.0
Barnet	42.2
Barnsley	21.0
Bath and North East Somerset	40.2
Bedfordshire	33.9
Berkshire	40.0
Bexley	35.6
Birmingham	25.0
Bolton	30.3
Bournemouth	40.5
Bradford	20.8
Brent	30.1
Brighton and Hove	27.1
Bromley	42.5
Buckinghamshire	50.4
Bury	37.3
Calderdale	29.4
Cambridgeshire	34.9
Camden	35.1
Cheshire	37.5
City of Bristol	22.6
City of Derby	26.7
City of Kingston-upon-Hull	14.8
Cornwall	36.0
Coventry	27.1
Croydon	28.4
Cumbria	33.4
Darlington	28.1
Derbyshire	33.6
Devon	33.8
Doncaster	24.8
Dorset	36.6
Dudley	31.4
Durham	27.4
Ealing	28.2
East Riding of Yorkshire	34.2
East Sussex	33.3
Enfield	31.4
Essex	35.0
Gateshead	31.5
Gloucestershire	41.6
Greenwich	19.9
Hackney	17.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	32.5
Hampshire	37.6
Haringey	17.9
Harrow	40.0
Hartlepool	19.6
Havering	37.9
Hereford and Worcester	34.8
Hertfordshire	41.5
Hillingdon	30.1
Hounslow	31.3
Isle of Wight	32.0
Isles of Scilly	27.8
Islington	16.5
Kensington and Chelsea	28.0
Kent	37.5
Kingston upon Thames	44.7
Kirklees	30.5
Knowsley	14.6
Lambeth	18.6
Lancashire	34.6
Leeds	28.5
Leicester City	24.8
Leicestershire	34.8
Lewisham	19.4
Lincolnshire	39.3
Liverpool	23.8
Luton	23.3
Manchester	19.1
Merton	30.1
Middlesbrough	21.0
Milton Keynes	21.9
Newcastle upon Tyne	24.9
Newham	23.2
Norfolk	34.0
North East Lincolnshire	22.8
North Lincolnshire	30.2
North Somerset	38.3
North Tyneside	31.0
North Yorkshire	42.7
Northamptonshire	31.3
Northumberland	34.2
Nottinghamshire	28.0
Oldham	27.4
Oxfordshire	36.7
Poole	40.8
Portsmouth	18.5
Redbridge	39.3
Redcar and Cleveland	30.0
Richmond upon Thames	36.5
Rochdale	25.3
Rotherham	27.8
Rutland	40.7
Salford	22.1
Sandwell	17.7
Sefton	35.6
Sheffield	29.3
Shropshire	37.0

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C at GCSE or equivalent[2] including English and mathematics by local authority*

Local authority	*Percentage*
Solihull	38.6
Somerset	37.6
South Gloucestershire	33.3
South Tyneside	27.3
Southampton	29.4
Southwark	17.1
St. Helens	30.0
Staffordshire	34.5
Stockport	40.8
Stockton on Tees	28.9
Stoke-on-Trent	22.5
Suffolk	33.5
Sunderland	26.1
Surrey	40.0
Sutton	47.3
Swindon	34.9
Tameside	28.5
Tower Hamlets	15.0
Trafford	44.3
Wakefield	28.2
Walsall	25.4
Waltham Forest	25.6
Wandsworth	23.2
Warwickshire	34.9
West Sussex	38.3
Westminster	22.5
Wigan	34.6
Wiltshire	39.0
Wirral	35.3
Wolverhampton	23.3
York	41.0
Academic year 2004/05[3]	
Barking and Dagenham	36.7
Barnet	57.2
Barnsley	35.4
Bath and North East Somerset	54.1
Bedfordshire	46.0
Bexley	47.3
Birmingham	42.3
Blackburn with Darwen	41.0
Blackpool	34.9
Bolton	41.7
Bournemouth	46.9
Bracknell Forest	44.0
Bradford	35.7
Brent	47.3
Brighton and Hove	43.5
Bristol	31.6
Bromley	52.8
Buckinghamshire	63.0
Bury	53.8
Calderdale	45.8
Cambridgeshire	53.9
Camden	43.5
Cheshire	53.9
City of Peterborough	42.3
City of Plymouth	43.8
Cornwall	49.7
Coventry	41.1
Croydon	45.9
Cumbria	49.9
Darlington	45.3
Derby	42.4
Derbyshire	47.6
Devon	49.3
Doncaster	38.0
Dorset	52.8
Dudley	43.4
Durham	43.2
Ealing	48.8
East Riding of Yorkshire	52.4
East Sussex	45.3
Enfield	45.5
Essex	47.2
Gateshead	43.9
Gloucestershire	57.2
Greenwich	37.4
Hackney	40.4

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C at GCSE or equivalent[2] including English and mathematics by local authority*

Local authority	*Percentage*
Halton	37.0
Hammersmith and Fulham	52.4
Hampshire	53.1
Haringey	35.9
Harrow	56.5
Hartlepool	39.4
Havering	53.6
Herefordshire	50.9
Hertfordshire	55.3
Hillingdon	41.4
Hounslow	51.1
Isle of Wight	34.1
Isles of Scilly	90.9
Islington	32.5
Kensington and Chelsea	44.0
Kent	50.2
Kingston upon Thames	65.4
Kingston-upon-Hull	30.2
Kirklees	42.0
Knowsley	30.0
Lambeth	37.4
Lancashire	48.7
Leeds	41.8
Leicester City	35.7
Leicestershire	51.0
Lewisham	41.2
Lincolnshire	49.9
Liverpool	34.9
Luton	38.1
Manchester	30.7
Medway	43.8
Merton	40.2
Middlesbrough	31.4
Milton Keynes	44.5
Newcastle upon Tyne	36.0
Newham	46.6
Norfolk	46.9
North East Lincolnshire	34.0
North Lincolnshire	41.4
North Somerset	50.8
North Tyneside	44.8
North Yorkshire	56.7
Northamptonshire	45.0
Northumberland	51.0
Nottingham City	27.9
Nottinghamshire	40.8
Oldham	40.1
Oxfordshire	49.2
Poole	57.6
Portsmouth	35.4
Reading	41.4
Redbridge	59.7
Redcar and Cleveland	40.4
Richmond upon Thames	50.9
Rochdale	39.3
Rotherham	41.9
Rutland	56.5
Salford	37.9
Sandwell	30.2
Sefton	44.2
Sheffield	42.1
Shropshire	55.9
Slough	53.1
Solihull	52.9
Somerset	49.8
South Gloucestershire	48.6
South Tyneside	36.1
Southampton	39.2
Southend	50.2
Southwark	31.8
St. Helens	42.3
Staffordshire	47.0
Stockport	47.9
Stockton on Tees	40.6
Stoke on Trent	35.3
Suffolk	49.1
Sunderland	38.6
Surrey	54.2
Sutton	63.2

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C at GCSE or equivalent[2] including English and mathematics by local authority*

Local authority	Percentage
Swindon	42.0
Tameside	40.1
Telford and the Wrekin	40.8
Thurrock	38.8
Torbay	48.8
Tower Hamlets	31.8
Trafford	62.2
Wakefield	45.2
Walsall	38.3
Waltham Forest	41.0
Wandsworth	44.9
Warrington	51.1
Warwickshire	49.4
West Berkshire	51.3
West Sussex	49.6

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A-C at GCSE or equivalent[2] including English and mathematics by local authority*

Local authority	Percentage
Westminster	47.5
Wigan	43.0
Wiltshire	52.8
Windsor and Maidenhead	53.4
Wirral	49.6
Wokingham	59.1
Wolverhampton	37.1
Worcestershire	47.9
York	49.9

[1] Age at start of academic year i.e. 31st August.
[2] Figures from 1996/97 include GCSE/GNVQs, figures from 2003/04 include other equivalent qualifications approved pre-16.
[3] 2004/05 figures are provisional, 1996/97 figures are final.
[4] Due to reorganisation, LA names and boundaries are not comparable for 1996/97 and 2004/05.

Table 3: Number and percentage of non-selective schools[1] with 70 per cent. or more of 15-year-old pupils[2] achieving (i) five or more GCSEs at grade A to C or equivalent[3] and (ii) five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C or equivalent[3] including English and mathematics in each year since 1995*

	Numbers		Numbers		
	5+ A*-C	5+ A*-C inc. E&M	5+ A*-C	5+ A*-C inc. E&M	Number of schools[1]
2003/04	413	413	14.0	3.7	2,946
2002/03	367	367	12.5	2.7	2,931
2001/02	298	298	10.2	2.3	2,935
2000/01	239	239	8.1	1.8	2,938
1999/2000	208	208	7.0	1.6	2,954
1998/99	180	180	6.1	1.5	2,964
1997/98	115	115	3.8	0.8	2,999
1996/97	79	79	2.6	0.8	3,000
1995/96	73	73	2.4	0.7	3,001
1996/95	52	52	1.7	0.5	3,003

[1] Includes maintained, mainstream schools with no selection policy upon entry.
[2] Age at start of academic year i.e. 31 August.
[3] Figures from 1996/97 include GCSE/GNVQs, figures from 2003/04 include other equivalent qualifications approved pre-16.
[4] The number and proportion of schools are not provided for 2004/05 as this data are currently being checked by schools as part of the Achievement and Attainment tables checking exercise. Revised figures, which take account of any amendments made by the schools during this exercise will be published in January 2006.

ITT Students

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many initial teacher training (ITT) students graduated in each of the last five years; how many newly qualified teacher (NQT) placement opportunities were available in each year; and how many ITT students failed to obtain NQT placements beginning in the September after achieving a post-graduate certificate in education *(a)* in England and *(b)* in each region. [30821]

Jacqui Smith: The following numbers of trainees gained qualified teacher status in each of the last five years:

	Number
1999/2000	21,693
2000/01	22,642
2001/02	25,489
2002/03	29,094
2003/04	31,810

The figures in the table include trainees on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The figures for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 do not include employment based routes. Employment based routes data are available from 2001/02 to 2003/04 only.

There is no formal concept of 'NQT placements'. Data are not held on the number of NQTs who fail to find employment each September, but only on those who are actively seeking employment six months after gaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

England

In March 2005, 848 postgraduate initial teacher training trainees were seeking a teaching post six months after gaining QTS.

The most recent figures on vacancies show that in January 2005 there were 1,923 classroom teacher vacancies nationally.

By region

By region, the following numbers of newly qualified teachers from postgraduate initial teacher training

courses responded to the survey that they were seeking employment as a teacher. The last figure in each row shows the number of vacancies for classroom teachers in nursery, primary and secondary schools (excluding special schools and pupil referral units) in each region as at January 2005.

Postgraduate trainees seeking employment six months after QTS award

QTS awarded in academic year	*1999/2000*	*2000/01*	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	
Still seeking employment	*March 2001*	*March 2002*	*March 2003*	*March 2004*	*March 2005*	*Vacancies January 2005*
North East	22	41	20	89	63	71
North West	50	51	54	78	108	198
Yorkshire and the Humber	17	35	51	101	92	172
East Midlands	13	18	9	19	43	91
West Midlands	40	30	30	92	136	236
Eastern	38	11	31	48	25	228
London	27	51	52	42	125	554
South East	16	26	30	181	63	296
South West	41	77	97	128	172	77
Non-regional	39	1	5	3	21	—
England	303	341	379	781	848	1,923
Total postgraduate trainees awarded QTS	14,846	16,153	19,074	22,691	25,755	

The figures in the table for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 do not include employment based routes. Employment based routes data are available from 2001/02 to 2003/04 only.

Head Teachers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in England were without a permanent head teacher for a period in the past 12 months broken down by (i) region and (ii) local education authority. [30584]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not available in the form requested.

Learning and Skills Councils

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) local partnership teams will *(a)* employ additional staff and *(b)* use existing LSC staff. [27959]

Bill Rammell: The LSC's local partnership teams will provide a national network of skilled and experienced education and training professionals who will work with key partners to tackle local learning and skills needs. The Teams will support the Government's 14–19 agenda, as well as taking forward work on personal and community development, and ensuring that national and regional priorities are delivered in a way that best meets local needs.

The LSC has stated that it will employ existing staff as far as possible in the local partnership teams.

Where the LSC feels it does not have sufficient numbers of staff in a particular area with the necessary skills and expertise for a local partnership team, then it may employ additional staff from further education, local authorities and the private sector, if appropriate.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the £40 million her Department is making available for part-time students will be administered *(a)* through the Learning and Skills Council and *(b)* to students pursuing tertiary education through colleges of further education. [30816]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills and the Higher Education Funding Council for England are both making an extra £20 million available in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08 which the Higher Education Funding Council for England will distribute between providers of higher education through a formula which takes account of part-time widening participation students. Colleges which provide higher as well as further education will receive their fair share of the total and stand to benefit from this formula. The detailed allocations to individual institutions will be announced in March 2006.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much each Learning and Skills Council in the Eastern Region spent on entertaining *(a)* in 2005 to date and *(b)* in 2004. [22428]

Bill Rammell: I have overall responsibility for the LSC, however the operations of the LSC are managed and overseen by Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive and as entertainment costs of local councils are a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom has written to the hon. Gentleman with further information. A copy of his reply has been placed in the House Libraries.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Andrew Selous, dated 11 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, how much each LSC in the Eastern Region spent on entertaining a) in 2005 to date and; b) in 2004.

I can confirm the following information in response to your request.

Location	*2004–05*	*2005–06 to date*
Beds	227.74	—
Cambs	73.00	91.00
Essex	1,579.87	575.50
Herts	1,658.15	243.35
Norfolk	750.00	626.00
Suffolk	26.60	137.40
Total	4,315.36	1,673.25

Modern Languages

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to increase the number of modern foreign languages available to pupils in state secondary schools. [30367]

Jacqui Smith: We have expanded the list of qualifications that count towards performance table scores to include more language qualifications. In addition to the European Union working languages, there are approved qualifications available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Irish, Japanese, Modern Hebrew, Punjabi, Persian, Russian, Turkish and Urdu.

We are also funding a range of projects and materials to promote languages and to develop innovative curricular models which will be show-cased to provide schools with delivery ideas and support.

Last September we launched the Languages Ladder—the national, voluntary recognition scheme for languages—which is an additional route for endorsing achievement in language skills at all levels of competence in a wide range of languages. It allows learners to progress in one or more of the four skills in one or more languages. In the first year, the scheme offers assessment opportunities in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish and Urdu. Additional languages will be available from autumn 2006 and are likely to include Arabic, Bengali, Irish, Gujarati, Hindi, Modern Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Welsh and Yoruba. The external assessment which learners can choose to take at the end of each stage of the scheme leads to an accredited qualification—Asset Languages offered by Cambridge Assessment—and attracts assessment and attainment points which contribute to a school's performance table.

Primary Education

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will estimate the cost of reducing the teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools to *(a)* 1:28, *(b)* 1:25 and *(c)* 1:20. [27771]

Jacqui Smith: The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:22.5 in primary schools based on provisional 2005 data. We estimate that the increased cost in terms of teachers pay to reduce this ratio to 1:20 would be approximately £780 million per year. This excludes training, leadership and structural costs.

Prison Population

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and lecturers and *(b)* learners amongst the prison population there were in each month in the academic year 2004/05. [27953]

Phil Hope: This information is not collated centrally by the Prison Service, and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

New arrangements for the delivery of learning and skills, planned and funded by the Learning and Skills Council, were introduced in three development regions – from 1 August 2005. Information on the number of learners for the first three months of the current academic year will be available for these regions later this month and I shall arrange to write to the hon. Member with the data when they are to hand.

Publicly Funded Courses (Drop-out Rate)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of learners who have enrolled on publicly funded courses since 1992 have failed to complete those courses, broken down by age bands of 10 years. [28583]

Phil Hope: Non-completion rates are not available on a consistent basis for all publicly-funded courses combined. Separate rates are available for; further education colleges and external institutions from 1998/99, work based learning providers from 2001/02 and HE institutions from 1996/97. The rates for each category of provision are NOT comparable with the rates for the other categories of provision because they are produced using different data collection systems and different methodologies. Within the three categories of provision the rates for each year are produced on a consistent basis.

Due to the compulsory nature of pre-16 school education retention data for the schools sector are not currently collected centrally by government. Work is under way to develop a means of obtaining retention data for schools with sixth-forms.

Non-completion rates for the three categories of provision are given on subsequent pages.

Non-completion rates for Further Education Colleges

Non-completion rates for the age groups 16 to 18 and 19+ are readily available from LSC benchmarking data and are shown in the following table. The resource required to break down non-completion rates into age bands of 10 years would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold for answering Parliamentary Questions.

		Percentage
	Age band	
Year course due to finish	16–18	19+
1998/99	25	19
1999/2000	25	20
2000/01	24	19
2001/02	19	17
2002/03	18	17
2003/04	17	15

Source:

DfES analysis of LSC Benchmarking data. Further details of the benchmarking data can be found on the LSC website at: http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/Data/Statistics/LearnerStatistics/LearningAimOutcomes/FESuccessRates/Default.htm

Non-completion rates for Work Based Learning Providers

Up to and including 2003/04 you could only start a Work Based Learning program if aged below 25 years of age. It is therefore not appropriate to break down non-completion rates into age bands of 10 years. Non-completion rates for all WBL learners are given in the following table.

Year of leaving	Non-completion rate (all frameworks or NVQs) (%)
2001/02	64
2002/03	59
2003/04	54

Source:
LSC Individualised Learner Record. Further details can be found on the LSC website at: http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/Data/Statistics/LearnerStatistics/LearningAimOutcomes/WBLSuccessRates/Default

Non-completion rates for HE institutions

Since 1996/97, information on non-completion rates for higher education students has been published annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in "Performance Indicators in Higher Education". The table gives the percentage of UK domiciled full-time first degree students expected neither to obtain an award nor transfer. The published figures cover students of all ages and are not calculated separately by age group. The figures for 2003/04 will be available in July 2006.

Students starting courses in:	Non-completion rate (%)
1996/97	16.0
1997/98	16.0
1998/99	16.0
1999/2000	15.0
2000/01	15.0
2001/02	14.1
2002/03	14.4

Source:
Performance Indicators in Higher Education, published by HESA. Further details can be found on the HESA website by looking at the background to table T5 at: http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi/0304/continuation.htm

Schools

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her policy to allow schools to select children for admission by interviewing their parents; and if she will make a statement. [29777]

Jacqui Smith: The statutory School Admissions Code of Practice makes it quite clear that we regard it as poor practice for schools to interview parents or children as any part of the admission process. The only exception to this is boarding schools, where we consider it reasonable to interview to assess a child's suitability to be a boarder.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1198–99W, on schools, what steps a local authority will have to take before deciding if a request from parents to set up a new school has support; and whether an individual parent will have the right of appeal to the schools adjudicator if such a proposal is rejected. [30714]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities will be subject to new duties to promote choice and diversity in their areas and to respond to parental demand for new schools. In carrying out these duties, local authorities will need to consider representations from parents on their merits, taking account of the number of parents expressing a demand for a new school, and the extent to which a new school might add to the quality and diversity of provision. We intend to issue guidance to local authorities on the duties once the legislation is in place. The Schools Commissioner will monitor the effectiveness of local authorities in carrying out their duties.

People wishing to establish new schools—either with the support of the local authority or otherwise—will, as now, have to consult on and publish formal statutory proposals. In future it will be for the local authority to decide such proposals, taking account of the views of stakeholders. If the local authority reject the proposals, the promoters—the people or organisation who originally published the proposals—will be able to appeal to the schools adjudicator.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition she uses for *(a)* a trust school, *(b)* a foundation school and *(c)* a voluntary aided school under the changes proposed in the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All". [30938]

Jacqui Smith: The characteristics of trust schools are described in the White Paper. In the terms of the existing legislation governing categories of schools—the School Standards and Framework Act 1998—a trust school will be a foundation school with a foundation. At present the foundation of such a school may only appoint a minority of the governing body: we intend to provide for foundations (trusts) to appoint a majority of the governing bodies of trust schools. A foundation school, as described in the White Paper, is a foundation school without a foundation. We are planning no changes to the existing characteristics of foundation and voluntary aided schools.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was allocated by her Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25756]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on funding at constituency level. However we do hold information centrally on funding allocated for education and children's services to Hertfordshire county council in which Hemel Hempstead constituency is situated. The information on capital and revenue funding is provided as follows. The figures exclude payments made by the Department's NDPBs which could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Table 1: revenue and capital funding for Hertfordshire county council

	Revenue	Capital	£ million Total
1997–98	430	12	442
1998–99	463	15	478
1999–2000	494	15	510
2000–01	544	37	580
2001–02	591	27	618
2002–03	640	48	687
2003–04	713	43	756
2004–05	765	61	826

Notes:
1. All figures are in cash not real terms.
2. Includes money paid out for education and for children's social services. Responsibility for children's social services transferred from DH to DfES in 2003–04 as part of Machinery of Government changes.

3. Includes school funding and children's social services funding paid through ODPM as well as grants paid directly to Hertfordshire by the Department.
4. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3 to 19 but exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
5. Where responsibility for funding has transferred from an LEA, related funding no longer appears in the series.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many grammar schools have closed in England since 1997. [20766]

Jacqui Smith: There have been no grammar school closures since 1997.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what her Department's target is for the number of specialist schools in *(a)* Surrey and *(b)* England; [30184]

(2) how many schools in *(a)* Surrey and *(b)* England have (i) applied for and (ii) been granted specialist status for each of the 10 specialisms; [30185]

(3) how many specialist schools in Surrey participate in the Leading Edge Partnership scheme. [30186]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities are not required to set targets for the number of specialist schools however 79 per cent. of schools in Surrey have already achieved specialist status (greater than the national average of 75 per cent.) with more planned. Our national target is that 95 per cent. of maintained secondary schools will be specialist or Academies by 2008.

To date over 2,600 schools in England have applied for specialist status including 42 in Surrey.

The following is the breakdown by specialism of schools which have been granted specialist school status:

(a) In Surrey there are 41 specialist schools:

Arts (4), Business and Enterprise (4), Language (3), Maths and Computing (5), Music (2), Science (4), Sports (4), and Technology (15).

(b) In England there are 2,380 specialist schools:

Arts (385), Business and Enterprise (201), Engineering (41), Humanities (60), Language (213), Maths and Computing (206), Music (15), Science (269), Sports (334), Technology (574), Combined (70) and SEN specialism (12).

There are two Leading Edge Partnerships in Surrey. Seven schools participate in the partnerships and six of these are specialist.

Science Teachers

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers of science there are in secondary schools in England; and how many there were in 1995. [22393]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the number of full-time teachers teaching sciences[1] in maintained secondary schools in England as at November 1996 and 2002. The figures are estimates based upon sample surveys carried out most recently in 1996 and 2002 only. A number of teachers may be in regular service teaching more than one science. The table shows each teacher once against each subject that they are teaching.

[1] Teachers qualified in combined/general science are treated as qualified to teach biology, chemistry or physics. Teachers qualified in biology, chemistry or physics are treated as qualified to teach combined/general science.

	1996	*2002*
Combined/general science	27,300	28,300
Biology	5,100	5,600
Chemistry	4,600	5,200
Physics	4,400	4,700
Other sciences[1]	1,600	1,600

[1] Other sciences includes subjects such as geology, environmental science and agricultural science.

Note:
Totals may not appear equal to the sum of their parts because of rounding.

Source:
Secondary Schools Curriculum and Staffing Survey

Sex Education

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to extend the number of hours devoted to sex education in schools. [30237]

Jacqui Smith: It is for schools to decide how much teaching time is necessary to meet the requirements for sex education outlined in statutory National Curriculum Science and in the non-statutory framework for Personal Social and Health Education.

Skills for Life Qualifications

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what grading levels will be used for Skills for Life qualifications. [28764]

Bill Rammell: Skills for Life qualifications in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL have been in place since 2001. They are available at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 and at Levels 1 and 2. Awards can be made at each level, for each subject. They are all awarded on a simple pass or fail basis.

Literacy and Numeracy Entry Levels 1 to 3 are assessed through coursework and at Levels 1 and 2 through external national tests which can be accessed on a 'when ready' basis and through e-assessment as well as on paper. Candidates can be given feedback on their performance to support their further learning.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Rights Act 2001 funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [29892]

Jacqui Smith: London borough of Croydon received £36,244.00 in 2004–05 to help the local authority youth service meet their duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. Croydon's proportion of the London regional allocation (£736,828.00) was 4.9 per cent.

Standards Fund

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was paid by her Department to *(a)* Buckinghamshire local education authority and *(b)* Milton Keynes local education authority under the ethnic minority achievement element of the Standards Fund in each year since 2003–04; how much is planned to be paid in each case in each year until 2007–08; and what the percentage change in (i) cash and (ii) real terms is between the amount paid in 2003–04 and the amount planned to be paid for 2007–08. [30607]

Jacqui Smith: Changes to the distribution of the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMAG) element of the Standards Fund were introduced in 2004–05 to bring a better targeted, fairer and more sensible distribution to this grant. These changes were widely endorsed by the DfES "Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils" consultation of 2003.

Total EMAG funding will increase by £10 million between 2005–06 and 2007–08.

The redistribution of funding will lead to a small number of local authorities receiving less funding than they did under the previous system. However, losses in any one year will be limited to 0.05 per cent. of each authority's overall school funding.

The allocations for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for the years 2003–04 to 2007–08 and the cash, as well as real terms changes, are detailed as follows:

£

Programme year	*Buckinghamshire*	*Milton Keynes*
2003–04	797,446	233,834
2004–05	797,446	233,834
2005–06	673,398	234,098
2006–07[1]	549,350	241,545
2007–08[1]	425,302	260,251

[1] Provisional DfES contribution.

In 2003–04 to 2005–06 the DfES contribution was matched funded by local authorities at 50 per cent. grant rate.

	Buckinghamshire	*Milton Keynes*
2003–04 (£)	797,446	233,834
2007–08 (Provisional) (£)	425,302	260,251
Actual difference (£)	-412,231	+1,887
Percentage difference real terms	-51.7	+0.8

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of children from low socio-economic backgrounds have achieved five A-C grade GCSEs in each of the last five years; and how this compares with national results. [26036]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect details of the socio-economic group of pupils. However, one commonly used measure of low socio-economic status is eligibility for free school meals (FSM).

Figures are given in the following table.

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving five or more A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] by eligibility for free school meals (FSM)[3] in 2002, 2003 and 2004*

	2002		*2003*		*2004*	
	Pupils	*Percentage*	*Pupils*	*Percentage*	*Pupils*	*Percentage*
Non FSM	477,798	53.7	493,336	55.2	508,060	56.1
FSM	80,626	23.0	81,278	24.4	82,738	26.1
Unclassified	2,967	—	1,470	—	976	—
All pupils	561,391	49.0	576,084	50.7	591,774	51.9

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2002 and 2003 include GCSEs and GNVQs only. Figures for 2004 include GCSEs and other approved qualifications.
[3] Attainment figures by pupil characteristics have been derived from the Annual School Census (ASC) since 2002.
Note:
These figures are for maintained schools only and are not directly comparable with the national attainment figures that underpin the Department's PSA targets.

Undergraduate Student Grants

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was spent on grants for *(a)* full-time undergraduate students and *(b)* part-time undergraduate students in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [25435]

Bill Rammell: Our expenditure plans for grants to undergraduate students in higher education over this period are:

£000

	FY 2005–06	*FY 2006–07*	*FY 2007–08*
Full-time mandatory grants	722,500	816,000	919,000
Part-time mandatory grants	63,500	63,000	63,000

£000

	FY 2005–06	*FY 2006–07*	*FY 2007–08*
Access to Learning Fund[1]			
Full-time	55,000	46,000	37,000
Part-time	30000	12,000	12,000
Total	844,000	937,000	1,031,000

[1] Can be paid as grants or loans at the discretion of the institution.
Note:
The figures are inclusive of the funds that will transfer to Wales from September 2006 when HE student support devolves to the Welsh Assembly Government; the Access to Learning Fund (which can be paid as grant or loan); and the tuition fee grant which is paid directly to the institution. The tuition fee grant will be replaced by the tuition fee loan over the period.

Funding to part-time students through the Access to Learning Fund is being increased significantly over the period.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 23 November 2005

PRIME MINISTER

Child Support Agency

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the oral answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 964, what the evidential basis is for his statement that *(a)* the administrative costs of the Child Support Agency (CSA) outweighed the money it took in 1997 and *(b)* in the majority of CSA cases the child concerned is not the product of either a married or stable relationship. [31234]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the Child Support Agency's (CSA) Annual report and accounts for the financial years 1995–96 and 1996–97. Copies of this are available in the Library of the House.

The majority of the workload dealt with by the CSA is generated by the more difficult cases, in particular where there is no previous stable relationship between the parents.

In addition, results from a national survey of CSA clients (Wikely N et al, 2001) (carried out in 1999 prior to the recent reforms) allow comparative analysis of the characteristics of compliant and non-compliant non-resident parents. Previously married and cohabiting non-resident parents were, respectively, five and three times more likely to comply with the CSA than those in less stable relationships.

Social Office

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will list each person employed by the Number 10 Social Office since May 1997; [30252]

(2) whether the Number 10 Social Office has a logo; [30253]

(3) whether the remit of the operation of the Number 10 Social Office is limited solely to arranging events which take place in Downing street; [30255]

(4) whether work is undertaken by members of the Social Office which is not directly related to the Prime Minister's official duties. [30256]

The Prime Minister: There is no such office within the Prime Minister's Office.

The Events and Visits Office manage all official events, domestic and international visits for the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister whether members of the Number 10 Social Office have accompanied the spouse of the Prime Minister on *(a)* official and *(b)* unofficial engagements (i) in the UK and (ii) overseas. [30254]

The Prime Minister: When the spouse of the Prime Minister travels in an official capacity she is provided with administrative support from the Events and Visits Office as necessary.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Synods (Armed Forces)

Robert Key: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what relationship the General Synod of the Church of England has with *(a)* the Forces Synodical Council and *(b)* the Army Archdeaconry Synod; and if he will make a statement. [29656]

Sir Stuart Bell: The information is as follows:

(a) The Forces Synodical Council has an enhanced representation on General Synod from this year and can now appoint up to seven members of the General Synod (not more than one bishop, not more than four persons who are in holy orders elected or chosen from among service chaplains and not more than four elected or chosen lay people). In the present Synod the Council has appointed one bishop and elected three service chaplains and three lay people.

(b) The Army Archdeaconry Synod forms part of the Forces Synodical Council and, as such, has no formal relationship with the General Synod.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Electoral Commission

Mr. Kemp: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how many people are employed by the Electoral Commission. [29835]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that it currently employs 155 people.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the total annual expenditure for the Electoral Commission was in each year for which figures are available. [29836]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that its outturn expenditure in each of the years concerned is as set out in the following table.

	Outturn expenditure (£ million)
2001–02	6.066
2002–03	18.160
2003–04	18.635
2004–05	24.824
2005–06	[1]23.974

[1] (estimated)

NORTHERN IRELAND

Schools

6. **Rosie Cooper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken to improve performance in schools in Northern Ireland. [29669]

Angela E. Smith: We are committed to driving up performance in schools in Northern Ireland by taking forward a wide range of initiatives aimed at raising standards, tackling under achievement and targeting funding at those areas of greatest social need.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects that a decision will be taken on whether Brooklands Primary School will be in a position to replace the school patrol-crossing man; and if he will make a statement. [30282]

Angela E. Smith: The South-Eastern Education and Library Board has agreed to the employment of a temporary School Crossing patrol at Brooklands Primary School until such time as a further review of the patrol point can be undertaken, using the regionally agreed assessment criteria. The Board has also undertaken to initiate discussions urgently with the school, and other agencies, to seek ways of improving road safety generally in the vicinity of the school entrance.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last visited a grammar school in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [29549]

Angela E. Smith: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, was the guest speaker at the Polities Society of Bangor Grammar School on 8 November. He has recently visited a number of schools in order to gain first hand experience of the Northern Ireland education system.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the requirement for school building repairs in the North Eastern education and library board area. [30201]

Angela E. Smith: The chief executive of the north Eastern education and library board (NEELB) has advised me that at 31 March 2005 there was a backlog of £37 million maintenance for the schools in the NEELB area. The Board anticipates that £1.5 million will be spent on response maintenance for the controlled and maintained schools in the 2005–06 financial year.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding is available to primary schools in Northern Ireland in 2005–06 in respect of *(a)* Head and Clerical, *(b)* Professional and other, *(c)* Primary School Allowances, *(d)* Delegated Schools Standards Grant, or equivalent, *(e)* All Revenue Standards Fund Allocation, or equivalent, *(f)* Devolved EIC Grant allocation, or equivalent and *(g)* Devolved Capital Standards Fund allocation, or equivalent. [27716]

Angela E. Smith: Funding for Northern Ireland primary schools is not allocated under the arrangements described and information is not therefore available on the basis requested.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children are eligible for free school meals in each board area within Northern Ireland. [30204]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

Children entitled to free school meals[1] by Education and Library Board area in Northern Ireland, 2004–05

	Pupils
Belfast	16,393
Western	16,079
North Eastern	10,618
South Eastern	9,438
Southern	14,494
Northern Ireland total	67,022

[1] For nursery pupils and children in voluntary and private pre-school centres, the number of children with 'a parent, or parents, in receipt of Income Support or Job Seeker's allowance' was used as a proxy for free school meal entitlement.

Note:
Figures relate to pupils at voluntary and private pre-school centres, nursery schools, primary schools and post-primary schools. Figures for pupils at special schools entitled to free school meals are not collected.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* school and *(b)* library facilities are planned for closure in each of the education boards in Northern Ireland. [28867]

Angela E. Smith: The following school closures and amalgamations are currently planned in each of the Education and Library Board areas.

Education and Library Board area	*School/s*	
North-Eastern	*St. Louis PS/St. Joseph's PS/*	*Amalgamation (into 2 new schools)*
	All Saints PS/St. Mary's PS, Ballymena	
	Kilcoan PS/Mullaghdubh PS, Islandmagee	Amalgamation
Southern	Annaghmore PS/Tullyroan PS	Amalgamation
	Tullymacarette PS	Closure
	Ardmore PS	Closure
	Loughbrickland PS	Closure
Western	Burnfoot PS/Dungiven PS/Lar[illegible] PS	Amalgamation
	Coranny PS/Cornagague PS, Roslea	Amalgamation
	Limegrove/Glasvey Special Schools	Amalgamation
South-Eastern	Charley Memorial PS /Lambeg PS /Hillhall PS/Drumbo PS	Amalgamation
	Holywood PS/Redburn PS	Amalgamation

In addition, there are two current development proposals for amalgamations in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area involving two post-primary schools and three special schools on which decisions have not yet been taken.

Education and Library Board Area	*School/s*	*Proposed date of Amalgamation*
North-Eastern	St. Malachy's High School, Antrim and St. Olcan's High School, Randalstown	1 September 2006—in new school on St. Olcan's site.
North-Eastern	Beechgrove, Dunfane and Loughan Special Schools	Amalgamation in a new school on the former site of Ballymena Boy's and Girls' Schools, on a date that will be determined by the completion of a new building

At the present date, the North Eastern Education and Library Board is reviewing the future of three branch libraries. This issue will be discussed at the Board's library committee meeting in December. Currently no decisions have been made by any of the other Boards about further library closures.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the new build programme for schools in Northern Ireland for the 2005–06 financial year to be announced. [30203]

Angela E. Smith: It is expected that an announcement on the 2005 schools' major capital allocations will be made in the next few weeks.

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

7. **Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has held with victims groups in Northern Ireland on the proposals in the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [29670]

Mr. Hain: In the last two weeks my ministerial colleagues and I have met with representatives of the RUC George Cross Foundation, the RUC George Cross Widows Association and RUC George Cross Parents Association, and also with the Police Federation, the Superintendents Association and the Prison Governors Association and with representatives of the four main Christian denominations, who also have an interest in the concerns of victims.

My right hon. friend the Prime Minister will also meet representatives from the RUC George Cross Parents Association and the RUC George Cross Widows Association later this afternoon, at the request of the hon. Member for North Down.

10. **Gordon Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [29673]

Mr. Hain: The Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill was introduced on 9 November. The Second Reading debate is this afternoon.

This Bill will enact the proposals published in May 2003 to address the unresolved issue of on-the-run terrorist suspects.

Smoking Ban

8. **Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had regarding plans to ban smoking in public places in Northern Ireland. [29671]

Mr. Woodward: Prior to announcing controls to protect workers in Northern Ireland by April 2007, we received significant support for comprehensive controls from the public, consulted widely and fully with trade unions—all but one totally supported comprehensive controls—and discussed the impact on the employment and hospitality sectors in Dublin and New York.

Paramilitaries

9. **Michael Connarty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the criminal activities of members and former members of Northern Ireland's paramilitary organisations. [29672]

Mr. Woodward: The IMC report published on 19 October provided a clear assessment of the current activities of paramilitary groups, up to the end of August.

This report recognises the PIRA statement as 'very significant' and that
"initial signs . . . are encouraging".

11. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of paramilitary violence have been attributed to *(a)* loyalist and *(b)* republican organisations in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [29674]

Mr. Woodward: We condemn all violence and intimidation. The most recent published information can be found in the 7th IMC Report.

Security Situation

12. **Dr. McCrea:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the security situation in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [29675]

Mr. Woodward: We continue to see dramatic improvements in the security situation. Paramilitary attacks also continue on a downward trend. The Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) report published in October stated that the initial signs following the Provisional IRA statement were encouraging.

EU Environmental Directives

13. **Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his Department's compliance with EU environmental directives. [29676]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment has cleared a significant backlog of both EU and domestic legislation, introducing over 50 pieces

of subordinate and primary legislation. Full compliance with the main water quality Directives will be achieved through completion of the on-going major investment programme in wastewater treatment works by the Department for Regional Development.

NICE Guidelines

14. **Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with whom he has held discussions in relation to extending National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines to Northern Ireland. [29677]

Mr. Woodward: Proposals for applying NICE guidance in Northern Ireland were originally set out in the 2001 consultation document "Best Practice—Best Care". Responses to that consultation indicated widespread support for a link with NICE which would ensure application of the Institute's guidance in Northern Ireland where appropriate. My Department has been discussing the detail of these arrangements with NICE, the Department of Health in London, and local health and social services interests.

Integrated Education

15. **Greg Mulholland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the potential role of integrated education in the peace process. [29678]

Angela E. Smith: Integrated education is an important building block towards creating the conditions necessary for long-term peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

We recognise that the integrated sector, together with all sectors of education, has a vital role to play in shaping a shared future for Northern Ireland.

It is our policy to encourage and facilitate integrated education through the recognition of and response to parental demand.

Acute Hospitals

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many acute hospital beds in Northern Ireland are to be taken out of service within the next six months. [31049]

Mr. Woodward: The Eastern Health and Social Services Board has recently announced plans to shift resources from the hospital sector to provide better, more effective services in the community. This shift equates to 109 beds and is fully aligned with best practice. It represents a significant step in building and shaping services in a modern way, close to people's homes with less reliance on the hospital sector.

The Northern Health and Social Services Board also has plans to invest in a number of services aimed at reducing demand for hospital services but these plans are still under development.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many acute hospitals are proposed for closure in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [31050]

Mr. Woodward: Under Developing Better Services, none of the current hospitals offering acute services will be closed—rather, they will be adapted to play their part in a new configuration of service provision.

Alcohol-related A and E Admissions

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of admissions to each hospital accident and emergency department in Northern Ireland has been linked to alcohol in each of the last five years. [28203]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not available on the number of attendances at hospital accident and emergency departments that are linked to alcohol. However, the number of admissions to hospital via an accident and emergency department is available.

The table shows the percentage of total admissions to each hospital trust, via the accident and emergency department, that had an associated alcohol-related diagnosis for each of the last five years for which data are available.

Percentage of all admissions[1] via accident and emergency that had an alcohol-related diagnosis

HSS Trust	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000/01*
Mater Informorum	3	2	3	2	0
Belfast City	1	1	1	1	1
Royal Group	3	3	3	3	3
Green Park	1	1	1	1	1
UC and HT	1	1	0	1	1
Down Lisburn	9	3	1	4	1
United	3	2	3	2	2
Causeway	1	1	0	1	1
Armagh and Dungannon	1	4	2	3	3
Craigavon Group	1	2	1	2	1
Newry and Mourne	2	2	1	1	2
Altnagelvin	2	1	1	1	0
Sperrin Lakeland	2	1	1	1	1
Total	2	2	2	2	2

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It is possible that any individual could be admitted to hospital more than once in any year and will thus be counted more than once as an admission.

Source:

Hospital In-patients System.

Ambulance Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks on ambulance staff responding to 999 calls in Northern Ireland, occurred in the first 10 months of *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [29884]

Mr. Woodward: The relevant figures are provided in the following table:

	Number
1 January to 31 October 2004	103
1 January to 31 October 2005	60

Andrew Smith

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days Mr. Andrew Smith worked for the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency as a non-executive director in each year he was employed. [29172]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is shown as follows.

Financial years	*Number of days worked*
1999–2000	32.75
2000–01	76.25
2001–02	75
2002–03	61
2003–04	56.50
2004–05	10

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who gave approval to the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency to employ Mr. Andrew Smith as a non-executive director beyond his contracted annual total of days. [29173]

Mr. Hanson: The chief executive of the Social Security Agency gave approval to employ Mr. Smith beyond his contracted annual total of days in accordance with his contract of employment.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many animals taken into care by the responsible authorities in Northern Ireland were destroyed in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available. [30472]

Angela E. Smith: I am responding in respect of the number of dogs taken into care by the responsible authorities in Northern Ireland.

Under the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 district councils are responsible for dealing with stray dogs in Northern Ireland. In the 12-month period January to December 2004 district councils impounded 9,145 dogs and placed them in approved dog pounds. Of these 3,371 were humanely destroyed. The remainder were either reclaimed by their owners or sold by the dog pounds.

Anti-poverty Strategy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide funding for implementing an anti-poverty strategy in Northern Ireland. [29478]

Angela E. Smith: Public consultation on the proposed anti-poverty strategy for Northern Ireland was completed on the 26 August 2005. Copies of the consultation document are available in the Library.

Proposals on the way forward, including how the strategy will be resourced, are currently being prepared for consideration by Ministers.

The finalised anti-poverty strategy for Northern Ireland will be published later this year.

Antisocial Behaviour

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money he has allocated towards tackling antisocial behaviour in North Down in each of the past three years. [28190]

Mr. Hanson: Four projects in the North Down area have been supported through the Community Safety Challenge Competition to tackle antisocial behaviour. The amount of funding allocated to these projects was £120,705 and £143,603 for 2003–04 and 2004–05 respectively. Other regional initiatives include the objective of reducing antisocial behaviour but it is not possible to disaggregate expenditure specific to the North Down area.

Ards Hospital

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the ministerial visits that have taken place to the Mental Health Inpatient Unit at Ards hospital in each of the past five years. [30310]

Mr. Woodward: There are no records of any ministerial visits that have taken place to the Mental Health Inpatient Unit at Ards hospital in any of the past five years.

Asbestos

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many compensation awards have been made to workers suffering from an asbestos-related health condition in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [30213]

Angela E. Smith: In each of the last five years compensation awards have been made under the Pneumoconiosis, etc., (Workers' Compensation) (NI) Order 1979 to workers suffering from an asbestos related condition in Northern Ireland as follows:

	Number of awards
2000–01	5
2001–02	7
2002–03	8
2003–04	10
2004–05	3

Avian Influenza

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who would be responsible for co-ordinating responses across the Health Board areas in Northern Ireland in the event of an avian influenza pandemic. [30089]

Mr. Woodward: In the event of a pandemic influenza occurring in Northern Ireland the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety would activate the Regional Health Command Centre which would then direct the use of all Health and Personal Social Services resources including the establishment of the Northern Ireland Influenza Pandemic Control Committee. Details of actions at each phase of a pandemic are described in the Northern Ireland Influenza Contingency Plan, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Belfast International Airport

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Government plans to upgrade the road route from Belfast International Airport to Belfast city centre. [30629]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Dr. William McCrea, dated 23 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding when the Government plans to upgrade the road route from Belfast International Airport (BIA) to Belfast city centre. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The primary route from BIA to Belfast is via the A57, the A6 through Templepatrick and the M2 motorway.

The most significant delays on this route are experienced by southbound traffic on the M2 motorway approaching the Sandyknowes junction in the morning peak hour. Roads Service plans to widen the southbound carriageway to create an additional lane between the Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions. This will make it easier for traffic joining the motorway whilst providing greater capacity for Belfast-bound traffic on the motorway. Construction of these improvements is expected to start during 2008.

This £30 million M2 Widening Scheme is one of three schemes forming part of the £100 million Roads Service's Design, Build, Finance and Operate Package 1, along with the M1/Westlink Project and the Antrim Hospital slip roads.

At present we have no plans for capital improvement to the A57/A6.

I hope this information is helpful.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government are taking further to improve the services of Belfast International airport. [30674]

Mr. Woodward: The Government support the development of Belfast International airport, as set out in the Air Transport White Paper 2003.

Belfast International airport has, in common with the other two commercial airports in Northern Ireland, benefited in the past from the Government's Air Route Development Fund. However, the operation of this fund is currently in abeyance.

The development of further services from Belfast International airport is a matter for its private sector owner.

Belfast-Dublin Rail Services

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to upgrade the infrastructure on the Belfast to Dublin railway line to reduce the train travel time between Belfast and Dublin; and if he will make a statement. [29449]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has recently commissioned a consultant to undertake a study into the feasibility and likely cost of reducing journey times for rail services between Belfast and Dublin. As the study is expected to continue to the end of this year, a statement cannot be made at this stage.

Benefit Fraud

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to reduce benefit fraud in Northern Ireland. [30140]

Mr. Hanson: The Social Security Agency has a wide ranging approach to reducing fraud which is detailed in Programme Protection Plans which are in place in all operational units.

These include:

interventions on fresh claims;

a programme of data matching benefit systems against other computer systems in organisations such as Inland Revenue, banks, credit agencies and utility companies to identify cases where incorrect information has been provided;

where fraud does get into the system the agency has a specialist counter fraud unit with staff trained to professional standards to investigate suspected fraud and produce evidence to support appropriate action which can range from prosecution to cautions;

an advertising campaign titled "It's a Rip-off" designed to make social security fraud socially unacceptable and deter people from committing fraud; and

a robust approach to the prosecution of offenders which, this year, has seen 170 successful prosecutions.

Blood Donation

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many blood donations have been rejected in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [30212]

Mr. Woodward: Blood donors may be deferred from giving blood or the donations themselves may subsequently be rejected. The single largest reason for deferment is a low haemoglobin level, which accounts for 6 per cent. of total donor attendances. Donations may be rejected after collection for technical reasons, e.g. inadequate volume, or in a very small number of cases because they fail the standard screening for blood-borne diseases.

Figures for total donations and rejections over the last five years are given in the following table, although the information for 2000–01 is incomplete.

	Whole blood attendance	Whole blood donations	Number of donors turned down before donation	Percentage of donors turned down before donation
2004-05	81,088	67,384	13,704	16.9
2003-04	81,709	68,799	12,910	15.8
2002-03	79,481	67,797	11,684	14.7
2001-02	79,363	66,982	12,381	15.6
2000-01	82,002	69,702	12,300	15.0
Total	403,643	340,664	62,979	15.6

	Number of donations rejected after donation	Donations banked
2004-05	3,892	63,492
2003-04	4,007	64,792
2002-03	4,149	63,648
2001-02	4,124	62,858
2000-01	—	—

Bullying

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from schools seeking support to deal with bullying. [30205]

Angela E. Smith: The Department has not been contacted by individual schools seeking support to deal with bullying. However, the Department has taken pro-active steps to support schools in tackling bullying through development and publication of guidance.

In 2004 the Department in partnership with voluntary organisations, including Save the Children, established an Anti-bullying Forum to enable a collaborative and co-ordinated approach to tackling bullying in schools. The forum enables members to share models of best practice, disseminate information, to develop and co-ordinate joint initiatives to ensure that schools and organisations working with children and young people are able to develop appropriate strategies to prevent and deal with bullying behaviours.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many cases of bullying were reported in the *(a)* controlled, *(b)* maintained, *(c)* voluntary and *(d)* integrated sectors of education in each year since 2002; [30207]

(2) how many cases of bullying were reported in *(a)* the secondary school sector and *(b)* the grammar school sector in each year since 2002. [30208]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the information requested.

Information about the scale and nature of bullying in Northern Ireland schools is contained in a research report published in October 2002. A research briefing summary is available on the Department's website at www.deni.gov .uk/rb8_2002.pdf.

The Department has recently commissioned updated research into bullying, in all its forms, and the results will also be published in due course.

Business Regulation

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to reduce the burden of regulation on business in Northern Ireland. [30121]

Angela E. Smith: A Better Regulation Strategy was introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive in December 2001 in order to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses of all sizes. As part of this, a more robust regulatory impact assessment procedure was introduced. Departments now carry out a micro business test to assess the impact of any proposed legislation on businesses with fewer than five employees. Departments are also required to give all businesses at least 12 weeks' advance notice of any legislation and to provide appropriate guidance on implementation.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is keeping this strategy under review and is liaising with the Cabinet Office Better Regulation Unit to ensure that improvements in the regulatory regime for businesses are consistently implemented across the United Kingdom.

Emissions

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how the Government plans to cut carbon emissions from 1990 levels in Northern Ireland to meet Kyoto agreement targets. [30122]

Angela E. Smith: The United Kingdom has a Kyoto target to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 12.5 per cent. (below 1990 levels) by 2008 to 2012 and national targets to specifically reduce Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) emissions by 20 per cent. by 2010 and by 60 per cent. by 2050. The UK is on course to meet the Kyoto target but is currently not on track to achieve the domestic 2010 CO_2 target. In Northern Ireland total GHG emissions in 2003 were 3.5 per cent. below the 1990 base year.

A range of policies and measures are being implemented across government departments in Northern Ireland to reduce CO_2 emissions. These include;

The implementation of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland Energy Supply which includes switching to more efficient gas fired power generation, expanding the natural gas network beyond the Greater Belfast area and increasing the use of renewable energy for heat and power generation.

The introduction of a Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation in April 2005 with a target to supply 12 per cent. of energy produced from renewable resources by 2012.

Currently 28 installations in Northern Ireland are participating in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme that effectively places a limit on the amount of CO_2 they can freely emit. The scheme is expected to exert a significant downward pressure on emissions for the foreseeable future.

In the domestic housing sector, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive invests around £40 million per annum on heating, double glazing and insulation works to improve energy efficiency in Northern Ireland's housing stock.

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) is bringing forward amendments to Northern Ireland's building regulations on minimum standards for the conservation of fuel and power and these should be in place from June 2006. DFP also invests in improving the energy performance of buildings in the public sector.

The Carbon Trust helps businesses and public sector organisations to reduce energy consumption through a range of programmes which include energy surveys, design advice, interest free loans, enhanced capital allowances and clean technology venture capital. The Trust is also promoting a Low Carbon Design Initiative for new build projects.

In October the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development issued a public consultation document on recommendations for developing the renewable energy potential of the agri-food and forestry sectors.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced plans in the draft budget to set up an Energy and Environment Fund for research and development into renewables and to incentivise the market through appropriate grant aid assistance.

Further details of these measures will be available in the forthcoming UK Climate Change Programme due to be published shortly.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in greenhouse gas emissions has been in each year since 1997 in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [30704]

Angela E. Smith: Information on total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for Northern Ireland is given in the following table. These figures have been taken from the Greenhouse Gas Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 1990–2003 report. No figures are available for 1997 and the latest year is 2003.

	Total emission of GHGs (Mt CO_2 equivalent)	*CO_2 emissions (Mt)*
1990	22.5	16.6
1995	24.3	18.2
1998	23.9	17.3
1999	24.5	17.9
2000	23.6	17.4
2001	24.1	17.9
2002	22.2	16.4
2003	21.8	16.1

In 2003, total GHG emissions in Northern Ireland have fallen by 3.5 per cent. below 1990, the Kyoto baseline year. Further information on the emission trends can be found in the report, which can be accessed at: http://www.naei.org.uk/report_link.php?report_id=360

Cataract Operations

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cataract operations were carried out by the NHS in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what the current waiting time is for a cataract operation in Northern Ireland. [31270]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of cataract operations carried out in acute hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year from 2000–01 to 2004–05 (the latest year for which data are available) is shown in the table as follows.

	Number of cataract operations
2004–05	8,381
2003–04	8,501
2002–03	7,666
2001–02	7,187
2000–01	7,178

Source:
Hospital In-patient System

Information on patients waiting is collected by time-band. The number of people waiting for a cataract operation in Northern Ireland, at 30 June 2005, is shown in the table as follows:

Months waiting	*Position at 30 June 2005*
0–2	1,499
3–5	956
6–8	481
9–11	124
12–14	117
15–17	36
18–20	5
21–23	0
24+	5
Total waiting	3,222

Source:
PFA 211 Departmental Information Return

Child Support Agency

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to reform the Child Support Agency in Northern Ireland. [31052]

Mr. Hanson: The Northern Ireland Child Support Agency is awaiting the final details of the Great Britain strategic review, which is being led by Stephen Geraghty, chief executive of the Child Support Agency in Great Britain. When this information is available an improvement plan for the Northern Ireland Agency will be developed.

Children's Fund

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the funding for the Children's Fund set out in the budget for Northern Ireland is new money; and when the executive programme funds will be reinstated. [29526]

Angela E. Smith: Yes. The allocations for the Children and Young People's priority funding package represent additional resources, as opposed to the reallocation of money previously allocated to other public services within Northern Ireland.

There are no plans to reinstate the Executive Programme Funds (EPFs). However, the three priority funding packages announced in the Draft Priorities and Budget 2006–08 will build on the positive aspects of the EPFs, in that they are focused on priority areas and will encourage a cross-cutting approach to the underlying issues.

Correspondence

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the letter of 17 October ref: (COR403/2005) to the hon. Lady for North Down, on Kingsland School, when he will write to the hon. Lady with the update indicated in his letter. [30295]

Angela E. Smith: Due to the complex nature of this case it has been necessary for the Department to seek legal advice. A response will be issued to the hon. Lady when the Department has considered the legal advice to be provided.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will reply to the letter of 26 September 2005 from the hon. Lady for North Down on mattress provision for *myalgic encephalomyelitis* in Northern Ireland. [30325]

Mr. Woodward: The response will be issued shortly.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial aid has been granted by each council in Northern Ireland to citizens' advice bureaux in each year since 2001. [30196]

Mr. Hanson: The primary source of funding for local voluntary advice services, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, is the Community Support Programme. This is a joint initiative involving the Department for Social Development (DSD) and District Councils. The following table outlines each Council's contribution to local advice services in 2004–05, this includes both Citizens Advice Bureaux and other independent advice providers. The DSD allocation is also included for information.

Details of Council allocations to advice services from 2001–02 to 2003–04 is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

£

Community support programme—funding to advice services in 2004–05

	Total	*Council*	*DSD*
Antrim borough council	48,991	42,991	6,000
Ards borough council	69,000	43,000	26,000
Armagh city and district council	46,500	26,500	20,000
Ballymena borough council	43,000	30,791	12,209
Ballymoney borough council	16,000	11,927	4,073
Banbridge district council	69,500	39,500	30,000
Belfast city council	312,314	203,004	109,310
Carrickfergus borough council	42,720	42,720	0
Castlereagh borough council	31,500	22,050	9,450
Coleraine borough council	63,652	52,154	11,498
Cookstown district council	50,000	15,000	35,000
Craigavon borough council	97,850	86,520	11,330
Derry city council	175,000	175,000	0
Down district council	145,399	120,148	25,251
Dungannon district council	49,183	33,266	15,917
Fermanagh district council	66,000	44,000	22,000
Larne borough council	20,357	11,702	8,655
Limavady borough council	26,500	18,500	8,000
Lisburn City council	50,000	10,000	40,000
Magherafelt district council	49,000	25,000	24,000
Moyle district council	11,500	8,113	3,387
Newry and Mourne district council	95,000	65,000	30,000
Newtownabbey borough council	168,952	150,257	18,695
North Down borough council	106,582	80,477	26,105
Omagh district council	46,600	46,600	0
Strabane district council	48,200	22,450	25,750
Total	1,949,300	1,426,670	522,630

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial assistance has been given to citizens' advice bureaux in Northern Ireland by Government departments in each year since 2001. [30195]

Mr. Hanson: The primary source of funding for local voluntary advice services, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, is the Community Support Programme. This is a joint initiative involving the Department for Social Development (DSD) and District Councils. Other Government Departments provide specific funding to organisations to deliver advice services on issues which fall within their policy responsibility. The table outlines Government funding to Citizens Advice Bureaux in the financial years from 2001–02 to 2004–05.

DSD has been leading on the development of a strategy for supporting delivery of voluntary advice services and this will be launched for consultation in December 2005.

Name of Department	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Department for Social Development (DSD) [1]	984,199	993,551	1,195,329	1,190,206	4,363,285
Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)	—	—	—	69,000	69,000
Total	984,199	993,551	1,195,329	1,259,206	4,432,285

[1] This includes the Department's contribution to the Community Support Programme, delivered through District Councils. Funding is provided to both Citizens Advice Bureaux and other independent providers. The DSD allocation to advice services from 2001-02 to 2003-04 is an estimation based on the recommended percentage output for advice services in this period.[2]
[2] Review of the Districts' Community Services Programme (DSD February 2000).

Civil Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of starting salaries of civil servants in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Wales; and if he will make a statement. [29139]

Angela E. Smith: Starting salaries for new recruits in the Northern Ireland Civil Service are relative to what is necessary to recruit, retain and motivate staff. A new member of staff is usually recruited at the minimum of the pay scale unless there are business reasons to justify a higher starting salary (e.g. because of market forces or the applicant having relevant additional qualifications and/or experience).

Starting pay for new recruits in the National Assembly for Wales is normally at the pay scale minimum unless the skills, knowledge and experience essential for the post justify a higher starting salary.

Climate Change

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government are taking in Northern Ireland to tackle climate change. [30192]

Angela E. Smith: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I have given to his question on actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions (PQ 05/2441 refers). In addition to these measures, work is under way to ensure that Northern Ireland prepares for the impacts of climate change.

The Department of the Environment (DOE) has recently commissioned the Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) to provide an updated report on the implications of climate change for Northern Ireland, incorporating a risk assessment approach and recommended adaptation strategies for key impacts. This study is due to be completed by the end of 2006.

DOE's Environment and Heritage Service has issued guidance to public bodies on climate change impacts in Northern Ireland, with information on how it might impact across sectors and on the delivery of key public services.

The Department is also working in partnership with key stakeholders on the development of a Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland which is due to be published along with the first of a series of implementation plans in 2006. Climate Change and Energy has been identified as one of the six priority areas for action within the emerging strategy.

Community Restorative Justice

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect public funding has been allocated to Community Restorative Justice schemes in Northern Ireland.[31235]

Mr. Hanson: No funding has been given to community-based restorative justice schemes by the Northern Ireland Office. We are undertaking a thorough search of all 11 Northern Ireland Departments and associated public bodies to ascertain if money has been given for non-criminal justice related work which will take some time. I will write to the hon. Gentleman when the information is available and place a copy in the Library.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he treats the Northern Ireland Police Board as a stakeholder in respect of the development of Community Restorative Justice schemes in Northern Ireland. [31236]

Mr. Hanson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland does regard the Northern Ireland Policing Board to be a key stakeholder in respect of the development of community-based restorative justice schemes in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre about the work of community restorative justice organisations in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.[29544]

Mr. Hanson: No direct representations have been received from the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre about the work of community-based restorative justice organisations in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of community restorative justice projects in Northern Ireland in dealing with cases of *(a)* alleged rape and *(b)* alleged domestic violence. [29545]

Mr. Hanson: The Government have recognised that community-based restorative justice programmes can have a part to play in helping to secure a normal society and is willing, in principle, to support their involvement with low level criminal cases. We would not consider any sexual or domestic violence offences to be low level, and the guidelines currently being formulated do not therefore envisage that any such offence will be referred to community-based schemes.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the applications for public funding that have been submitted by community restorative justice organisations in Northern Ireland giving in each case *(a)* the name of the organisation, *(b)* the date of application, *(c)* the sum of money applied for and *(d)* the expected time scale for a decision; and if he will make a statement. [29546]

Mr. Hanson: I will write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy in the Library.

Councils

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Roman Catholics were employed in each council in Northern Ireland in each of the past four years. [30130]

Angela E. Smith: An analysis of the employees of each district council, reflecting community background, is set out in the following table. Statistics for 2001, 2002 and 2003 have been taken from the Equality Commission's 2003 Monitoring Report. The 2004 figures have not yet been published.

	2001				2002			
	P[1]	RC[2]	ND[3]	Total	P[1]	RC[2]	ND[3]	Total
Antrim	177	70	7	254	191	78	9	278
Ards	318	55	19	392	330	53	24	407
Armagh	162	114	1	277	135	118	—	253
Ballymena	211	49	14	274	215	52	14	281
Ballymoney	95	19	11	125	96	16	21	133
Banbridge	141	40	3	184	143	41	4	188
Belfast	1,432	853	124	2,409	1,387	833	107	2,327
Carrickfergus	158	11	20	189	162	14	21	197
Castlereagh	398	29	58	485	413	31	63	507
Coleraine	206	59	20	285	212	62	25	299
Cookstown	93	91	3	187	101	90	3	194
Craigavon	246	159	12	417	262	171	13	446
Derry	119	395	12	526	135	426	10	571
Down	74	189	24	287	74	211	21	306
Dungannon	131	122	14	267	148	132	16	296
Fermanagh	101	141	8	250	104	139	6	249
Larne	112	39	5	156	113	39	7	159
Limavady	78	51	7	136	80	54	8	142
Lisburn	341	78	21	440	354	83	24	461
Magherafelt	83	91	—	174	91	106	—	197
Moyle	34	64	12	110	32	70	12	114
Newry	51	336	5	392	50	342	5	397
Newtownabbey	342	44	19	405	402	55	9	466
North Down	356	36	39	431	371	43	39	453
Omagh	125	258	29	412	126	256	37	419
Strabane	56	100	2	158	58	99	2	159
Total	5,640	3,493	489	9,622	5,785	3,614	500	9,899

	2003			
	P[1]	RC[2]	ND[3]	Total
Antrim	190	82	8	280
Ards	339	63	26	428
Armagh	139	115	—	254
Ballymena	231	52	15	298
Ballymoney	90	19	12	121
Banbridge	155	39	4	198
Belfast	1,455	868	106	2,429
Carrickfergus	172	13	21	206
Castlereagh	464	43	51	558
Coleraine	227	74	20	321
Cookstown	112	92	3	207
Craigavon	258	165	11	434
Derry	137	443	12	592
Down	76	219	19	314
Dungannon	150	138	18	306
Fermanagh	101	139	4	244
Larne	110	39	5	154
Limavady	80	53	7	140
Lisburn	352	85	19	456
Magherafelt	99	96	—	195
Moyle	33	75	11	119
Newry	56	343	6	405
Newtownabbey	434	57	8	499
North Down	404	48	45	497
Omagh	136	270	34	440
Strabane	59	107	3	169
Total	6,059	3,737	468	10,264

[1] Protestant
[2] Roman Catholic
[3] Non-denominational

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many compensation claims have been made to his Department under the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2002; how many payments have been made in each year of the operation of the scheme; and what the total value of claims was in each year. [25218]

Mr. Hanson: Between 1 May 2002 and 31 October 2005 the Compensation Agency had received a total of 26,308 claims, under the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2002. To this date 1603 claims have been withdrawn, 18,153 claims have been assessed and payment has been made in 4,379 claims. The total value of payments is £20,216,884.00 and the following annual breakdown applies:

	Total number of claims receiving payment	*Total value (£)*
2002–03	3	75,000.00
2003–04	568	3,277,784.00
2004–05	1,881	8,281,291.00
2005–06 (to 31 October 2005)	1,927	8,582,809.00

Departmental Refurbishment

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the companies to which his Department contracted out their construction and refurbishment work in each of the last three years; and what process his Department used to select each contractor. [18231]

Angela E. Smith: The award of contracts for all construction and refurbishment work by Northern Ireland Departments and their agencies is compliant with public procurement policy and EU Procurement Directives.

The names of the companies and the procedure used in each contract, with a de minimis value of £25,000, are set out as follows.

Contractor	*Procurement method*
April 2002 to March 2003	
Adair Bros	Competitive tender
Annvale Construction	Competitive tender
Bi Electrical Services	Competitive tender
Bradley Construction	Competitive tender
Greenline NI Ltd.	OGC framework
Henry Bros. Magherafelt Ltd. x 2	Competitive tender
Heron Brothers	Competitive tender
Irwin Metalcraft	Single tender action
J. and G. Engineering	Competitive tender
J. D. McGeown Ltd.	Competitive tender
J. H. Turkington and Sons	Competitive tender
Kone (NI) Ltd.	Competitive tender
Litton Group	Competitive tender
Lorne Electric	Competitive tender
Maurice Stevenson Ltd.	Competitive tender
O'Hare and McGovern x 3	Competitive tender
Otis Ltd.	Competitive tender
Rotary Services	Competitive tender
Sharpe Mechanical Services x 2	Competitive tender
T. and A. Kernoghan	Competitive tender
The McAvoy Grp.	Competitive tender
OGC Framework	Competitive tender
The Saville Group Ltd.	Competitive tender
Vaughan Engineering	Competitive tender
Vis Security Solutions	Competitive tender
WC Glazing Contractors	Competitive tender
William Dowling	Competitive tender
April 2003—March 2004	
Bradley Construction	Single action tender
David Patton and Sons NI	Competitive tender
Gilbert-Ash NI Ltd. x 3	Competitive tender
H. and J. Martin Ltd. x 3	Competitive tender
Henry Bros. M'felt Ltd.	Competitive tender
Litton Group	Competitive tender
Mascott Construction	Competitive tender
McLaughlin and Harvey x 2	Competitive tender
O'Hare and McGovern	Competitive tender
Portview Construction and McLaughlin and Harvey	Competitive tender
Radiocontact Ltd.	Competitive tender
Sharpe Mechanical Services	Competitive tender
The McAvoy Group	Single action tender
Vaughan Engineering x 3	Competitive tender
Vis Security Solutions x 2	Competitive tender
April 2004—October 2005	
Cleary Contracting	Competitive tender
Fin Engineering	Single tender action
H. and J. Martin Ltd. x 4	Competitive tender
Henry Bros.	Competitive tender
Radiocontact	Competitive tender
Sharpe Mechanical Services	Single tender action
Tectrol Ltd.	Single tender action
Vale Gardenhouses Ltd.	Competitive tender

Diet

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people there are in Northern Ireland who have been identified as suffering from malnourishment. [31054]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not available on the number of people in Northern Ireland who have been identified as suffering from malnourishment. However, information is available on the number of admissions to hospital where malnourishment has been diagnosed.

The following table provides figures on the number of admissions to hospital with a primary or secondary diagnosis of malnourishment for each of the last five years for which figures are available. It should be noted that any individual could have been admitted to hospital more than once over the course of a year or over a number of years and would therefore be counted more than once in the table.

	Number of admissions[1] to hospital with malnourishment
2004–05	427
2003–04	411
2002–03	446
2001–02	473
2000–01	403

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions.

Disability Living Allowance

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been claiming disability living allowance in Northern Ireland in each of the past five years. [30126]

Mr. Hanson: The following table shows the number of people in Northern Ireland who have been claiming disability living allowance in each of the past five years.

	Number of people
2001	140,479
2002	146,548
2003	151,870
2004	161,839
2005	167,156

Down Lisburn Health Trust

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the community care funding allocated to Down Lisburn Health Trust. [29525]

Mr. Woodward: The Department allocates resources to Health and Social Services Boards. It is then the responsibility of each board to determine how it will allocate these resources to local areas and to specific programmes. The Department has not assessed the situation for community care separately, but based on the latest information on planned expenditure for the population of the Down Lisburn locality as a proportion of Northern Ireland expenditure, the level of funding, having adjusted for differences in need, is around the NI average.

Economic Development Strategy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to introduce an economic development strategy for Northern Ireland; and what assessment he has made of regional disparities in *(a)* investment, *(b)* job creation and *(c)* wealth in Northern Ireland. [29497]

Angela E. Smith: Delivering the Economic Vision will require concerted action from both the public and private sectors on our stated economic priorities—the four productivity drivers of innovation, skills, enterprise and infrastructure. For its part Government will produce a Regional Economic Strategy that will set out the policy framework for delivering the Economic Vision. The strategy will also form our response to Government policy to progress against targets on regionally balanced economic growth across the UK.

The Northern Ireland strategy is currently being drafted by DFP in collaboration with the other Government departments. The first draft will shortly be circulated to Ministers for consideration and will then issue for wider discussion.

Regional economic disparities within the UK, and Northern Ireland, are being analysed and illustrated within the evolving strategy. Particular attention is being paid to those disparities that impact on the four productivity drivers and the employment rate. With this in mind the current activities of government are also being analysed to gauge the extent to which they effectively contribute to promoting the four productivity drivers.

Economic Inactivity

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been economically inactive in each year since 2000. [30128]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the number of people in NI classified as economically inactive in each July-September period since 2000. The table gives the number of economically inactive for both the population aged 16 and over and the population of working age.

Economically inactive people in NI (2000–05)

Thousand

Period	*16 plus population*	*Working age population (16–59/64)*[1]
July-September 2000	522	294
July-September 2001	504	273
July-September 2002	510	283
July-September 2003	517	281
July-September 2004	542	300
July-September 2005	517	277

[1] Working age is taken as ages 16 to 59 for females and 16 to 64 for males.

Source:
NI Labour Force Survey.

Education and Library Boards

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were employed in each of the Education and Library Boards in each of the last three years. [29037]

Angela E. Smith: The information provided in the table below is in respect of staff employed in each of the five Education and Library Boards for the last three years. The figures are taken from the Education and Library Boards Annual Statistical Returns to the Department and relate to non-teaching school based and non-school based staff in each board. Figures are in respect of permanent and temporary staff in post at 30 September for each year.

	2002–03		*2003–04*		*2004–05*	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
BELB	1,413	2,322	1,534	3,664	[1]2,434 (FTE)	Included in FTE figure
NEELB	1,602	5,161	1,643	4,699	1,461	4,981
SEELB	1,503	4,237	1,558	4,603	1,539	5,185
SELB	1,266	6,339	1,245	6,377	1,378	6,948
WELB	1,796	5,273	1,753	4,938	1,949	5,167

[1] BELB moved to a new HR/payroll system on a phased basis from April 2004 and the board is unable to provide a corresponding staff in post figure for 2004–05. The figure the board has provided is an overall full-time-equivalent (FTE) figure, taken over the period April 2004 to March 2005.

Emergency Planning Budget

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget is for 2006–07 for emergency planning in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [29477]

Angela E. Smith: As the estimated funding levels for emergency planning services by Government Departments and public bodies are contained within a wide range of budgets it is not possible to provide an aggregated figure for the overall position. The Northern Ireland civil contingencies framework, which is to be published shortly, requires, among other things, that

> "all organisations shall develop and maintain civil contingencies plans and other preparations in relation to their functions so that they can deliver those functions for the purpose of preventing an emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects or taking any other action necessary in relation to it".

The framework also requires that organisations

> "shall ensure that appropriate funding and other resources are made available",

but it is the responsibility of individual departments to determine what is appropriate funding in the light of risk assessments and having regard to other priorities.

Employment Tribunals

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment his Department has made of the merits of allowing the use of video-conferencing at employment tribunal hearings in Northern Ireland. [30246]

Angela E. Smith: The Department is currently assessing the merits of using video conferencing at tribunal hearings and discussions have commenced with stakeholders on this issue.

Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to establish an independent Environmental Protection Agency for Northern Ireland; and when the Environment and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order is planned to be implemented. [29480]

Angela E. Smith: The Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Lord Rooker, announced an independent Review of Environmental Governance in Northern Ireland in July 2005. The review will consider, among other things, the arrangements for the organisation and supervision of the environmental governance system. Lord Rooker hopes to be in a position to launch the review soon.

Most of the provisions of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 relating to waste have been in force for some time. However Part III, which provides for a contaminated land regime in Northern Ireland, has not yet been implemented. The Department is currently reassessing the likely resource requirements and the options for implementing Part III.

Farmers

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average age of registered farmers in Northern Ireland was *(a)* in 2000 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [30217]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the age profile of the farm work force is collected as part of the EU Farm Structures Survey. For the purposes of this survey, farmers are considered to be those individuals who are legally and financially responsible for the farm and who are also responsible for the day-to-day management of the farm business. The most recent years for which information is available are 2000 and 2003.

In 2000 the average (median) age of farmers in Northern Ireland was 54.

In 2003 the average (median) age of farmers in Northern Ireland was 55.

Fire Service

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure the safety of fire officers attending fires within the Northern Ireland community. [30151]

Mr. Woodward: I am introducing, in the new Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order, which will be laid at Westminster early in the new year, a new statutory offence covering assault or obstruction of firefighters and anyone helping them in the execution of their duties. This explicit statutory protection highlights the seriousness of this offence, which endangers both the lives of firefighters and those they are trying to help. It is intended that the new offence will have a deterrent effect, reducing the number of attacks on firefighters and their equipment.

The penalties are in line with the legislation relating to police officers, and include provision for conviction on indictment, whereby someone found guilty of the offence could face up to two years in prison and/or an unlimited fine. The penalty, on summary conviction, will be imprisonment for up to six months and/or a fine up to the statutory maximum of £5,000.

Meanwhile, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service continues to place an increased focus on community education and communication in order to reduce deaths and injuries from fire and attacks on personnel.

Fisheries Conservancy Board

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the financial position of the Fisheries Conservancy Board in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [30759]

Mr. Hanson: Following the reduction in agency work income for the Fisheries Conservancy Board, the board are currently exploring how they can operate within the new budgetary constraints.

Free Public Transport

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce free travel on public transport for those aged 60 years and over in Northern Ireland. [30761]

Mr. Woodward: I have no plans at present to introduce free travel on public transport for Northern Ireland residents aged 60 to 64. However the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme will be reviewed shortly. This review will consider the feasibility of extending the scheme to additional groups, including those aged 60 years and over.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he plans to take to tackle fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. [29457]

Mr. Hanson: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Dodds) on 14 June 2005, *Official* Report, column 313.

Further Education

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils aged 16 to 18 years are being educated in further education colleges in Northern Ireland. [30206]

Angela E. Smith: The following table details the number of pupils (aged 16–18) who are being educated in a further education college in NI for the academic year 2004–05.

Students[1] in further education in Northern Ireland aged between 16 and 18 years in 2004–05

Age[2]	*Academic Year 2004–05*
16	9,764
17	9,306
18	7,139
Total 16 to 18 year olds	26,209

[1] Data relate to a snapshot of students on 1 November of the relevant academic year.

[2] Age is at 1 July at the beginning of the relevant academic year.

Source:
FESR snapshot

Grant Thornton

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why Deloitte MICS were replaced as financial advisers on the Civil Service electronic human resources contract by Grant Thornton. [26752]

Angela E. Smith: Financial advice was provided by Deloitte MCS Ltd. from March 2004 to May 2005 when their contract expired. Under the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993 a new procurement competition for Financial Advisers was required. One compliant tender, from Grant Thornton UK LLP, was received in response to the procurement competition. This was considered to meet the Department's requirements and consequently they were appointed to provide financial advice to the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Guest Speakers

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines are used by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland, on the invitation of guests who are asked to make a speech at events organised by the Department to mark sporting achievements [31089]

Mr. Hanson: It is normal practice that the governing body for the sport involved is invited in advance to nominate speakers on its behalf.

Health Staff

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to provide a safe working environment for *(a)* hospital nurses and doctors and *(b)* ambulance staff in Northern Ireland. [30152]

Mr. Woodward: The Department is currently developing a Controls Assurance Standard for Security Management for the HPSS, which seeks to ensure there is a secure environment that protects all service users, staff and visitors.

(a) This reinforces a range of existing measures already designed to reduce the potential risk of violence against all HPSS staff which as a result of a review, recommended:

To regularly review the assessment of risk associated with different facilities/locations.

Regularly train staff and ensure that training is being tailored for the different staff disciplines.

Restrict the number of entrances to A&E departments, particularly late at night.

Limit the number of persons, not themselves requiring treatment, entry to an A&E department.

HPSS employers welcomed the recommendations. Some Trusts have also installed emergency panic buttons in A&E units, toughened transparent screens at interview hatches, and CCTV.

(b) In addition The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) is committed to improving health and safety protection for its staff and has implemented a range of measures including:

reinforced windscreens and side windows in all ambulances;

security cameras in new vehicles;

a trial of stab-proof/anti-ballistic vests;

provision of mobile phones directly linked to Ambulance Control and short-range radios to improve communications at incident scenes;

provision of training on how to handle difficult situations;

establish a violence-to-staff working group; and

access to an officer-on-call system.

NIAS is currently reviewing its health and safety policy to improve its performance in such areas as accountability, consultation, hazard identification, and incident reporting and risk management.

All HPSS organisations are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for staff.

Higher Education

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage change there has been in the pay of those involved in teaching in higher education in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [29265]

Angela E. Smith: Pay in the higher education institutions is determined by negotiating mechanisms between the employers and the unions. Government are not involved in this process and do not hold the information sought.

Home Accidents

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what programmes have been developed by Government Departments in Northern Ireland to reduce injuries and deaths by raising public awareness of home accident prevention, with particular reference to the elderly. [28369]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety launched a five-year Home Accident Prevention Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland in January 2005. The strategy aims to reduce the number of accidental deaths and injuries in the home and targets those most at risk including the socially disadvantaged, children and the elderly. A multi-agency implementation group is currently taking forward work on the 14 separate action points in the plan. One of the action points centres on the development of a public information campaign to raise awareness of home accident prevention with a target date of September 2006. The Department provided funding of £30,000 this financial year to the Health Promotion Agency to take forward preliminary work on development of a suitable information campaign. A home safety public awareness campaign is expected to be in place by the summer of next year.

In addition the Department has allocated funding of £180,000 this year to the four health and social services boards to take forward work on local initiatives and programmes to reduce injuries and deaths by raising awareness and implementing home accident prevention interventions with particular focus on those most at risk.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action Government Departments in Northern Ireland have taken to reduce the rate of *(a)* serious injuries and *(b)* death from accidents among (i) children and (ii) the elderly. [28370]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety launched a five year Home Accident Prevention Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland in January 2005 which aims to reduce the number of accidental deaths and injuries in the home and targets those most at risk including the socially disadvantaged, children and the elderly. The strategy gives particular emphasis to preventing falls (the most common type of accident to children and older people), fires and injuries to children especially on farms. A multi-agency implementation group is currently taking forward work on the 14 separate action points in the plan.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money his Department made available to *(a)* local councils, *(b)* Health and Social Services trusts, *(c)* the Housing Executive Northern Ireland and *(d)* the Fire Service of Northern Ireland for home accident prevention in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [28382]

Mr. Woodward: No specific funding has been allocated to local councils, HSS Trusts or the Fire Service of Northern Ireland for home accident prevention. The Department of Social Development allocated £767,960 in 2003–04 and £1,124,860 in 2004–05 to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for home accident prevention initiatives. This funding was used for the provision of handrails, grabrails, and the installation of smoke alarms in homes. In addition, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety provided funding of £83,996 in 2003–04 and £97,918 in 2004–05 to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents towards home accident prevention work in Northern Ireland.

Hospital Staff (Attacks)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been both charged and sentenced in each of the last three years for attacks on hospital staff in *(a)* accident and emergency departments and *(b)* other areas of hospital sites in cases where all proceedings are complete. [30283]

Mr. Woodward: There were 5,449 violent incidents against staff employed in the HPSS between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2005. Seven people were prosecuted as a result of these incidents and four prosecution cases are pending. This is the earliest date that this information is available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list serious personal attacks in the last three years on members of hospital staff at accident and emergency hospitals which led to a prison term for the assailant; if he will indicate the nature of the attack in each case; and if he will make a statement; [30284]

(2) what the total costs have been in the last three years of repairs and replacement of equipment at each accident and emergency hospital in Northern Ireland due to attacks by members of the public; [30285]

(3) what the level of spending on security personnel has been at each accident and emergency department at hospitals in the Province in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [30307]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the operation of the Invest Northern Ireland venture scheme for small and medium enterprises, with particular reference to the level of income sought from private sector investors. [16849]

Angela E. Smith: In November 2004, EU state aid approval was granted for the then named 'Northern Ireland venture scheme for small and medium sized enterprises'. This clearance was in response to an identified need in the market for venture capital funds in the £250,000 to £1.5 million deal size range.

Following an EU wide tender, Invest Northern Ireland has since participated in a £22.5 million deal size venture capital fund managed by Crescent Capital Ltd. Of this total, private investors have agreed to contribute £9 million and the European Investment Fund £6 million.

Inter-Trade Ireland Report

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the report commissioned by Inter-Trade Ireland on the regional development strategy for Northern Ireland and the national spatial strategy for the Republic of Ireland will be published. [29515]

Angela E. Smith: Inter-Trade Ireland plans to publish the report on the development of a potential framework for collaborative action between the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and the National Spatial Strategy for the Republic of Ireland in March 2006.

Investment Strategy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to publish the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. [29481]

Angela E. Smith: The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland will be published before the end of the year. The precise date has yet to be decided.

Locum Doctors

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent estimate is of the number of locum doctors working in the NHS in Northern Ireland. [31056]

Mr. Woodward: There is no comprehensive list of locum hospital doctors employed within the NI HPSS held centrally within the Department. However the Central Services Agency maintains a voluntary register of locum general medical practitioners which is used o circulate professional information. As at November 2005, there were 151 active locum general medical practitioners recorded on this register.

Housing

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what change there has been in the number of unfit dwellings in the Province in each of the past five years. [30123]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the format requested. The level of unfitness for all housing tenures was 4.9 per cent. (31,600) in 2001 and 3.8 per cent. (25,600) in 2004.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many private dwellings in Northern Ireland have been allocated heating and insulation grants in each of the last five years. [30124]

Mr. Hanson: Heating and insulation grants are provided to private dwellings through the Warm Homes Scheme and the number of homes that have benefited from grants is as follows.

Year of scheme	*Number of homes in Northern Ireland*
July 2001 to 31 March 2002	3,146
Year ending 31 March 2003	7,484
Year ending 31 March 2004	7,144
Year ending 31 March 2005	8,557
Up to 14 November 2005	5,612

Private sector grants for heating and insulation are also available, but the figures requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dwellings have been built by housing associations in each constituency in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000. [30125]

Mr. Hanson: The number of houses completed for the five year period 2000–01 to 2004–05 is as follows.

House completions

Constituency	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
East Antrim	84	53	27	31	0
North Antrim	70	26	41	12	36
South Antrim	0	15	9	36	14
Upper Bann	68	44	0	18	7
East Belfast	53	203	190	67	14
North Belfast	174	192	130	260	370
South Belfast	142	14	49	27	147
West Belfast	187	237	104	69	135
North Down	4	63	46	10	33
South Down	94	29	61	0	57
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	42	62	70	30	2
Foyle	135	230	352	103	63
Lagan Valley	130	236	86	70	69
East Londonderry	69	136	26	27	44
Mid Ulster	0	7	10	6	6
Newry and Armagh	104	28	38	39	36
Strangford	8	85	4	11	11
West Tyrone	100	74	50	38	29
Total	1,464	1,734	1,293	854	1,073

The figures include new build and houses purchased from the open market either in good condition or from rehabilitation, prior to letting. All are additions to social housing stock.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many families in Northern Ireland were waiting for housing executive dwellings in each of the last five years; and what the trend in numbers on the housing list has been over the last 10 years. [30211]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the format requested. The tables detail the total waiting list for applicants for social housing in Northern Ireland over the last 10 years.

The following tables demonstrate that the demand for social sector accommodation continues to rise steadily.

Total number of households on the waiting list for social housing 1995–2000 (all figures refer to the end of the financial year).

	Total number of households	*Urgent housing need*[1]
1996	21,960	11,148
1997	22,276	11,895
1998	22,691	11,510
1999	23,193	11,734
2000	23,084	11,372

[1] Prior To November 2000 urgent need was defined as 'urgent housing need' i.e. priority 'A' group cases plus 'B' cases with 30 or more points.

Total number of households on the waiting list for social housing 2001–05 (all figures refer to the end of the financial year).

	Total number of households	*Housing stress*[1]
2001	21,635	10,187
2002	25,903	12,449
2003	26,248	13,042
2004	27,515	14,152
2005	29,608	15,527

[1] From November 2000 the definition changed from 'urgent housing need' to 'housing stress' i.e. households with 30 or more points.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many senior citizens units have been built by housing associations in the Antrim borough council area in each of the last five years; [30810]

(2) how many senior citizens units have been built by housing associations in the Newtownabbey borough council area in each of the last five years. [30811]

Mr. Hanson: In the two areas mentioned the priority has been to try to stabilise the situation and balance supply and demand. Less popular accommodation in both areas has been demolished to remove blight. In Antrim the waiting list for small units of accommodation is being catered for through relets. In Newtownabbey there have recently been signs of growing stability to the extent that the development programme that is currently being prepared will make provision for an additional supply of small units over the next five years.

Against this background no units specifically for senior citizens have been built in Antrim over the past five years. In Newtownabbey 31 units were built in 2000–01 and 12 in 2002–03.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many single person dwellings have been built by housing associations in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [30812]

Mr. Hanson: The number of houses completed, specifically for general needs and homeless singles occupation, are as follows:

	Number
2000–01	51
2001–02	31
2002–03	47
2003–04	43
2004–05	45

Locations

	Number of units
Falls Road, Belfast	22
19–21 Cliftonville Road, Belfast	20
College Square North, Belfast	14
Antrim Road, Belfast	12
Grace Avenue, Belfast	6
573 Donegall Road, Belfast	4
Belgravia Avenue, Belfast	3
47–49 Carrick Hill, Belfast	3
Beersbridge Road, Belfast	1
Crawford Square, Londonderry	43
Foyle Road, Londonderry	21
Flush Park, Lisburn	32
Church Street, Strabane	16
Main Street, Strabane	11
Avon House, Portadown	9

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many housing executive grants have been made in each constituency in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [30197]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the format requested. However, payments made in each district council area between 1 November 2004 and 31 October 2005 are as follows:

District council	*Completed grants*
Antrim	43
Ards	105
Armagh	188
Ballymena	80
Ballymoney	43
Banbridge	104
Belfast	1,502
Carrickfergus	83
Castlereagh	116
Coleraine	90
Cookstown	185
Craigavon	285
Derry	225
Down	168
Dungannon	362
Fermanagh	506
Larne	98
Limavady	72
Lisburn	178
Magherafelt	125
Moyle	23
Newry and Mourne	483
Newtownabbey	154

District council	Completed grants
North Down	119
Omagh	264
Strabane	141
Total	5,742

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many houses are planned to be built to meet the needs of social housing over the next 12 months in each Northern Ireland constituency. [30689]

Mr. Hanson: Across Northern Ireland the target is to start 1,500 new social houses in 2005–06.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is responsible for assessing housing need and for prioritising the development programme. The following table shows a current gross programme of 1,836 houses. This will be netted down to 1,500 as the year progresses and the remainder will be deferred until the following financial year.

Constituency	Number of houses
East Antrim	30
North Antrim	11
South Antrim	60
Upper Banr	56
East Belfast	173
North Belfast	404
South Belfast	216
West Belfast	370
North Down	40
South Down	28
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	31
Foyle	113
Lagan Valley	130
East Londonderry	37
Mid Ulster	5
Newry and Armagh	31
Strangford	94
West Tyrone	7
Total	1,836

Influenza

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance his Department has given to general practitioners in Northern Ireland in drawing up contingency plans to deal with a potential influenza pandemic; and what further assistance he plans to give. [28207]

Mr. Woodward: In March 2005 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, posted on its website the Northern Ireland Pandemic Influenza Contingency Plan. On 19 October a revised, updated version of the plan replaced the original one.

Among other things, the plan calls on Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts to develop their own plans at local levels. The plan describes in detail the responsibilities of boards/trusts and the decisions which they will be required to make. By their nature these involve close collaboration with GPs in planning a co-ordinated response to an outbreak.

On 21 October the Department wrote to GPs and a wide range of other health professionals with advice on the distinction between avian flu and pandemic, enclosing with the letter a set of commonly asked questions and answers. On 7 November a further letter was issued enclosing a key facts summary on pandemic flu and a supply of leaflets to be passed on to patients seeking information about pandemic flu. Both letters also referred recipients to the Department's website to view the updated plan, which will of course continue to be revised in the light of developments.

The Department will continue to communicate directly with GPs and other health professionals about pandemic flu as and when it is deemed appropriate to do so.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what restrictions there are on how early in the year pharmacies in Northern Ireland can order influenza vaccinations. [28163]

Mr. Woodward: The Department does not place any restrictions on pharmacies in relation to the time in the year when they may order vaccine for seasonal influenza. Pharmacists are free to order flu vaccine as soon as it is marketed by the manufacturers for the anticipated seasonal virus profile as determined by the World Health Organisation.

Local Government Finance

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) by what means his Department scrutinises expenditure by the Local Government Audit Office; [30247]

(2) what the running costs of the Local Government Audit Office in Northern Ireland have been in each of the last three years; and how many staff are employed in the office, broken down by grade. [30248]

Angela E. Smith: The Local Government Audit function is part of the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Questions relating to its resources are matters for the Comptroller and Auditor-General who will write to the hon. Lady

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the revenue support grant was in each council within Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [30209]

Angela E. Smith: The revenue support grant (or resources element of General Grant) allocated to district councils, in each of the last five years, is set out in the following table.

General grant—resources element (new statutory formula introduced 1 April 2003)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Antrim	0	0	0	0	0
Ards	1,166,169	1,503,641	1,026,207	1,051,866	1,255,948
Armagh	1,939,216	2,174,051	1,772,494	1,816,813	1,783,504
Ballymena	0	0	0	0	0

General grant—resources element (new statutory formula introduced 1 April 2003)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Ballymoney	1,041,025	1,134,277	1,027,602	1,053,295	1,052,084
Banbridge	1,111,205	1,285,246	937,049	960,479	953,758
Belfast	0	0	0	0	0
Carrickfergus	439,796	431,090	37,731	38,675	264,650
Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0
Coleraine	0	0	0	0	0
Cookstown	720,363	746,680	948,270	971,980	972,907
Craigavon	0	132,945	0	0	0
Derry	444,782	969,890	1,208,865	1,239,091	1,276,683
Down	1,927,449	2,090,630	1,682,751	1,724,826	1,683,189
Dungannon and South Tyrone	488,830	535,916	1,055,047	1,081,427	930,916
Fermanagh	727,552	830,231	1,452,352	1,488,666	1,437,935
Larne	0	0	141,133	144,662	24,202
Limavady	1,168,411	1,125,562	1,274,940	1,306,818	1,308,476
Lisburn	0	0	0	0	0
Magherafelt	1,152,006	1,244,922	1,422,268	1,457,831	1,466,528
Moyle	681,581	633,175	601,358	616,394	585,645
Newry and Mourne	3,109,549	3,080,160	1,910,908	1,958,688	2,043,239
Newtownabbey	0	0	0	0	0
North Down	0	0	0	0	0
Omagh	1,016,053	1,144,138	1,413,193	1,448,528	1,407,084
Strabane	1,846,723	1,938,926	2,084,832	2,135,961	2,050,252
Total	18,980,710	21,001,480	19,997,000	20,497,000	20,497,000

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the effect of the forthcoming Reform of Public Administration on capital expenditure projects by local councils in Northern Ireland. [30473]

Angela E. Smith: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced his decisions on the Review of Public Administration on the 22 November 2005. In matters concerning capital expenditure projects, councils would be expected to exercise prudence and not enter into commitments that would impose an unnecessary burden on ratepayers, now or in the future.

Looked-after Children

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children have left care in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years; and how many of these had no formal qualifications. [30541]

Mr. Woodward: Information regarding the numbers of children who ceased to be looked after and the educational attainment of these children is only available relating to children aged 16 or over. The latest available information is detailed in the following table.

Children aged 16 or more who ceased to be looked after and the numbers that ceased to be looked after with no formal qualifications (year ending 31 March)

	Children who ceased to be looked after	Children who ceased to be looked after with no formal qualifications
2001-02	199	103
2002-03	206	95
2001-04	405	198

Medical Schools/Junior Doctors

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* medical school places and *(b)* junior doctor posts there have been in Northern Ireland in each year since 1990. [28846]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is set out in the following tables:

(a) Number of medical school places

	Medical student intake
2005-06	250
2004-05	188
2003-04	169
2002-03	170
2001-02	169
2000-01	161
1999-2000	160
1998-99	154
1997-98	169
1996-97	152
1995-96	148
1994-95	143
1993-94	140
1992-93	141
1991-92	143
1990-91	134

Note:
Excludes overseas students (approximately 12 per annum).

(b) Number of junior doctor posts (information only available from 1999)

	Number
August 2005	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	546
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	806
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	230
Total	1,583
August 2004	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	529
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	789
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	224
Total	1,542
August 2003	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	471
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	772
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	219
Total	1,462
August 2002	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	462
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	693
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	217
Total	1,372

(b) Number of junior doctor posts (information only available from 1999)

	Number
August 2001	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	423
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	673
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	196
Total	1,292
August 2000	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	404
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	658
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	189
Total	1,251
August 1999	
Specialist Registrars (SpRs)	383
Senior House Officers (SHOs)	643
Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHOs)	183
Total	1,209

Milk

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government are taking to tackle the differential between the retail and farm gate price of milk in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [30145]

Angela E. Smith: I have not taken any action on this matter, as it is not Government policy to interfere in the operation of normal market forces, providing competition rules are respected. I, however, appreciate the important contribution which the dairy sector makes to the agri-food industry in Northern Ireland, albeit it is heavily reliant on the manufacture of bulk commodities for export markets. I would therefore encourage the dairy industry to continue in its efforts to move from a production-led approach towards higher value-added and market-led strategies. This should help to improve the overall competitiveness of the industry and hopefully narrow the differential.

Ministerial Meetings

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* other communications have taken place between the Ministers with responsibility for each of the Northern Ireland Departments and their counterparts in (i) the Scottish Executive and (ii) the National Assembly of Wales in order to identify areas of co-operation and mutual benefit in each of the past 12 months. [28202]

Angela E. Smith: Formal and informal contact takes place with the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government on an ongoing basis. The British Irish Council on which the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland administration are represented continues to provide one effective co-ordinating mechanism to support co-operative working and a number of ministerial meetings have taken place in the last year. The sixth summit, hosted by Guernsey on 19 November 2004, focused on Tourism and the seventh, hosted by the Isle of Man on 20 May 2005, focused on Telemedicine. In addition a sectoral meeting on Environment was held in Dublin on 7 April 2005.

NICE Drug Assessments

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Government expects to refer bortezomib to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [30150]

Mr. Woodward: I understand that the Department of Health referred bortezomib to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on 20 July 2005. The Institute has not yet published a timescale for the completion of its appraisal.

Personal Injury Claims

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much compensation has been paid in personal injury claims by members of the public against the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland in each of the past three years. [30091]

Mr. Woodward: The following table sets out the total compensation paid by the Department for Regional Development in respect of public liability personal injury claims by members of the public in each of the last three years.

	£
	Amount
2004–05	1,760,490
2003–04	2,142,323
2002–03	2,504,607

Pigs

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pigs were reared on Northern Ireland farms in each of the last five years. [30147]

Angela E. Smith: The number of clean finished pigs reared on Northern Ireland farms in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Number of pigs reared
2000	884,400
2001	922,800
2002	931,700
2003	973,200
2004	[1]879,100

[1] Provisional.

Planning Applications

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications have been approved in each district council area in Northern Ireland during the last 12 months. [30198]

Angela E. Smith: Details of the number of planning approvals issued between 1 November 2004 and 31 October 2005 are set out in the following table.

District council area	*Number of approvals*
Antrim	980
Ards	1,020
Armagh	1,001
Ballymena	1,114

District council area	Number of approvals
Ballymoney	702
Banbridge	732
Belfast	2,135
Carrickfergus	323
Castlereagh	496
Coleraine	1,193
Cookstown	1,027
Craigavon	882
Derry	863
Down	1,027
Dungannon	1,677
Fermanagh	1,922
Larne	337
Limavady	763
Lisburn	1,163
Magherafelt	1,109
Moyle	445
Newry and Mourne	1,858
Newtownabbey	654
North Down	593
Omagh	1,400
Strabane	812
Total	26,228

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many divisional planning decisions were overturned by the management board after being referred to them by district or borough councils in each of the last five years. [30224]

Angela E. Smith: The management board referral (MBR) process is an administrative rather than a statutory process. It affords councils the opportunity to refer planning applications to the Planning Service's management board for further consideration where the council strongly disagrees with the local Divisional Planning Office's recommendation.

Details of the number applications where the Planning Service's management board overturned the Divisional Planning Office's recommendation is set out in the following table.

	Number of MBR cases	Number overturned
2000	106	10
2001	104	9
2002	123	5
2003	146	6
2004	192	5
2005	234	3

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications were lodged within each planning service district in Northern Ireland in each of the past six years; and what the relevant administration costs were in each of the districts in each year. [30250]

Angela E. Smith: Details of the number of planning applications received and the corresponding administration costs, set out by Planning Service division, in each of the last five years are contained in the following table. It is only possible to provide accurate data for the last five years as all the information for previous years is not held electronically and could be extracted only at a disproportionate cost.

Division	2000-01		2001-02		2002-03		2003-04		2004-05	
	Apps	Costs (£)	Apps	Costs (£)	Apps	Costs (£)	Apps	Costs (£)	Apps	Costs (£)
Ballymena	3,160	762,236	3,352	778,876	4,000	832,935	5,328	813,180	4,971	1,077,426
Belfast	3,442	990,777	3,821	953,936	3,592	980,833	3,840	1,162,726	3,862	1,326,888
Craigavon	4,986	1,085,314	5,309	1,141,915	6,060	1,391,245	7,493	1,416,160	6,845	1,676,537
Downpatrick	4,120	1,050,383	4,457	1,198,381	5,001	1,241,134	5,036	1,267,004	6,090	1,437,886
Londonderry	3,093	629,116	3,410	616,158	3,556	727,997	4,348	818,318	4,969	1,079,062
Omagh	4,828	1,039,546	4,834	994,979	5,500	1,098,323	6,799	1,319,690	9,205	1,720,971
Headquarters	92	645,877	135	700,430	198	751,233	196	810,263	342	935,144

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* civilian staff and *(b)* police officers are employed in each Police Service of Northern Ireland station within the South Antrim constituency. [30134]

Mr. Woodward: It is not appropriate, for operational security reasons, to disclose how many personnel are attached to each PSNI station. Equivalent figures for officers and staff for Antrim DCU which covers the most of the South Antrim constituency are set out as follows.

	Number
Regulars	139.75
FTR	36
PTR	17
Civilian staff	30
Agency staff	3

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the present strength is of the Police Service for Northern Ireland; and what percentage of its members are *(a)* Roman Catholic, *(b)* Protestant and *(c)* of other affiliation. [29632]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that, as at 8 November 2005, PSNI strength was 7,485 (Regular Officers).

Of these officers:

(a) 18.88 per cent. were Catholic

(b) 78.46 per cent. were Protestant

(c) 2.66 per cent. were Not Determined.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the deviation from community balance was in the composition of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Police Service of Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [29633]

Mr. Woodward: In light of the deviation from community balance that was present in the composition of the RUC, the Report of the Independent Commission

on Policing for Northern Ireland recommended Police Regular Officers be recruited at an equal ratio of Catholics to non-Catholics.

They advised that this recruitment profile

> "over a 10 year period . . . reflects the demographic breakdown of people now in their twenties, or who will reach the age of recruitment over that period".

The first intake under these temporary 50:50 provisions was in November 2001. As a result, there has been a marked decrease in the deviation from community balance in the Police Service of Northern Ireland, due an increasing proportion of Catholic officers.

I am advised that the community background of RUC and PSNI Regular Officers, in each of the last 10 years has been as follows:

Percentage

	Protestant	*Catholic*	*Not determined*
1 January:			
1996	88.98	7.96	3.06
1997	88.67	8.16	3.17
1998	88.52	8.24	3.24
1999	88.32	8.33	3.35
2000	88.27	8.37	3.36
2001	88.16	8.48	3.36
2002	87.67	8.86	3.47
2003	85.04	11.68	3.28
2004	83.01	13.91	3.08
2005	80.38	16.87	2.75
8 November:			
2005	78.46	18.88	2.66

Post Offices

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial assistance is available to assist the start up of new sub-post offices in rural areas in Northern Ireland; and to where applications for grant assistance can be submitted. [28484]

Angela E. Smith: In accordance with its commitment to meet the Government requirement to prevent avoidable post office closures in rural areas, Post Office Ltd. administers a fund to assist with the re-introduction of a branch in a rural area where one has been forced to close within the past 18 months. Prospective applicants should contact the Post Office on 08457 223355. An adviser will then be allocated to help with the specific case.

Assistance is available to support the start up of small businesses in Northern Ireland under the Start A Business Programme (SABp). Provided certain criteria are met the establishment of a new sub-post office might be eligible. Details of the scheme can be obtained from InvestNI at Bedford square, Bedford street, Belfast BT2 7EH.

Prisons

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage of inmates in prisons in Northern Ireland who will be granted leave for Christmas. [30215]

Mr. Woodward: The figures provided in the table show the percentage of inmates that are eligible to apply for home leave this Christmas. It is not possible at this stage to estimate the percentage of prisoners that will be granted leave for this purpose, as each application is subject to a satisfactory risk assessment which takes some time to complete. The decision to grant the Christmas leave rests with the Governor of each establishment. As HMP Magilligan holds prisoners with shorter sentences or those in the latter stages of their sentences, it has proportionately more prisoners eligible to apply for home leave at Christmas.

Establishment	*Number of prisoners eligible to apply for home leave at Christmas*	*Total number of prisoners at Establishment*[1]	*Percentage of prisoners eligible to apply for home leave at Christmas*
Maghaberry	56	719	7.78
Magilligan	118	406	29.06
Hydebank Wood (including females)	24	223	10.76
Total	198	1,348	14.69

[1] The figures in this column (at 17 November) include 'all' prisoners, viz, remands, determinate sentence and life sentence.

Public Administration Reform

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the period of consultation will be on his plans for the reform of public administration in Northern Ireland. [29883]

Angela E. Smith: The six month consultation that closed on 30 September 2005 was the final opportunity to influence the outcome of the Review of Public Administration. Final decisions were announced on 22 November 2005 and we are now moving into the implementation phase.

Public Appointments

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessments are made of the political party memberships of individuals appointed to quangos and commissions in Northern Ireland. [11230]

Angela E. Smith: Those appointed to public bodies in Northern Ireland are not required to declare their political background. However, they are asked to declare any significant political activity they may have undertaken in the five years prior to the date of their application.

Appointments are made solely on merit, political activity is recorded for monitoring purposes only and plays no part in the selection process.

Public Sector Properties

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of public sector properties in each constituency in Northern Ireland. [30221]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested by the hon. Gentleman is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Public Services' Funding

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding allocated to *(a)* education, *(b)* roads maintenance and *(c)* health in Northern Ireland. [29524]

Angela E. Smith: All proposed allocations in the recently announced Draft Priorities and Budget 2006–08 must be viewed in the context of the overall resources available for public services in Northern Ireland, and in particular the fact that there was no National Spending Review this year, and hence no material additional resources for Northern Ireland.

Proposed allocations for Education and Health continue to grow in real terms over the two years to 2007–08, and will be further supplemented by the three priority funding packages. While there has been some reduction in the amounts available for Roads Maintenance, the proposed amounts available should still enable Roads Service to respond to emergencies, treat surface defects and carry out the highest priority remedial works.

Regional Museums Review

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the full report on the Review of Regional Museums will be published; and if he will make a statement. [29448]

Mr. Hanson: The report of the Steering Group to the Local Museum and Heritage Review was issued on 26 March 2001. The joint response of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department of the Environment to the above report was issued in October 2003.

Both documents are available from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and through the Department's website.

Regional Tourism Partnerships

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will increase the funding of the regional tourism partnerships; and if he will make a statement. [29496]

Angela E. Smith: Regional Tourism Organisations are the predecessors of the proposed new Regional Tourism Partnerships, and are currently funded by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board under the European Union's Peace II Programme. As this funding will not be available after 1 April 2006, the future funding of the proposed Regional Tourism Partnerships will be considered in the context of the Government's draft Budget 2005, which is currently the subject of public consultation.

Renewable Energy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made towards meeting the targets for the provision of renewable energy in Northern Ireland. [30251]

Angela E. Smith: The target set is that by 2012 at least 12 per cent. of all electricity consumed in Northern Ireland is obtained from indigenous renewable energy sources with 15 per cent. of this being generated by non-wind technologies. Since April 2005 the supply of electricity from renewable sources has increased by 120 per cent. and at 30 September 2005 had reached 5.8 per cent. with 3.5 per cent. coming from indigenous sources.

Road Maintenance

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he will take to revise and increase the financial allocation towards structural roads maintenance in the next three years following the recommendations of the regional transportation strategy; and if he will make a statement. [29113]

Mr. Woodward: The Draft Budget provides that, by 2008, total Government spending in Northern Ireland will exceed £16 billion, a jump of more than 50 per cent. since 1997. Public expenditure in Northern Ireland is by far the highest figure for any region of the UK and is 29 per cent. higher than the UK average.

Notwithstanding this, there are many pressures on the Northern Ireland Budget and the roads' programme must compete for funding along with other spending programmes. The Draft Priorities and Budget 2006–08 is presently out for consultation. It allocated additional resources for health and for education and this inevitably had some implications for other programmes including roads maintenance. It is expected that the revised budget will be announced in December 2005 and allocations will be kept under review in the context of budgetary management processes.

The Regional Transportation Strategy (2002–2012) identified strategic transportation investment priorities and considered potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the 10-year period. It was explained in the RTS that the level of public expenditure funding for the Strategy would be determined through the normal budgetary process, which will take account of the needs of other departments and decisions on priorities.

Roads service will continue to make best use of the resources available to it to develop and maintain the road network.

Road Safety

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has held with his ministerial counterpart in the Republic of Ireland regarding the adoption of a north-south approach to road safety to reduce deaths and serious injuries on roads throughout the island of Ireland. [29456]

Angela E. Smith: Officials from the Department of the Environment and the Department for Regional Development have been liaising closely with counterparts

in the Republic of Ireland's Department of Transport (DoT), National Roads Authority (NRA) and National Safety Council (NSC) and, through Cross Border Steering Group meetings, with officials from the Department of the Environment and Local Government, to ensure positive road safety benefits on both sides of the border.

Among the most notable areas of co-operation is the joint production of road safety campaigns that have been a significant feature of the publicity programmes in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in recent years. Joint campaigns increase value for money, production costs can be shared and the partnership approach draws sponsorship at a level that would not otherwise be available. To date there have been eight joint road safety campaigns with a ninth, addressing drink-driving, in preparation.

Work is in hand to develop an agreement between UK and Ireland to allow driving disqualifications to be recognised in both countries regardless of where the offences took place. This will allow the worst offenders, who would otherwise be escaping the rule of law, to be removed from the road. Work is also in hand to allow each administration to recognise the penalties for driving offences at levels below that of disqualification.

There has been a large degree of co-operation on the EuroRAP project. EuroRAP aims to help reduce death and serious injury on Europe's roads by generating consumer information to the public and providing road engineers with benchmarking information.

Roads Service and the NRA are also joint partners in the European (DG TREN) funded project INSTANT, a multimodal project which considers the need for traffic control measures and traffic and travel information on the Belfast to Dublin corridor.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* fatal and *(b)* non-fatal road traffic accidents have occurred in each of the last five years on the (i) Knock Dual Carriage Way, (ii) Comber road and (iii) Upper Newtownards road. [28879]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not readily accessible in the format specified and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The available figures are contained in the following table and show the number of fatal and non-fatal accidents in East Belfast District Command Unit in each of the last five years.

Number of injury road traffic collisions in East Belfast DCU: 2000-04

	Fatal collision	*Non fatal collision*[1]	*Total collisions*
2000	3	354	357
2001	3	351	354
2002	4	305	309
2003	1	238	239
2004	—	255	255
Total	11	1,503	1,514

[1] Non-injury collisions are not included.

Roads (South Antrim)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on major road schemes in South Antrim constituency; and what the estimated cost of the schemes are for each year between 2005 and 2008. [30673]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Dr. William McCrea, dated 23 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding if he will make a statement on major road schemes in the South Antrim constituency and their estimated cost for each year between 2005 and 2008. I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The recently published Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan set out the Department's transport proposals up to 2015. Included within these transport plans are the following major road schemes which lie wholly or partly within the South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency area.

All schemes are subject to the satisfactory completion of the various statutory procedures and the availability of funding through the normal budget process.

A6 Dualling Randalstown to Castledawson

This £69.5 million contract will complete a continuous dual carriageway between the western end of the M22 Motorway at Randalstown and the Castledawson roundabout. Planning of the scheme is well advanced and it is anticipated that the statutory orders, i.e. Environmental Statement, Notice of Intention to Make a Direction Order, and Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order will be published in late spring 2006. Construction of the £33.4 million Randalstown to Toome section of the dualling, which lies within the South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency area, could start in late 2007/early 2008, with an estimated expenditure that year of approximately £12 million.

M2 Crosskeiinan Slips

This £1.8 million scheme will complete the M2 junction 7, providing full motorway access to the Antrim Area Hospital and on to Antrim town. It is anticipated that the current contract to construct the on-slips to the motorway will commence in Spring 2006. The contract will be carried out as part of the £100 million Public Private Partnership contract, which includes widening of the M1 and Belfast Westlink Corridor. It is expected that £1.6 million will be spent on this scheme during the 2006/2007 financial year and £0.2 million spent during the 2007/2008 financial year.

M2 widening from Junction 4, Sandyknowes to Junction 7, Greencastle

The £30 million scheme to widen the M2 carriageway to create an additional southbound lane between the Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions is currently being progressed as part of Roads Service's Design, Build, Finance and Operate Package 1. Construction of these improvements is expected to start in 2008.

I can also advise that Roads Service are currently progressing two further significant, minor works schemes within South Antrim. Work on a new roundabout on the A57 Templepatrick Road/ Station Road/ Longshot, to replace the existing staggered junction, started on 15 August 2005 and is due for completion by the end of December 2005, at a cost £878,000. In addition, a scheme to replace the existing staggered junction with a new roundabout at Doagh Road/Carntall Road/Carnmoney Road North, and to include the provision of a footway on Carntall Road from Doagh Road to 100 Carntall Road, is currently at design stage. Subject to clearing the necessary statutory procedures and the availability of funds at the time, the scheme is programmed to start on site during the 2007/08 financial year at an estimated cost of £500,000.

I hope this information is helpful.

Rural Development Programme

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when *(a)* his assessment of the report prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers into the last Rural Development Programme and *(b)* the strategy for the new Rural Development Programme will be published. [29185]

Angela E. Smith: With regards to part *(a)*, the report prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers into the last Rural Development Programme 1994–99, was the Ex-post Evaluation of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 1994–99, published in 2003. The key recommendations within the report were agreed and are being implemented in the current Rural Development Programme 2001–06.

With regard to part *(b)* the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development plan to publish draft strategy for consultation before the end of 2005.

Soccer Funding

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has given to soccer in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland. [22999]

Mr. Hanson: The following exchequer funding has been given to soccer in each of the last three years by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI).

SCNI exchequer funding

	£
	Soccer
2002–03	1,931,575
2003–04	69,624
2004–05	1,053,092

Note:
Includes funding via the Safe Sports Ground Programme.

In addition the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Department of Social Development (DSD) and Department of Education (DE).

DFP funding

		£
	Soccer	*Numerous Sports*[1]
2002–03	10,800	—
2003–04	565,041	15,000
2004–05	57,618	61,227

[1] Includes peace II funding to projects involving soccer and other type of sports.

DETI funding

	£
	Soccer
2002–03	13,629
2003–04	57,332
2004–05	5,319

OFMDFM funding

	£
	Soccer
2002–03	18,188.90
2003–04	62,234.20
2004–05	31,277.80

DSD funding

	£
	Soccer
2002–03	14,688.66
2003–04	177,039.04
2004–05	[1]420,814.60

[1] This figure includes a grant for £260,000.00 towards a multi-sports facility where soccer is the main game played on the pitch but it also has a facility available where a variety of other sports can be played.

DE funding

	£
	Soccer
2002–03	—
2003–04	5,436.25
2004–05	4,311

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will detail the amount of funding his Department has given to Gaelic football in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland. [23000]

Mr. Hanson: The following exchequer funding has been given to Gaelic Games, including Gaelic Football in each of the last three years by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI).

SCNI exchequer funding

	£
	Gaelic[1,2]
2002–03	557,042
2003–04	207,596
2004–05	208,211

[1] Includes funding via the Safe Sports Ground Programme.

[2] Gaelic includes Gaelic Football, Hurling and other Gaelic Athletic Association Games.

In addition, the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). Department of Social Development (DSD) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), have provided the following funding:

DFP funding

	£	
	Gaelic	*Numerous sports*[1]
2002–03	—	—
2003–04	55,000	48,434
2004–05	15,000	—

[1] Includes peace II funding to projects involving Gaelic football and other sports.

DSD funding

	£ Gaelic
2002–03	—
2003–04	998
2004–05	60,885

DARD funding

	£ Gaelic
2002–03	5,594
2003–04	—
2004–05	—

South Down (Secondary Roads)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he is taking to improve secondary roads in South Down to improve access to the Belfast to Dublin corridor; and if he will make a statement. [29499]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 21 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what action is being taken to improve secondary roads in South Down to improve access to the Belfast/Dublin corridor.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

As you will be aware, the most direct routes from Downpatrick to the Belfast/Dublin corridor (A1) are the A25 through Rathfriland and latterly the A25/B8 through Hilltown.

On the A25 we have recently completed a carriageway improvement scheme at Kilcoo at a cost of £220,000, with major resurfacing work at Knocksticken, Ballykilbeg, Loughislandreavey, Ballybannon to Priest's Road, and Priest's Road to Aughlisnafin at a cost of £547,000.

We also have plans to carry out a number of improvement schemes on these routes including:

junction improvements on the A25 Dublin Road at Burrenreagh Road near Castlewellan at an estimated cost of £40,000 (05/06);

carriageway realignment on the B8 Hilltown Road, Newry, at an estimated cost of £400,000 (06/07);

carriageway realignment and visibility improvement on the A25 Burrenbridge Road at an estimated cost of £100,000 (06/07) ;and

carriageway resurfacing at Windsor Hill, Newry, at an estimated cost of £65,000 (06/07).

In relation to other "A" and "B" Class roads in the South Down area, we have recently completed, or plan to complete the following improvements during the current year at a cost of some £1,200,000:

carriageway realignment on the B2 at Caughey's Road, Dromore;

junction improvements and footway provision on the B10 at Mays Corner;

carriageway realignment and footway provision on the A2 Newry Road, Kilkeel at Mourne Grange;

carriageway realignment and footway provision on the A2 at Ballindoalty Corner between Rostrevor and Kilkeel;

carriageway realignment on the B2 Annacloy Road, Downpatrick;

carriageway realignment and junction improvement on the B2 at Ballygowan Road;

junction improvement on the B3 at Ballinafoy Road Rathfriland;

carriageway realignment on the B7 Dromara Road at Ballyroney;

carriageway realignment and junction improvement on the B10 Derrylough Road, Banbridge;

junction improvement on the B2 Lurgan Road at Ballynaris Hill, Dromore;

junction improvement and footway provision at Greenpark Road, Rostrevor; and

junction improvement on the B27 Sandbank Road, Hilltown.

Finally, the following improvement schemes are currently programmed for future financial years at a cost of some £785,000:

junction improvement on the B2 at Magheraloan Road, Annacloy;

junction improvement on the B10 at Lisnaree Road, Banbridge; and

carriageway realignment on the A50 Castlewellan Road at Corbet Lough;

I hope this information is helpful.

Speed Detection Devices

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions the *(a)* Operational Command Unit and *(b)* District Command Unit have used (i) speed detection devices and (ii) tax detection devices on the Comber road. [28877]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not record the information requested in relation to speed detection devices.

Driver Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland carries out tax detection by Automatic Number Plate Reader. I am advised that they do not use any sites on the Comber road for detection purposes.

Student Finance

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to require adults to pay higher tuition fees for college courses in Northern Ireland. [30214]

Angela E. Smith: From the 2006–07 academic year, Northern Ireland institutions providing designated courses of full-time higher education will be able to charge annual tuition fees of up to £3,000 to students entering higher education from that year. From 2006–07 all Northern Ireland domiciled students studying at institutions in the UK, will be able to defer payment by taking out a non-means tested loan which will not have to be paid until after the student leaves higher education and is earning more than £15,000 per year.

Sports Funding

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding his Department has provided for *(a)* hockey, *(b)* cricket and *(c)* rugby in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland. [22760]

Mr. Hanson: The following exchequer funding has been given to hockey, cricket and rugby in each of the last three years provided by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI).

SCNI Exchequer funding

	2002–03	2003–04	£ 2004–05
Hockey	51,150	112,393	120,605
Cricket	26,330	61,814	65,246
Rugby[1]	122,035	101,825	96,728

[1] Includes funding via the Safe Sports Ground Programme.

In addition, the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), Department of Education (DE), Department of Social Development (DSD) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), have provided the following:

DFP funding

	2002–03	2003–04	£ 2004–05
Hockey	—	—	7,245
Cricket	—	—	—
Rugby	—	88,478	7,200
Numerous sports[1]	—	48,434	—

[1] Includes Peace II funding to projects involving more than one of the listed sports.

DE funding

	2002–03	2003–04	£ 2004–05
Hockey	—	—	1,441
Cricket	—	—	1,132
Rugby	—	—	—

DSD funding

	2002–03	2003–04	£ 2004–05
Hockey	—	—	211
Cricket	—	—	—
Rugby	9,000	—	—

DARD funding

	2002–03	2003/04	£ 2004/05
Hockey	—	—	—
Cricket	—	—	—
Rugby	—	—	58

Statementing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in each Education and Library Board area are awaiting assessment for a statement; and if he will make a statement. [25016]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows by, Education and Library Board, the total number of children for whom a statutory assessment has currently been requested (column a), out of that total, the number of cases where the assessment process has not yet started (column b) and the number of statutory assessments currently underway by boards (column c).

Education and Library Board	*(a) Number of children requiring a statutory assessment*	*(b) Of (a) the number of cases, where the assessment process has not yet started*	*(c) Number of statutory assessments currently under way (a)-(b)*
Belfast Education and Library Board	220	0	220
North Eastern Education and Library Board	164	6	158
South Eastern Education and Library Board	570	60	510
Southern Education and Library Board	281	25	256
Western Education and Library Board	247	14	233

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs sets out a five-stage approach to the process. At Stage 4 the Education and Library Board considers the need for a statutory assessment, following a request from parents of the child, the school or other agencies. If the board considers that such an assessment is necessary, the parents will be notified and a multi-disciplinary assessment will be made. The board may then make a statement of special educational needs at Stage 5. From the date of the initial request for statutory assessment, the board has 18 weeks, subject to certain exceptions, to issue a proposed statement, where this has been found to be necessary.

Stevens Inquiry

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the total cost of the Stevens Inquiry into allegations of police collusion in Northern Ireland; and what assessment he has made of the progress made by the inquiry to date. [30760]

Mr. Hain: Sir John Stevens' report is to the Chief Constable of the PSNI. The Stevens investigation has thus far been funded by the PSNI and is therefore a matter for the Chief Constable.

Specific criminal investigations continue and the criminal justice process must be allowed to take its course.

Sub-regional Transportation Plan

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when work will be completed on the sub-regional transportation plan for Northern Ireland; when the plan will be published; and what consultation measures will be put in place for the plan. [29446]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 21 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding when work will be completed on the Sub-Regional Transportation Plan (SRTP) for Northern Ireland; when the plan will be published; and what consultation measures will be put in place for the plan.

I have been asked to reply, as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The draft SRTP is programmed to be published for formal consultation in March 2006, and at this stage, the nature of the consultation process has not been finalised. The final SRTP is programmed for completion by December 2006, however, this will be dependent on the exact nature of responses received during the consultation process.

I should add, that as with all transport plans, the schemes contained within the SRTP would be subject to normal statutory procedures and to the availability of funds at the time.

I hope this information is helpful.

Supporting People Programme

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list payments made in Northern Ireland from the Supporting People programme in each of the last three years. [30809]

Mr. Hanson: The Supporting People programme funds 114 providers providing housing support services to over 900 schemes. The total amount paid out in the last three years is as follows:

	Amount paid (£)
2003–04	42,805,119.53
2004–05	48,870,916.70
2005 to date	31,784,917.93

Telecare Projects

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was allocated for Telecare projects in Northern Ireland in the last three years, broken down by constituency. [29168]

Mr. Woodward: The Department has not made a specific allocation of funds for the provision of Telecare services in the last three years.

Telecommunications Masts

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning permission applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in South Antrim in each of the last three years. [30141]

Angela E. Smith: Details of the number of mobile phone masts granted approval in the South Antrim constituency over the last three years are set out in the following table.

	Council area	
	Antrim	*Newtownabbey*
2002–03	12	11
2003–04	11	4
2004–05	8	7

It should be noted that figures for 2002 also include applications made under the prior approval process. In June 2002 Permitted Development rights were removed by statute except in the case of an emergency and applications for telecommunications equipment were subject to the full planning process.

Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent additional security measures have been put in place at the Ulster Community and hospitals trust to protect staff since an attack on four nursing staff at the Accident and Emergency department by a member of the public on the weekend of 12–13 November; and if he will make a statement. [29795]

Mr. Woodward: Following the recent incident at the Ulster Community and hospitals trust, the management have conducted a formal incident review and personnel have met with the PSNI to explore ways of improving security. An action plan, detailing improved structural security measures at the Ulster hospital's A and E department has been drawn up and this will be implemented as soon as possible.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the extent was of the injuries sustained by the nursing staff at the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust Accident and Emergency department as a result of the attack by a member of the public on the weekend of 12 and 13 November. [29796]

Mr. Woodward: Following the recent incident at the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust, nurses were traumatised; no physical injuries were sustained.

Unemployment (South Antrim)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes in the level of unemployment there have been in South Antrim constituency in each year since 2001. [30200]

Angela E. Smith: Unemployment levels from the claimant count in the South Antrim parliamentary constituency in each of the years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 (to October), together with their yearly change are provided in the following table.

South Antrim

	Unemployment (annual averages except for 2005)	*Change from previous year*
2001	1,427	-110
2002	1,505	78
2003	1,398	-107
2004	1,111	-287
2005[1]	1,086	—

[1] January-October

Voluntary Organisations

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has recently held a meeting with the Organisation of the Unemployed Northern Ireland to discuss the funding of voluntary and community organisations; and if he will make a statement. [30142]

Mr. Hanson: No Ministerial meetings have been held with the Organisation of the Unemployed NI (OUNI). Officials from the Department for Social Development (DSD) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) have met with OUNI to discuss potential funding opportunities. Although no immediate funding sources were identified, the organisation was advised of future funding streams and the requirements for voluntary and community sector organisations involved in delivery of public services.

Wages

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average yearly wage in Northern Ireland was in 2004. [30202]

Angela E. Smith: Median gross annual earnings for full-time employees on adult rates, who have been in the same job for at least 12 months, including those whose pay was affected by absence was £19,634 at April 2004.

Waiting Times

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his letter of 31 October, what definition he uses of an unreasonable length of time in respect of waiting times for *(a)* an out-patient appointment and *(b)* in-patient or day-case treatment in Northern Ireland. [28464]

Mr. Woodward: I have stated on numerous occasions that I view current hospital waiting times in Northern Ireland as completely unacceptable.

The aim of the elective care reform programme I announced in July is to develop fully scheduled services within which patients can access the care they require within the time scale that their clinical condition dictates.

The first steps of the reform programme to address in-patient and day-case waiting times are now under way, and I will announce detailed proposals to tackle out-patient waiting times next month.

Water Consumption

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes there have been in levels of water consumption in Northern Ireland over the last three years. [30624]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Dr. William McCrea, dated 23 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what changes there have been in levels of water consumption in Northern Ireland over the last three years (30624). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The figures for water consumption by both domestic and non-domestic customers are as follows:

As at March:	*Million litres per day*
2003	503
2004	498
2005	490

There is a high degree of estimation used in arriving at these consumption figures, mainly due to the low level of metering in Northern Ireland. There are also a number of factors which affect the level of water consumption, including seasonal variations in weather. Water Service manages water demand through a range of measures included in its Water Efficiency Plan, including raising awareness about water conservation and the promotion of water saving devices.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what opportunities he has identified in Northern Ireland for significant water savings by consumers. [30692]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Dr. William McCrea, dated 23 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what opportunities he has identified by consumers in Northern Ireland for significant water savings (30692). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service's second Water Efficiency Plan, which was published on 12 January 2004, set out a wide range of measures aimed at reducing demand for water through the effective use of water by both Water Service and its customers. One of the key aspects of the plan is a reduction in the level of leakage. A significant programme of investment has resulted in leakage being reduced by over 100 megalitres per day (Ml/d) from 291 Ml/d in March 2002 to the current level of 190 Ml/d at September 2005. In achieving this level of reduction Water Service has been actively encouraging customers to play their part in eliminating leakage within private property. It is estimated that some 20 per cent. of total leakage occurs within the customers' pipework, therefore customers have an important contribution to make to this aim. In 2004, the Water Service introduced the "Leakline" free telephone number (08000 282011) to encourage customers to report any visible leaks.

Water Service continues to raise awareness of the need for water efficiency by providing practical advice on the actions that the customers can take. These include carrying out water efficiency audits and the installation of Hippo bags in larger toilet cisterns to reduce the amount of water used. Water efficiency is also promoted through the distribution of leaflets to customers, through public displays, exhibitions and presentations identifying how water can be used wisely in the home, school, business and agricultural premises Over the past few years, water efficiency leaflets have been issued to every property in Northern Ireland. Water Service has a double decker bus, known as the Waterbus, which contains an exhibition on water and sewerage services. The Waterbus visits schools to make children aware of the water cycle, water sources, water treatment, the efficient use of water and wastewater treatment, through a number of displays, models, experiments, video shows and computers.

Water Service's annual customer survey contains a number of the questions relating to water efficiency and in recent years the responses have indicated an increasing awareness of water efficiency among customers.

Wind Farms

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for planning permission have been granted for wind turbines in South Antrim constituency in each of the last three years. [30225]

Angela E. Smith: Details of the number of wind turbines granted approval in the South Antrim constituency in each of the last three years are set out in the following table.

	Number of wind turbines approved
2002–03	5
2003–04	2
2004–05	4

Youth Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding will be provided to implement the Province's Children and Young People strategy. [24892]

Angela E. Smith: The Strategy for Children and Young People is currently being re-drafted and will be launched in February 2006. Implementation of the strategy will involve the development of fully costed plans updated and reviewed on a regular basis.

In addition, as part of our proposals for the draft budget for Northern Ireland for 2006–08 an additional £25 million has been provided in each of the next two years to ensure that every child has the best start in life. This will include driving forward our policies in areas such as pre-school and extended/out-of-hours school-based activities, child care and Sure Start, as well as measures to foster their health and well-being.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Development Instrument

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the Development Instrument will provide funding for education. [30264]

Mr. Thomas: The Development Co-operation and Economic Co-operation Instrument (DCECI) will provide development funding for all countries currently covered by the Asia, Latin America and parts of the TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States) Regulations. The Commission has also suggested it covers funding for the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific). Likewise, it will provide funding for thematic programmes in specific sectors of global or multi-country nature, which cannot be covered by normal country or regional programmes.

Country and regional programmes establish the focus of Community assistance in specific countries and regions. This will be based on partner Governments' specific needs and development plans. It will also reflect the added value of Community aid in particular countries and sectors. Funding of activities in the field of education will depend on these factors. From experience, we know that Community country programmes do fund activities in the field of education.

Globally applicable or cross-cutting education initiatives may also fall under the thematic funding banner. This is likely to remain the case for the new batch of thematic programmes to be launched under the next Financial Perspectives (2007–13).

Disaster Relief

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what percentage of Government funding in respect of *(a)* the tsunami, *(b)* the Pakistan earthquake, *(c)* the situation in Niger and *(d)* the situation in Southern Africa has been directed to (i) the International Movement of the Red Cross, (ii) Red Crescent, (iii) International Red Cross/Crescent Federation, (iv) all non-government organisations and (v) United Nation agencies. [29690]

Mr. Thomas: The percentage of Government funding provided in response to the Asian tsunami, Pakistan earthquake, Niger and Southern Africa humanitarian crises which has been directed to the International Movement of the Red Cross, Red Crescent, International Red Cross/Crescent Federation, non-government organisations and United Nations agencies is set out in the following table. Where relevant, funding for humanitarian relief and reconstruction has been separately recorded. The 'Total UK Government funding' figures shown refer to funding commitments given by DFID in response to current (and ongoing) crises.

		Percentage of which was channelled to:				
Event/Type of assistance	*Total UK Government funding (£ million)*	*International Movement of the Red Cross*	*Red Crescent*	*International Red Cross/Crescent Federation*	*All non-government organisations*	*United Nations agencies*
Asian tsunami[1]						
Humanitarian relief	75.00	2	—	3	16	50
Reconstruction	65.00	—	—	—	—	8
Pakistan earthquake						
Humanitarian relief	33.00	6	—	4	27	29
Reconstruction	70.00	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Niger						
Humanitarian relief	3.25	—	—	—	42	58

Event/Type of assistance	Total UK Government funding (£ million)	International Movement of the Red Cross	Percentage of which was channelled to: Red Crescent	International Red Cross/Crescent Federation	All non-government organisations	United Nations agencies
Southern Africa[1]						
Humanitarian relief	37.23	1	—	—	22	35

[1] Tsunami figures cover contributions to Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, and Maldives.
Of the £65.00 million for reconstruction £41.40 million has been committed; £25.60 million to the multi Donor Trust Fund with further amounts pledged to the Decentralisation Support Facility, Transparency International and World Bank. The remaining funds are yet to be programmed.
[2] Announced 19 November, not yet programmed by agency.
[3] Southern Africa covers contributions to Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

Background figures to table

£000

Event	Total UK Government funding	of which: International Movement of the Red Cross	Red Crescent	International Red Cross/Crescent Federation	All non- government organisations	United Nations agencies
Asian tsunami						
Humanitarian	75,000,000	1,500,000	—	2,000,000	11,845,959	37,808,001
Reconstruction	65,000,000	—	—	—	—	5,000,000
Pakistan earthquake						
Humanitarian	33,000,000	2,078,250	—	1,500,000	9,083,784	9,438,250
Reconstruction	70,000,000	[1]—	—	—	—	—
Niger	3,250,000	—	—	—	1,367,000	1,863,000
Southern Africa	37,230,000	610,389 (Zimbabwe)	—	—	1,041,925 (Zambia) 7,365,844 (Zimbabwe)	130,000 (Malawi) 837,000 (Mozambique) 350,000 (Lesotho) 300,000 (Swaziland) 425,575 (Zambia) 11,102,350 (Zimbabwe)

[1] Still to be programmed

Other funds provided by UK Government are disbursed through the DFID programme or given directly to the partner Government.

Indian Ocean Tsunami

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 309W, on the Indian Ocean tsunami, if he will place in the Library a copy of the report of the independent review of his Department's humanitarian response in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India following the tsunami. [31019]

Mr. Thomas: The review consists of a number of documents relating to different aspects of the response, and to date is not fully completed. DFID intends to publish the review on its website once the process is complete. A copy will also then be placed in the Library.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26607]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has had 11 IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997. Of these, seven are in use, three are current projects which are not yet complete, and one has been superseded by a later project.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26621]

Mr. Thomas: None.

Sugar

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress is being made in developing economic action plans to help Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean affected by changes to the EU's sugar regime. [30503]

Mr. Thomas: It is very important that Commonwealth Caribbean countries produce appropriately costed sugar transition action plans as soon as possible in order to be eligible for European Union (EU) transitional assistance in 2006, and so that the European Commission (EC) can make realistic and appropriate plans for further financing from 2007 onwards.

DFID has been closely engaged with ensuring that the impact of sugar reform is fully considered for a number of years. In 2003 and 2004, DFID-funded reports were produced on the impact of reform on the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Sugar Protocol countries, the impact on the Least Developed Countries and options for transitional assistance. These reports were made public, and have enabled an informed debate on the developmental aspects of sugar reform to take place.

In March 2005, DFID funded a workshop in Trinidad which initiated the process of developing sugar transition action plans in the Caribbean. Since July, as President of the EU, the UK has been working with the EC, other EU member states and the European Parliament to secure agreement on the draft regulation produced by the EC in June 2005 for the timely delivery of adequate transitional assistance to the Sugar Protocol countries.

DFID is working alongside the EC Delegations in the Caribbean to support development of sugar transition action plans by the six Commonwealth Caribbean sugar producing countries: Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of Barbados have asked for DFID's support for the preparation of their action plan on the basis of their forthcoming National Strategic Plan that will inform the future direction of the sugar industry. Consultancy work on this should begin shortly and a draft report should be prepared by mid-January 2006.

Belize has already developed a strategy for the reform of its sugar industry and initiated discussion of a detailed action plan. The Government of Belize recently asked DFID's support for its preparation and are finalising the scope of the required advice. We are encouraging the Government to take the opportunity of the changes necessitated by the sugar reform to look more widely at the macro-economic challenges facing the country.

The Government of Guyana's working group is preparing the draft action plan, with DFID-funded consultants identified to help put this into the required EC format. To date, given the Government's unwillingness to commit themselves publicly to producing an action plan, there remains a risk that Guyana will not be prepared to submit its plan by the end of the year.

In Jamaica, Prime Minister Patterson said in a statement to Parliament in October that the cane industry will be centred on three products raw sugar for export and domestic markets, molasses for use in rum production, and ethanol. He stated that the Government was at an advanced stage of development of the Jamaica action plan and intended to submit this to the EC ahead of schedule. He specifically recognised the assistance that DFID has offered to provide to help design measures to mitigate the social impact of the sugar reforms.

Due to the high debt to national income burden and its impact on the labour force, the adjustment process in St. Kitts and Nevis will be particularly challenging. To assist, DFID is leading the co-ordination of donor support to St. Kitts and supporting three key pieces of work to inform the Government's preparation of their action plan: consultants to advise on the corporate restructuring of the Sugar Manufacturing Company, a land resource analysis to identify feasible options for the use of the sugar lands and a study to help identify support for those affected adversely by the sugar transition. The Commission's team of consultants working on the preparation of St. Kitts adaptation strategy aims to complete its assignment in December, drawing on these DFID supported reports.

In Trinidad and Tobago, DFID, in close liaison with the EC Delegation, is financing a consultancy to help put the Government prepare their action plan. The consultants facilitated the first consultation on 26 October that brought together representatives from farmers' associations, the sugar industry, the Government, and development partners. The consultants are due to deliver their report by the second week of December.

Uganda

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on recent attacks on non-governmental organisation workers in Uganda. [29813]

Mr. Thomas: The European Union, under the UK presidency, condemned the recent attacks on non-governmental organisation (NGO) staff in northern Uganda in a statement issued on 31 October. NGOs play a crucial role in providing humanitarian relief to hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the conflict in the north. As a result of the recent attacks many agencies have severely curtailed their movement outside major towns. The World Food Programme continues to deliver essential emergency food aid as normal under heavy military escort.

The attacks only serve to increase the suffering of civilians. The Ugandan Government, working with other countries in the region, must do all it can to protect civilians and to ensure the safety of aid workers.

Water and Sanitation (Funding)

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down the UK's funding for water and sanitation in 2004–05 by *(a)* recipient country and *(b)* funding route. [26023]

Mr. Thomas: The most precise available measure of water and sanitation expenditure comes from a detailed analysis commissioned by DFID. The report 'Financial Support to the Water Sector 2002–04', produced for us by consultants, estimates that DFID spent £221 million on water and sanitation in 2003–04. This report also provides a breakdown of expenditure by country and estimates of how expenditure is split through different funding routes for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04. A copy of this report has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The analysis is currently being updated for 2004–05 and figures are expected to be available around March 2006.

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down the UK's planned aid for water and sanitation in 2007–08 by *(a)* country and *(b)* funding route. [26102]

Mr. Thomas: In response to the current situation where most of sub-Saharan Africa is off-track to meet the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets, DFID has committed to double spending on water supply and sanitation sectors in Africa from £47.5 million in 2004–05 to £95 million in 2007–08. This will bring our global spending on water and sanitation up to at least £225 million a year by 2008.

We anticipate that meeting the commitment will require an increase in expenditure through all funding mechanisms, including our own bilateral programmes, but also through encouraging others such as the World Bank and the EU to do more in water and sanitation. We do not have specific country targets.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27732]

Jim Knight: The 10 largest amounts of damages paid out in the last year are as follows:

£52,000 for personal injury compensation to an employee

£52,000 for personal injury compensation as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak

£33,839 for personal injury compensation as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak

£30,000 for personal injury compensation as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak

£14,000 for unfair dismissal and discrimination compensation

£13,967 for road traffic accident compensation

£12,073 for personal injury compensation as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak

£9,500 for personal injury compensation as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak

£8,189 for road traffic accident compensation

£8,000 for personal injury compensation as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak

Date-based Export Scheme

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with the European Commission regarding the lifting of the date-based export scheme; and when the scheme will be lifted. [31082]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Defra officials and Ministers have maintained regular contacts with the European Commission to seek the end of the beef export ban at the earliest possible time.

EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) inspectors visited the UK in June 2005 to assess the state of our BSE controls. Their report was published on 28 September 2005 and was discussed at a meeting of the Commission's TSE Working Group on the same day. The Commission issued a press release stating that the pre-conditions for discussions to begin with member states on lifting the embargo have been met.

The next step is for the Commission to submit to member states a proposal to lift the ban on the export from the UK of cattle, beef and other bovine products and we expect discussions with member states to commence this month. Due to the need to observe EU legal procedures and to gain member states' agreement, it is unlikely that legislation to lift the ban will come into force until early 2006. The Government are continuing to work in Brussels to ensure that the export ban is lifted as soon as possible.

If EU legislation to lift the export ban is adopted, we will need to amend our existing domestic legislation, the Bovines and Bovine Products (Trade) Regulations 1999, to bring UK law into line with EU law. We have already launched a public consultation on the lifting of the ban and related issues, with the aim of ensuring that changes to EU and UK law can, as far as possible, enter into force at the same time so as to enable exports to resume at the earliest possible opportunity.

When the export ban is lifted, the date-based export scheme will no longer be required and will automatically be discontinued.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by her Department. [27377]

Jim Knight: The 10 most valuable moveable and immovable assets owned by the Department, including its sponsored bodies, are shown in the tables. In the main, the monetary values reflect the value of the assets as at the end of the 2004/05 financial year. The lists do not include IT systems still in the process of development.

The Forestry Commission and British Waterways are both part of the Defra group, and each has considerable property holdings. For clarity, and to avoid these property holdings masking other major assets held by the rest of the Department, the 10 most valuable immoveable assets for the Forestry Commission and British Waterways are shown separately.

Moveable assets:

£

Item	*Owned by:*	*Value*
Research vessel (Endeavour)	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)	25,963,000
IT Software—RPA Change Programme	Rural Payments Agency	10,093,135
RIMNET IT software	Core Defra	7,733,333
Animal Movement Licensing Scheme (AMLS) Database IT software	Core Defra	5,179,815
AATSR Environmental Satellite	Core Defra	5,143,399
National Scrapie Plan IT software	Core Defra	5,132,416
Emissions Trading Register IT software	Core Defra	2,243,856
CTS Platform IT software	Core Defra	1,770,128
LVI E-Business IT software	Core Defra	1,704,565
Plant and Equipment (Pumps etc)—SCADA Phase 3	British Waterways	1,482,966

Immoveable assets:

(i) Core Defra and sponsored bodies (excluding the Forestry Commission and British Waterways)

Item	*Owned by*	£ *Value*
Thames Barrier	Environment Agency	1,120,905,685
Land, buildings and laboratories at Woodham lane, Weybridge	Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA)	157,900,000
Land, buildings and laboratories at Sand Mutton, York	Central Science Laboratory (CSL)	134,721,000
Land and buildings at Kew[1]	Royal Botanic Gardens	54,000,000
Land and buildings at Wakehurst[1]	Royal Botanic Gardens	27,000,000
Drayton Experimental Husbandry Farm, Stratford	Core Defra	24,945,000
Barking Barrier	Environment Agency	16,625,154
Land and buildings at Epsom Road, Guildford	Core Defra	15,000,000
Holehaven Barrier and Plant	Environment Agency	14,417,169
Weymouth Laboratory	CEFAS	13,771,000

[1] As allowed by the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), the Royal Botanic Gardens only value land and buildings on the balance sheet that are used for fundraising or administration purposes or which have been built/restored since the SORP was revised in 2000.

(ii) The Forestry Commission woodlands

Item	£ *Value*
Kielder Forest	79,570,923
New Forest East	13,469,775
Forest of Dean	13,027,350
New Forest North	12,030,747
New Forest West	10,389,039
Wykeham Dalby	10,183,872
Thetford South	9,478,840
Thetford North	9,366,320
New Forest South	7,075,221
Hamsterley	4,839,984

(iii) British Waterways property

Item	£ *Value*
North Wharf Road, Paddington Basin, London [offices, residential]	40,700,000
Wood Wharf Business Park, London Docklands	38,200,000
The Interchange, Camden Town, London [warehouse]	21,500,000
Commerce Road, Brentford [warehouses and offices]	12,000,000
Cavendish House, Stockton-on-Tees	10,900,000
West Ferry Printers Site, London Docklands	9,900,000
Industrial premises at Rotton Park Street, Birmingham	9,500,000
Willow Grange, Watford [office building]	8,200,000
Gloucester Quays Re-Development site, Gloucester	7,200,000
Castle Wharf, Nottingham [city centre waterside property]	7,000,000

Farm Subsidies

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers have applied for entry to the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. [29876]

Jim Knight: *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* As at 14 November, the Rural Development Service had received 423 applications for Higher Level Stewardship agreements.

Milk

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will discuss with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry referring the difference between the retail and farm-gate price of milk to the Office of Fair Trading; and if she will make a statement. [29010]

Jim Knight: As I noted in my oral answer to the hon. Member for Torridge and West Devon (Mr. Cox) on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 977, I have been discussing issues relating to competition in the dairy sector and the concerns of dairy farmers with the Department of Trade and Industry. My noble Friend Lord Bach, the Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food, and I will be continuing those discussions when we meet with my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs later in the year. However, except in limited exceptional circumstances, responsibility for deciding whether to carry out market studies or investigations, or to investigate alleged breaches of competition law, rests with the Office of Fair Trading, which is an independent statutory body.

Modulation

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the rate of modulation will be in each year after 2006. [29878]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Under current EU legislation, the rate for compulsory modulation to be applied across the EU-15 agreed as part

of the 2003 CAP reforms is 4 per cent. in 2006, rising to 5 per cent. in each of the years from 2007 to 2012. The European Commission has recently suggested, in the context of the EU future financing negotiations, an increase in that rate of compulsory modulation.

In addition to this, the UK countries apply additional national modulation, which for England is 6 per cent. in 2006. It is likely that the rate in England will rise in future years, in order to provide part of the funding for Environmental Stewardship. However, the rate of any additional national modulation will depend on the outcome of the EU future financing negotiations for the period 2007–13. The UK is pressing to ensure the principle of additional national modulation is available to member states in the next budget period.

Racehorses

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether racehorses have been deemed to be commercial animals for the purposes of regulations governing burial of animals. [27318]

Margaret Beckett: The disposal of animal carcases and other animal by-products is governed by Regulation (EC) 1774/2002. The regulation bans burial as a disposal route for animal by-products. A derogation exists within the regulation that permits the burial of pet animals only to continue. However in our view a racehorse is clearly a working commercial animal and not a pet.

Tenant Farmers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what she expects to implement the recommendations of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group Report; and if she will make a statement. [29790]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The legislative recommendations of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG) have been incorporated into a draft regulatory reform order (RRO) which is being finalised. We are aiming to lay the RRO before Parliament early in the new year with the intention that, (if the proposals are accepted), the new legislation would come into force in June 2006.

TRIG also recommended a code of good practice on diversification within agricultural tenancies, and this was published in September 2004. An adjudication scheme to back up the code is expected to be in place before Christmas.

The Government have also implemented other recommendations of TRIG, including an advice pack for farmers and research on tenant farmer retirement.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* extent and *(b)* effect of new agricultural tenancy agreements designed to take entitlement to single farm payments away from tenant farmers at the end of those agreements for less than the fair compensation specified within the Tenancy Reform Industry Group's code of practice. [29791]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* DEFRA maintains close relationship with the industry organisations represented on the Tenancy Reform Industry Group (TRIG), in particular the Tenant Farmers Association, National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association. Feedback from members of the Group, and other sources, suggests that TRIG guidance "notes to aid tenants and landlords on CAP reform" has proved effective, in the majority of cases, in helping both parties reach amicable arrangements in respect of the new Single Payment Scheme, but there have also been reports of arrangements which have left one party or the other feeling aggrieved.

Coventry university is currently undertaking research on behalf of DEFRA, on the impacts of CAP reform on the diversification activities of tenant farmers in England. While the research is intended primarily to focus on the effect of CAP reform in opening up opportunities for farm diversification by tenant farmers, the specification for the project also covers investigation of the wider impact of CAP reform on the landlord/tenant relationship.

Wild Birds (Imports)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how live wild bird commercial imports, which are to be banned, will be distinguished by inspectors from live wild bird pet imports that are being restricted. [27314]

Margaret Beckett: Wild bird pet imports can be distinguished from wild bird commercial imports by inspectors because of the following requirements for wild bird pet imports brought into effect by Commission Decision 2005/759/EC:

pet birds must be accompanied by a declaration by the owner, or representative of the owner, which says that the animals are not intended for commercial purposes;

pet birds must be accompanied by the owner or a representative; and

a consignment of pet birds may only consist of less than five birds.

TRANSPORT

Buses

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* disabled people and *(b)* young people used buses in England in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [28309]

Ms Buck: Data on bus use by disabled people are not available. Data from the National Travel Survey on trips per person per year by local bus in 2004 for people up to the age of 20 are given in the table as follows.

Average number of bus trips per person per year, 2004

Age	*Trips per person per year*
0–10 years	30
11–16 years	116
17–20 years	138

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency on advertising at the Argentina versus England football match held in Geneva on 12 November. [30599]

Dr. Ladyman: This advertisement was part of a continuing campaign to improve the accuracy of DVLA's records by encouraging the public to notify changes in details. The advertisement cost £45,000 for five minutes exposure. The estimated television audience was in excess of 10 million.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent estimate he has made of the greenhouse gas emissions per distance travelled of passenger trains operating in the United Kingdom. [29307]

Derek Twigg: Greenhouse gas emissions from trains vary significantly according to their size, power requirements and whether they are diesel or electric. The following table provides estimates of CO_2 emissions for average diesel, electric and UK trains in terms of emissions per passenger kilometre assuming average passenger loads:

	CO_2 emissions per passenger km (g/km)
Fleet average—diesel	41
Fleet average– electric	56
Average UK—electric and diesel combined	49

Local Transport Plans

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the major schemes *(a)* proposed and *(b)* approved under the second round of local transport plans; what the expected cost was of each scheme, including expected central government funding; and what estimate has been made of future levels of (i) traffic and (ii) carbon dioxide emissions under each scheme. [26751]

Ms Buck: The major schemes that are proposed in the second round of local transport plans fall into two categories. There are those for which we received Major Scheme Business Cases in July 2005 which contain detailed proposals, including costs. The remainder are those that authorities have indicated that they will be developing over the next few years for which there are fewer details.

The schemes for which we have business cases are set out in the table. Both the estimated total cost and the Department's contribution have been rounded to the nearest million.

Local authority	*Scheme name*	*Estimated total cost (£ million)*	*Estimated DfT contribution (£ million)*
Milton Keynes	Bletchley Link	10	9
Brighton and Hove	Rapid Transit System	22	20
Warwickshire	SPARK	15	13
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton Railway Station	20	7
Sandwell / Dudley	Burnt Tree junction A4123/A461	10	10
Walsall	Brownhills Transport Package	21	19
Nexus (Tyne and Wear PTE)	Washington to Gateshead Bus Corridor	7	5
Sunderland	Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor	69	69
Nottinghamshire	Mansfield Bus Station	8	8
Doncaster	Finningley and Rossington Route Scheme	158	93
Rotherham	Waverley Link Road	8	8
West Yorkshire PTE	Wakefield Westgate Station	7	7
Kirklees	Highways Strengthening and Bridge Maintenance	15	15
Bristol	Greater Bristol Bus Network	69	42
Gloucestershire	Gloucester Parkway Elmbridge Court	27	19
Somerset	Taunton Third Way and Northern Inner Distributor Road	27	14
Suffolk	Ipswich Town Centre Improvements	15	13
Norfolk	A140 Long Stratton Bypass	27	27
Herefordshire	Rotherwas Access Road	10	6
Sandwell	A41 Expressway/A4031 All Saints Way	20	20
Northamptonshire	A509 Isham to Wellingborough Improvement	14	14
East Riding	Beverley Integrated Transport Plan	28	24
Nottinghamshire	Pleasley Bypass Extension	17	17
Bridlington	Bridlington Integrated Transport Scheme	4	4
Essex	Thames Gateway A13/A130	71	71
Lancashire	Heysham to M6 Link Road	88	86
Blackpool	Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramway upgrade	96	72
Durham	East Durham Link Road	10	10
York	Haxby Station	4	3
Middlesbrough	A66 Middlesbrough	0	2
Leicestershire	A47 Earl Shilton Bypass	15	14
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Urban Traffic Control	14	14
South East Dorset	Canford Bridge	3	3

Decisions on these schemes will be taken in the spring of 2006, following the receipt of the advice from the regions on transport priorities.

These major schemes are being considered by the Department and are subject to economic appraisal using the NATA methodology which looks at both traffic and

emissions. However, neither carbon dioxide nor traffic levels are always explicitly identified as part of the appraisal, so it would not be possible to identify these elements for all schemes.

In terms of the other schemes in the second round of local transport plans, these range from specific proposals to descriptions of the problem that needs to be addressed. A list of the named proposals has been placed in the Libraries of the House. This list is not exhaustive and other proposals may be presented to the Department in the period.

We are unable to provide the estimated total cost or the Department's contribution at this stage as these proposals have not yet been formally submitted to the Department. No decisions have been taken on these schemes.

Pedicabs

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he intends to take to address issues raised by the operation of pedicabs; [30841]

(2) if he will bring forward amendments to the Road Safety Bill *[Lords]* to regulate the operation of pedicabs; and if he will make a statement; [30842]

(3) if he will discuss with *(a)* Transport for London, *(b)* the Association of London Government, *(c)* the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association and *(d)* other interested parties the operation of pedicabs. [30843]

Ms Buck: Transport for London has made clear its intention to bring forward proposals for a licensing regime for pedicabs in London which they hope to have in place by next autumn. I look forward to these proposals.

The Department is very willing to hold further meetings with interested parties but Transport for London are in the lead on the introduction of a licensing regime.

Picnic/Rest Areas

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many picnic and rest areas have been available for public use per mile of motorway in each year since 1997. [31180]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* In 1996, there were 52 motorway service areas in England; the equivalent of one for each 53.26km of motorway. Since then 16 further sites, listed in the table, have been added to the network increasing the frequency to one for each 43.38 km of motorway.

	Motorway	*Service area*
1997	M20	Maidstone
1998	M40	Oxford
	M56	Chester
1999	M1	Tibshelf
	M1	Donnington Park
	M5	Cullompton (north bound)
	M6	Stafford (south bound)
	M42	Hopwood Park
	M5	Bridgewater
2000	A1(M)	Doncaster North
2001	A1(M)	Peterborough
	A14/M11	Cambridge
	A1(M)	Baldock
	M3	Winchester
2003	M54	Castle Farm (Telford)
2004	M6(Toll)	Norton Canes

Railways

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much Government funding the rail infrastructure in East Sussex has received in each year since 1997; and what the projected funding is for the next 10 years. [29816]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on Government spending and investment on rail at a regional level. This is primarily because franchise areas often encompass two or more regions and Network Rail is structured on a route by route basis which also serves more than one region.

The Secretary of State made a statement to Parliament on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 93–96WS, setting out Government spending plans for rail as a whole to 2008–09.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much public subsidy First Great Western Trains Ltd. has received in each year since 1997; how much has been awarded against the company in penalties in each year; and if he will make a statement. [30727]

Derek Twigg: Great Western Trains Company Limited has received the cash subsidy and penalties set out in the following table for the years ending 31 March.

£ million

	Subsidy	*Penalty*
1997	61.9	—
1998	58.9	—
1999	53.3	(2.5)
2000	48.6	(2.2)
2001	42.8	(2.0)
2002	27.6	(5.4)
2003	8.7	(2.6)
2004	16.1	(2.0)
2005	(17.6)	(1.1)

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much compensation was paid to passengers for poor services by train operating companies in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1998, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2000, *(e)* 2001, *(f)* 2002, *(g)* 2003 and *(h)* 2004; and if he will make a statement. [26957]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport does not hold this information, which is a matter for the train operating companies.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the statutory powers that enable the Government to provide compensation for train operating companies involved in industrial disputes. [29209]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State's power to enter into Franchise Agreements is contained in Section 23 of the 1993 Railways Act. The power to reimburse net losses of the Franchise Operator due to industrial action

is contained within individual Franchise Agreements. This power is entirely discretionary and in order to exercise it, the Secretary of State must be satisfied that the Franchise Operator has taken all reasonable steps to prevent industrial action as well as mitigating its effects.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rail carriages were *(a)* in operation and *(b)* replaced in the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004. [29034]

Derek Twigg: It is not possible to provide this information on a year-by-year basis between 1994 and 2004. The number of vehicles, on lease at the sale of the Rolling Stock Leasing Companies recorded in the invitation to tender in March 1995, was 10,401 vehicles. The number of vehicles on lease now is approximately 11,000 vehicles. This includes additional vehicles required for growth which were included as replacement for Mark 1 stock on the Southern TOCs and additional rolling stock which has been required to reflect increases in passenger numbers. The number of new vehicles which have been ordered and entered service are set out as follows:

	New vehicles entering service
1996	0
1997	0
1998	20
1999	153
2000	229
2001	602
2002	619
2003	658
2004	1,282
2005	6,471

[1] This is the position at Quarter 3 2005

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the use of the Waterloo International Terminal platforms for other international services once Eurostar has moved to St. Pancras in 2007. [29279]

Derek Twigg: Those representations that have been received by the Department have been in support of using the Waterloo International platforms for domestic passenger services. The Secretary of State confirmed in the House on 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 150, that the Waterloo International platforms would be retained for domestic passenger use once Eurostar services have moved to St. Pancras.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* regulations and *(b)* advice (i) his Department and (ii) regulatory bodies within his Department's responsibility have issued to passenger train operators regarding the efficiency of passenger trains in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. [29305]

Derek Twigg: Neither the Department nor the regulatory bodies for which it is responsible have issued any regulations or advice regarding train efficiency to passenger train operators. The Department funds a research programme run by the Rail Safety and Standards Board, in which the Association of Train Operating Companies is actively engaged, which is considering possible ways of reducing the environmental impact of trains. The Department is also co-ordinating the procurement of the replacement of the Intercity 125 High Speed Train and is placing significant emphasis on ensuring fuel efficiency by the replacement.

TREASURY

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of harmonising tax regimes for defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes on A-day next year for *(a)* each of the next five years, *(b)* 2020 and *(c)* 2030; [31205]

(2) what estimate he has made of the impact on costs of applying the tax regime for defined benefit pension schemes to defined contribution schemes. [31206]

Mr. Des Browne: Pension Tax Simplification, which takes effect from 6 April 2006, replaces the numerous existing complex tax regimes with a single universal regime for tax-privileged pension savings that covers both defined benefit and defined contribution schemes. This new regime will provide greater flexibility to some 15 million pension savers and redresses the current anomalies between defined benefit and defined contribution schemes in the level of contributions that can be made and what benefits can be taken. It is not correct to assume that we have harmonised both towards the tax treatment of either defined contribution or defined benefit; and we can not provide an estimate for the exchequer cost of such a policy.

The broad estimates for the exchequer costs of pension simplification over the first three years were given in paragraph 48 of the Regulatory Impact Assessment published in December 2003, which is available in the House of Common Library and the HMRC website at this address: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ria/simplifying-pensions.pdf

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the amount of tax relief paid on contributions to public sector pension schemes for *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05, *(c)* 2005–06, *(d)* 2006–07, *(e)* 2010, *(f)* 2020 and *(g)* 2030. [31207]

Mr. Des Browne: Latest estimates of cost of tax relief on contributions to occupational pension schemes are included in Table 7.9 of the HMRC website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/7_9_sep05.pdf

The cost of tax relief on contributions to public sector schemes is not estimated separately from other occupational schemes.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 330W, on pensions, what the estimated proportion was of the benefit payments from unfunded public sector pension schemes in *(a)* 2013 and *(b)* at subsequent five yearly intervals relating to members who will join the scheme after April 2006. [30236]

Mr. Des Browne: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how he intends to treat targets which have been partly met for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target number nine. [29859]

Mr. Des Browne: Information on use of partly met and other measurement and definitions used for this target are set out in the published technical note, available at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_spending_and_services/publicservice_performance/pss_perf_technote.cfm

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the data required to measure 2004 public service agreement target number 8 are published; [29860]

(2) what specific targets have been set for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target number 8. [29861]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the technical notes for the PSA targets, which set out details about measurement issues.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect the change in the Treasury's assessment of the start and finish of the current economic cycle has had on measuring achievement against 2004 PSA target *(a)* 1 and *(b)* 4. [30059]

Mr. Des Browne: The Treasury will report against these targets in the forthcoming autumn performance report.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to ensure that action to recover a tax credit debt when a couple split up and there is no ongoing award does not fall only on the member of the couple with continuing care of the child. [30008]

Mr. Des Browne: This is already the case. code of practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" sets out what happens where an award has ceased following the break-up of a couple and there remains an overpayment to be repaid.

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria are used to determine the level of weekly instalments for the repayment of overpaid tax credits. [30428]

Mr. Des Browne: Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?", sets out the maximum amounts by which the tax credits office will reduce payments to recover overpaid tax credits from a previous year.

For ceased tax credits awards, recovery can be made over a 12 month period. Alternatively, a repayment plan may be agreed with HMRC's debt management and banking and the factors that will be taken into account are published in the COP26.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Consumer Credit Directive

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Department has conducted cost impact assessments in relation to the proposed EU consumer credit directive. [30229]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Department of Trade and Industry produced a partial regulatory impact assessment on the European Commission's October 2004 proposal for a consumer credit directive as part of its consultation on the proposed directive published on 25 February this year (http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/creditdircondoc.pdf). Copies of the consultation document and a summary of responses (http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/creditdirresponse.pdf) have been deposited in the Libraries of the House. The Department will update its impact assessment in the light of the Commission's modified proposal, adopted on 7 October, and input from stakeholders.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the Director of Estates and Facility is in his Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26316]

Alan Johnson: The Director of Estates and Accommodation for the DTI HQ estate is Mike Rainsford. Mr. Rainsford is a chartered engineer, a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management. Mr. Rainsford worked for an international firm of consulting engineers before joining the civil service in 1987. Since then he has worked in a number of Departments, most recently the Department of Health where he held similar responsibilities from 1996 to 2003.

EU Directives

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment the Government have made of the impact on costs of the *(a)* removal of the UK opt-out from various aspects of the EU Working Time Directive, *(b)* Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Regulation and *(c)* proposed EU Directive on agency and temporary workers; and if he will place of copy of the assessments in the Library. [29764]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Regarding the removal of the UK opt-out from various aspects of the EU Working Time Directive, the Government have conducted a number of regulatory impact assessments on the Working Time Regulations and their subsequent amendments. The initial introduction of the Working Time Regulations was estimated to cost £10 million a year in annually recurring implementation costs and around a £2 billion annual cost to employers. Subsequent regulatory impact assessments have estimated the costs of the various amendments to the original regulations, all being significantly less than the original introduction costs.

Regarding the European Commission's proposed Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH), the Government commissioned an impact assessment which estimated the direct costs of REACH on UK industry to be £515 million over 11 years. This impact assessment was published on 30 March 2004 as part of a Defra public consultation paper on REACH.

The Government subsequently commissioned a further assessment to look at the indirect costs of REACH through supply chains. This assessment was published on Defra's website in October 2005. The assessment concluded that industry is likely to be able to absorb the majority of the costs of REACH without significant impact on the competitiveness, location or market structure in the UK. However, in the case of a substance being withdrawn due to the failure of manufacturers or importers to support it through REACH, significant industry barriers may result in unexpected impacts (even where substitutes already exist).

The Government have drawn on the results of these impact assessments to identify improvements to REACH to ensure that it meets its objectives of delivering better protection for human health and the environment while not undermining competitiveness or hindering innovation.

Regarding the proposed EU Directive on agency and temporary workers, the Department of Trade and Industry published the final regulatory impact assessment on its website in April 2002. The regulatory impact assessment estimated direct costs to agencies and user enterprises to be in the region of £330 million to £596 million per year.

All regulatory impact assessments are placed in the Libraries of the House when the relevant Bill is laid in Parliament.

Hairdressers Registration Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the operation of the Hairdressers Registration Act 1964. [28273]

Alun Michael: The 1964 Hairdressers Registration Act created the Hairdressing Council (HC) to establish and maintain a register of qualified hairdressers, its work is a matter for the council itself.

Manufacturing

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the manufacturing industry in Northamptonshire. [28090]

Alun Michael: The manufacturing industry in Northamptonshire was comprehensively assessed most recently as part of the Northamptonshire Integrated Local Employment Strategy (NILES). This was work undertaken on behalf of local partners by the Economic Development Arm of Northamptonshire county council and financed by the Council of Europe's European Social Fund. This found that Northamptonshire is characterised by a relative over-representation in employment in manufacturing with over 20 per cent. of employment being within that sector. It also found that the county was dependent on declining traditional manufacturing but that it was now attracting new higher level manufacturing with proposals for science and technology realms at the forefront of this drive.

In addition the Northamptonshire Chamber and Business Link continue to undertake regular Quarterly Economic Surveys. Their findings for the quarter ending September 2005 for the sector show the following results in relation to sales and business confidence:

For businesses involved in the UK market, excluding seasonal variations, over the past three months:

(a) In general sales/custom/bookings have either increased or remained constant.

(b) In general orders/advance custom/bookings have either increased or remained constant.

For businesses involved in overseas markets, excluding seasonal variations, over the past three months:

(a) The majority reported that overseas sales/custom/bookings have remained constant.

(b) The majority reported that overseas orders/advance custom/bookings have remained constant.

Business confidence:

(a) 65 per cent. believe 'Turnover' will improve over the next 12 months.

(b) 50 per cent. believe 'Profitability' will improve over the next 12 months.

A further survey carried out for the Chamber by the organisation 'Matters of Fact' and based on the latest figures from the Annual Business Inquiry 2003 show a continuing decline in the county's manufacturing base. Manufacturing businesses accounted for 10.3 per cent. of all businesses in 2001, and 10 per cent. in 2002 but this has fallen to 9.5 per cent. in 2003.

In terms of employment, its role remains significant with manufacturing businesses accounting for the biggest share—19.1 per cent.—of county employment. Within the sector the research also shows that the food and drink sector has become by far the most significant area of manufacturing in Northamptonshire in employment terms.

Obesity

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will assess the likely impact of obesity on productivity in *(a)* the next 12 months and *(b)* the next 10 years; [28242]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of obesity on productivity in the UK in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [28257]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

In its report of 10 May 2004, The House of Commons Health Committee estimated that lost production through obesity related time off work was running at an annual rate of £1.3 billion to £1.45 billion. This estimate is an update of a National Audit Office Report, "Tackling Obesity in England" published in 2001, which puts this figure at £1.3 billion in 1998. In addition, there will be production losses through inability to work associated with illness brought on by obesity.

Obesity is on a rising trend. The National Audit Office predicts that by 2010 prevalence will have risen to 26 per cent. to 28 per cent. of the adult population. It is likely

that the impact on productivity will increase in step but no quantified forecast has been made of the prevalence of obesity or of its productivity effects.

Pirate Radio Stations

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met Ofcom to discuss the change in the number of pirate radio stations. [30053]

Alun Michael: I have had no such discussions and the subject has not been raised with me by anybody since I took on my current responsibilities. Enforcement of legislation to control illegal radio broadcasting is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. Accordingly, I have had no discussions with Ofcom on this matter.

Post Office

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which objectives from the Counter Revolution Report published in 2000 the Government has achieved. [29968]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Government accepted and implemented all of the PIU report recommendations. We continue to work with Post Office Ltd and stakeholders to deliver the PIU vision of a modern network meeting changing consumer needs.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices have run out of cash to pay benefits in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [30627]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL) and the chief executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many post offices have closed in East Anglia since 2001; and if he will make a statement; [31250]

(2) how many post offices have closed in each of the last five years, broken down by region; and if he will make a statement. [31293]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd (POL). I have therefore asked the chief executive of POL to provide a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Regional Development Agencies

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff each Regional Development Agency employs; what the total salary bill was of each agency in the last year for which figures are available; what the average salary per employee was in each region; and what the average staff salary per thousand head of population was in each region. [29003]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The following information is set out according to the RDA's annual reports for year ending 31 March 2004.

	Number of staff	*Total salary bill (£000)*	*Average salary*	*Mid year population estimate for 2004*[1]	*Proportion of staff salary per 1,000 head of population (£)*
AWM	308	14,901	48,380	5,334,000	2,794
EEDA	159	7,403	46,560	5,491,300	1,348
EMDA	210	7,352	35,010	4,279,700	1,718
LDA	303	12,196	40,251	7,429,200	1,642
NWDA	377	16,125	42,772	6,827,200	2,362
ONE	376	13,147	34,965	2,545,100	5,166
SEEDA	335	13,391	39,973	8,110,200	1,651
SWRDA	259	9,720	37,529	5,038,200	1,929
YF	351	12,989	37,006	5,038,800	2,578

[1] Source: Mid-year Population Estimates: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Royal Family

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which members of the Royal Family have taken part in trade visits to other countries in each of the last five years. [28630]

Ian Pearson: The following members of the Royal Family have taken part in trade visits:

2000

The Duke of Kent—Japan and China

The Duke of Gloucester and Nigeria

2001

The Duke of York—Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, USA, Germany, Luxembourg, Ireland, Bulgaria, UAE, Oman and Kuwait

The Duke of Gloucester—Argentina

2002

The Duke of York—Germany, Switzerland, South Africa, USA, France, Japan

The Duke of Gloucester—Singapore

2003

The Duke of York—Greece, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia, USA and the Middle East

The Duke of Gloucester—Panama

2004

The Duke of York—Italy, Spain, Morocco, Middle East, China, Turkey, Sweden, Russia, USA, South East Asia, Italy and Switzerland

2005

The Duke of York—Middle East, Japan, Azerbaijan, Germany, France, Hungary, Slovakia and Korea.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list each visit promoting UK business and onward investment undertaken by members of the Royal Family in each of the last five years; and what the total cost of each visit was broken down by *(a)* travel costs, *(b)* accommodation costs and *(c)* other costs. [28631]

Ian Pearson: We are unable to answer this question on the grounds of disproportionate costs.

Silent Telephone Calls

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in what circumstances those making silent telephone calls will not be subject to action from Ofcom following Ofcom's publication of a new policy on silent calls. [28146]

Alun Michael: The matter raised is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. Accordingly, my officials have asked the chief executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member and to send me a copy of his response. Copies of the chief executive's letter will also be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Telephone Preference Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many companies have been subject to successful enforcement orders as a result of investigations into potential breaches of the Telephone Preference Service arrangements imposed by the Information Commissioner in each year since 1999; [28562]

(2) what the level of fines imposed on each of the companies which have been subject to enforcement orders for breaches of the telephone preference service arrangements was in each year since 1999. [28563]

Alun Michael: The Information Commissioner initially warns companies informally that it will initiate formal action unless they cease to make calls to registered numbers with the Telephone Preference Service. The Commissioner tells me that this approach has been effective to date without the need for formal action, but that he will have no hesitation in using the powers of his office if there is any evidence of a failure to comply with a warning.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedures Ofcom undertook to ensure that no conflict of interest arose from awarding the contract for Telephone Preference Services to Telephone Preference Services Ltd.; and if he will make a statement. [28564]

Alun Michael: The matter raised is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. Accordingly, my officials have asked the chief executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member and to send me a copy of his response. Copies of the chief executive's letter will also be placed in the Libraries of House.

Unofficial Strikes

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on unofficial strikes. [25209]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Whereas employees should be free to withdraw their labour, the Government consider that, in order to avoid disorderly industrial relations, the legal framework should encourage official over unofficial industrial action. As a result, the protection against dismissal for employees taking official, lawfully organised industrial action is significantly greater than for those taking unofficial action.

DEFENCE

Aldermaston Weapons Establishment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what proportion of spending on the Aldermaston Weapons Establishment has been on *(a)* UK subsidiary companies of US corporations and *(b)* US corporations in each year since 1997; [25010]

(2) what percentage of capital equipment purchased for the Aldermaston Weapons Establishment has been purchased in the US in each year since 1997; [25011]

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent at Aldermaston in each of the last three years; how much was paid to *(a)* in-house services, *(b)* UK-owned companies, *(c)* US-owned and subsidiary companies and *(d)* other companies; and if he will make a statement. [25279]

John Reid: For details of expenditure at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in the last three years, I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) and my hon. Friend the Member for Islington North (Mr. Corbyn) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 15W.

AWE is a Government Owned Contractor Operated ('GOCO') establishment. The contract for the management and operation of AWE sites is with AWE Management Limited, and it is to this company that the Ministry of Defence makes payment against agreed milestones and requirements. Subject to the MOD proscribed national security and value for money considerations. It is for the contractor to price, place, manage and make payments against subcontracts in connection with the delivery of these requirements. Accordingly, the MOD does not maintain records of payments in the form requested.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1259W, on AWE Aldermaston, what further plans he has for additional funding for AWE Aldermaston. [28513]

John Reid: No decisions are required at present on the level of investment at AWE Aldermaston beyond financial year 2007–08. The Defence budget for the period 2008–09 to 2010–11 will be set in Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Armed Services (Recruitment)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the result was of his review of the documentation *(a)* setting out the rights and responsibilities of recruits to

the armed services and *(b)* explaining the nature of commitment they are undertaking; and if he will place a copy of that documentation in the Library. [26279]

Mr. Touhig: There are a number of publications that highlight to prospective applicants their rights while joining or serving in the armed forces:

Each naval service recruit signs a RN form which details the branch in which the recruit is entered, and the terms of the 'engagement'. Notice periods for voluntary discharge and grounds for compulsory discharge are listed.

The Army are currently in the process of producing a publication aimed at parents/guardians which aims to answer concerns in relation to young recruits joining the Army. The publication is due to be available by the end of March 2006. Also, job profiles given to new recruits explain the nature of their employment group in operations.

Twice during the inquiry/application process, RAF applicants receive a RAF form which sets out the terms and conditions of enlistment, their right to terminate their service and a statement that they may be required to serve worldwide.

The Tri-Service AFCO Form 5, "Application Form Information and Guidance Booklet", outlines the armed forces attitude towards bullying and harassment and the areas in which the service way of life differs from that of civilian society. These messages are reinforced during armed forces recruiting presentations which are open to applicants and their parents/ guardians.

These publications are kept under constant review.

Automated Signing Machines

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* he or *(b)* any other Minister in his Department uses (i) an automated signing machine and (ii) a stamp for ministerial correspondence purposes. [19874]

Mr. Touhig: No.

Guidance on handling ministerial correspondence is set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments', copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

BAE Shipyard (Barrow)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role the BAE shipyard at Barrow will play in *(a)* submarine and *(b)* surface shipbuilding for the Department. [28007]

Mr. Ingram: The BAE Systems shipyard at Barrow will continue to play a vital role in support of Ministry of Defence's submarine build programme.

It is open to companies which have the necessary capability and capacity to bid for surface shipbuilding work.

MOD is working closely with industry to develop a Maritime Industrial Strategy (MIS), which will encompass the submarine, ship support and shipbuilding elements of the UK's maritime industry and will seek to identify ways of achieving greater efficiency and long-term sustainment. The MIS is part of the wider Defence Industrial Strategy, which will develop a clear joint understanding, across Government and with industry, of the key industrial capabilities that will be required by Defence in the future.

Chinook HC2

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Chinook HC2 was issued with full Military Aircraft Release. [26614]

Mr. Ingram: Chinook HC2 aircraft clearances were first issued under what was then known as a Controller Aircraft Release in November 1993. The Controller Aircraft Release was re-named Military Aircraft Release in February 1999.

Decommissioning

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1087–88W, on fixed-wing capability, what the decommissioning dates are for HMS Illustrious and HMS Ark Royal; and what the maximum period is for which they can be postponed. [30171]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 22 November 2005]*: On present plans, HMS Illustrious is due to be withdrawn from service in 2012 and HMS Ark Royal in 2013. There is no pre-determined upper limit to the service life of a warship. How long a particular ship can remain in service will depend on a range of factors, including its material condition; certification for fire safety, stability and hull strength; its continued compliance with legislative requirements; and cost.

Departmental Estate

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many empty homes his Department owns; what the locations of these properties are; how many of these properties have been empty for more than six months; and how many of these properties his Department is prepared to offer to registered social landlords for short-term leases. [28824]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is currently being obtained from a number of separate sources and will take time to collate. I will therefore write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Falklands

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of maintaining the garrison in the Falklands in 2004. [29404]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of maintaining the garrison in the Falklands in financial year 2004–05 were £113 million.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the South Atlantic Medal Association regarding commemorations for the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War; and if he will make a statement. [30914]

Mr. Touhig: My predecessor met the Chairman of the South Atlantic Medal Association (SAMA 82) in February of this year and agreed in principle that the main official commemoration in the United Kingdom would be in London on Sunday 17 June 2007. Officials are engaged in further discussions with representatives

of SAMA 82 and other interested organisations to develop plans. I intend to announce the detailed arrangements for the commemorations early next year.

Iraq

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers based in Northern Ireland were serving in Iraq on the latest date for which figures are available. [30199]

Mr. Ingram: On 31 October 2005 there were some 50 soldiers committed to Northern Ireland but temporarily deployed in Iraq.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel from Shropshire are serving in Iraq. [30827]

Mr. Touhig: Data on the residential location of armed forces personnel are not held centrally in databases of individual records and it is therefore not possible to give figures by place of residence.

Joint Combat Aircraft

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the target date is for bringing the first United Kingdom tranche of Joint Combat Aircraft into service; [30172]

(2) whether an agreement has been reached with the United States on dates by which *(a)* the first UK tranche and *(b)* subsequent UK tranches of the Joint Combat Aircraft must be purchased. [30173]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The in service dates (ISO) for the Joint Combat Aircraft will be set at the main manufacturing investment decision point. Our current planning assumption for bringing the aircraft into service in 2014. We are negotiating the terms of the memorandum of understanding for the co-operative production, support and follow on development phase with the US and seven other nations.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's disposal targets are for married quarters estate stock in each of the next three years. [23321]

Mr. Touhig: The table illustrates current planned disposals of the Ministry of Defence married quarters estate for each of the next three years. Further properties are likely to be identified for disposal as part of the continual review of service families accommodation requirements and rationalisation of the estate but it is too early to say how many.

Under a land agreement, 21 married quarters will be handed to the Gibraltar Government in 2006–07 and 44 in 2007–08. An additional 54 will be demolished during the period 2006 to 2009.

Country	Number by sale (financial year) 2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
England, Scotland, Wales	[1]568	[2]149	[2]221
Northern Ireland	0	339	0
Ascension/Falkland Islands	0	0	0
Cyprus	0	0	0

[1] Of which 488 will be handed back to Annington Homes Ltd (AHL).
[2] AHL hand backs.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28969]

Mr. Touhig: None.

RAF Bases

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish his report on airfields; and if he will make a statement. [30652]

Mr. Ingram: As I explained to the hon. Member on 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1126, the defence airfields review is taking the form of a series of business cases. Two of those have addressed the basing requirements for the Joint Combat Aircraft and the Nimrod MRA4. We intend to publish the Joint Combat Aircraft and Nimrod MRA4 basing studies on the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme shortly.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the special advisers in post in his Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29413]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1256W, by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning).

Information relating to costs of special advisers for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1073W, on warships, when his Department first received notice from *(a)* Swan Hunter and *(b)* BAE Systems that further cost increases to the landing ships dock (Auxiliary) project were likely. [28335]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Swan Hunter initially indicated to the Ministry of Defence a potential cost increase to their programme in June 2005. BAE Systems notified a likely increase in August 2005.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23838]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA).

Each department's human resources director is responsible for ensuring that their department develops and implements a skills development plan.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23863]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA).

Copies of the DCA Departmental Skills Development Plan 2004–09 and the 2005 update to the plan have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland was published in February 2003. It can be accessed using the following link; http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/lifelong/llsm-00.asp.

As referred to in this document, the Scottish Executive learning strategy sets out how the Executive plan to support their people through learning. This document is available internally through the Executive's intranet.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department; what the *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses is of each; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27435]

David Cairns: The salary ranges of the highest paid employees in the Scotland Office are listed in the Scotland Office Annual Report 2005. The costs of special advisers are published annually, details of which are given in the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

The salary details of the other members of staff, all of whom are civil servants, are not released, as to provide this information for such a small number of staff (all of whom are below the Senior Civil Service grade) would be unfair on the grounds of their entitlement to privacy.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28975]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). No staff on loan to the Office were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October 2005.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29133]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. All the staff in the Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), who remain the principal employers. Two staff were dismissed from the Office while on loan from the Scottish Executive; one in 2001 and one in 2002.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Amateur Dramatics

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of people who are members of amateur dramatic organisations which receive public funding. [30465]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff in her Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27445]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows:

(a) The numbers of civil servants are published in table C on Civil Service Statistics which covers permanent staff numbers (FTE basis) in each Department and Agency. Civil Service Statistics 2004 is available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website.

(b) This information is not held centrally and could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

(c) The figures are in the table:

	Number
1999	20
2000	10
2001	10
2002	Less than 5
2003	10
2004	10
2005	20

Gambling Act

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to enable part 3 of the Gambling Act 2005 to be brought into force as soon as possible. [30936]

Mr. Caborn: We propose to bring into force part 3 of the Gambling Act 2005, including provision for the prohibition of chain-gift schemes (section 43), as soon as the Gambling Commission becomes fully operational in September 2007.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first-class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first-class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27673]

Mr. Lammy: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

(a) My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Members to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

(b) and *(c)* The detailed information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

(d) In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–06 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within her Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if she will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27810]

Mr. Lammy: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used, and shows how many officials accompanied Ministers in those circumstances. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Between 2003–05 DCMS Ministers took 22 domestic flights. Information on officials accompanying Ministers and covering the period pre 2003 could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Smithfield Market

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Corporation of London on the heritage implications of plans to demolish the old Smithfield Market site. [28095]

Tessa Jowell: I have had no discussions with the Corporation of London on the heritage implications of the plans to demolish these buildings. DCMS officials liaised with the Corporation to obtain background information on the planning proposals for the site. However, such proposals cannot be taken into account in determining whether or not a building should be listed. Listing decisions are based solely on the architectural and historic merit of the buildings.

Olympic Lottery

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the likely impact on income for original lottery games as a result of the new Olympic lottery game. [27351]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* We estimate the non-Olympic good causes may receive up to 5 per cent. less in income over the period from 2005 to 2013, as a result of sales diversion to Olympic lottery games. Sales of the initial Olympic lottery game have been good—we will monitor progress against the operator's forecast throughout the period.

Royal Regalia

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which of the *(a)* Crown Jewels and *(b)* other items of royal regalia on display at the Tower of London are in public ownership. [29818]

Mr. Lammy: The Crown Jewels and other items of 'royal regalia' at the Tower of London are owned by Her Majesty in right of the Crown, as Sovereign, for Her successors and for the nation.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what ministerial visits she has undertaken since May; what the purpose was of each; and if she will make a statement. [24120]

Tessa Jowell: The answer is in the table.

Date of visit	Where to	Purpose
5 June 2005	Manchester	2005 EUAFA European Women's Championship—England v Finland
10–11 June 2005	Zambia	Next Step conference
14–15 June 2005	Rome	Bilateral with Italian Minister
18 June 2005	London	Expat and ethnic minority London 2012 tour
20 June 2005	Qatar	To discuss Women and Sport
21–24 June 2005	Japan	To discuss the creative economy in Japan
27 June 2005	Dublin	Meeting with Minister Dempsey
28 June 2005	Portugal	Meeting with Ministers for Culture and Youth and Sport
3–7 July 2005	Singapore	Decision on the 2012 Olympics
11 July 2005	London	Family Assistance Centre, set up after the 7/7 bombings
12 July 2005	London	Family Assistance Centre, set up after the 7/7 bombings
13 July 2005	London	Family Assistance Centre, set up after the 7/7 bombings
14 July 2005	London	Family Assistance Centre, set up after the 7/7 bombings and service in Trafalgar Square
15 July 2005	London	Family Assistance Centre, set up after the 7/7 bombings
27 July 2005	Stratford/East Ham	Visiting sites for 2012 Olympics
7 August2005	Cardiff	FA Community Shield Match
27–29 August 2005	Edinburgh	Edinburgh Festival
6 September 2005	London	Event to mark 7 years to go to the 2012 Paralympics
9 September 2005	Salford	School Sports Partnership—local school
11 September 2005	London	nPower Test Match
20 September 2005	Liverpool	Anthony Cormley exhibition
12 October 2005	Stratford, London	Tour of the Olympic Park
19 October 2005	Luton	Visiting local families who lost relatives in the Pakistan earthquake
20 October 2005	Hertford	Sport facilities at Richard Hale school
21 October 2005	Aberdeen	Opening of the old Town House

Music Television Channels (Premium Rate Calls)

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received about music television channels which invite viewers to make a premium rate telephone call to choose a music video. [30772]

James Purnell: None.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under what regulations music television channels in the United Kingdom operate, with particular reference to music television channels that use a premium rate telephone number displayed on screen. [30774]

James Purnell: The Communications Act 2003 has put in place a framework for the regulation of independent television broadcasting by the communications regulator, Ofcom. Ofcom regulates broadcasters' output through its broadcasting code, which sets out the rules and guidance with which broadcasters must comply. Section 10 of the code deals with commercial references within programmes, including the use of premium rate numbers in programmes. Under the code, any use of premium rate numbers must comply with the code of practice issued by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS).

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the special advisers in post in her Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to her Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29414]

Mr. Lammy: Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House. Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Age Discrimination (Housing)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to prevent minimum age restriction covenants in relation to housing. [28618]

Yvette Cooper: Some local authorities set minimum age restrictions, for example on sheltered accommodation. We have no plans to prohibit such restrictions. However, local authorities do need to ensure that any restrictions do not restrict:

access to social housing for certain categories of applicants, or

the authority's ability to ensure that reasonable preference for social housing goes to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories.

Business Growth Incentives Scheme

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which London boroughs benefited from the Local Authorities Business Growth Incentives scheme in 2004–05; what steps he will take to ensure that all London boroughs have the opportunity to take part in the scheme in future years; and if he will make a statement. [30143]

Mr. Woolas: All London boroughs have the potential to gain from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentives scheme which is due to make its first payments to eligible authorities in February 2006. The data needed to calculate which authorities will receive a payment under this scheme will not be available until January 2006.

Every local authority in England and Wales is included in the scheme, which is initially scheduled to run for three years. As announced to the House in July, there will be a review of the scheme in England following its first year of operation. This review will allow us to assess the scheme's appropriateness and success for all authorities, including for the London boroughs.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list projects conducted for his Office by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29088]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for his Department and its agencies. [29089]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The level of expenses paid to Consultants carrying out work on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and its Agencies is tied to the level of the Office's subsistence rates paid to civil servants of equivalent grade.

The ODPM's contracting process ensures that usage of the Office's subsistence rates is adhered to, by seeking all inclusive priced proposals from Suppliers. Contractor invoices are also subject to scrutiny by ODPM Officials.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government plan to introduce primary legislation to amend the council tax system in Wales after the Lyons inquiry has reported. [26916]

Mr. Woolas: The Government have no plans to introduce primary legislation to amend the council tax system in Wales.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister at what level he expects to cap local authorities' council tax rises in the 2006–07 financial year. [30178]

Mr. Woolas: No decisions have been taken about capping in 2006–07 and beyond, but the Government will not hesitate to use its capping powers to protect council taxpayers from excessive council tax increases in future years.

There is no excuse for excessive council tax or spending increases.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice and guidance the Department has given to local authority IT *(a)* Departments and *(b)* suppliers in relation to the council tax revaluation in (i) England and (ii) Wales. [29708]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided no advice and guidance to local authority IT departments and suppliers in the relation to the council tax revaluation in England and Wales. Guidance on recommended IT measures relating to council tax revaluation and reform in England could not usefully have been provided until the shape of any reform was clear following ministerial decisions in the light of the recommendations of the Lyons Inquiry and responses to a public consultation following from that.

Council tax revaluation in Wales is a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for how many residential properties in England the Valuation Office Agency has *(a)* dwelling house codes and *(b)* value significance codes data. [29716]

Mr. Woolas: As at 3 November 2005 the Valuation Office Agency had dwelling house code data on 21,265,910 out of 22,006,884 dwellings in England. On this date there were 1,794,709 dwellings with value significant codes.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the Valuation Office Agency conducted analysis of the likely effects of council tax revaluation in England prior to the announcement of its postponement. [29725]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1030W.

Empty Properties

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely number of empty dwelling management orders to be levied per year once the system is in operation. [26922]

Yvette Cooper: We do not know how far the possible use of an empty dwelling management order (EDMO) will give property owners an incentive to resolve the situation in advance. Therefore we do not know how many EDMOs will be used in practice. However, the regulatory impact assessment on empty dwelling management orders published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in September 2004 estimates that local housing authorities would make approximately 1,000 EDMOs annually.

Fire Control Rooms

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which of the fire authorities which have responded to his Department's proposals for the provision of regional fire control rooms have signified *(a)* agreement and *(b)* disagreement. [30875]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* All fire and rescue Regional Management Boards, which represent the Fire and Rescue Authorities, have written to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister indicating that they accept the proposals for regional fire control centres.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what legal authority his Department proposes to *(a)* establish regional fire control rooms and *(b)* contract with the private sector for the provision of fire control rooms. [30876]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 22 November 2005]*: There are powers in section 29 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 that provide the necessary authority. Development agreements for the construction of the new control centres were concluded using these powers. The single technology/infrastructure services procurement is being conducted under the same powers. The responsibility for operating the control centres will however remain in public sector. Each control centre will be run as a local authority company, owned by the relevant fire and rescue authorities.

Firelink Project

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has commissioned a risk assessment of the Firelink project. [31101]

Jim Fitzpatrick: As required by the Office of Government Commerce good practice and Prince 2 methodology the management of the Firelink project includes detailed risk assessments and mitigation procedures. The evaluation of the competing bids also took into account risk. External assurance is provided through the Office of Government Commerce Gateway reviews. The most recent review was Gateway 3 (investment decision) conducted in October 2005.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the technical requirements for the Firelink project produced by the Firelink Board. [31103]

Jim Fitzpatrick: A copy of the technical requirements for the Firelink project will be placed in the Library of the House following contract signature, which is anticipated to take place by the end of 2005.

Housing

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1037–38W, on housing, if he will break down the figures provided by housing type. [29990]

Mr. Woolas: The answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1037–38W, gave the total number of vacant dwellings in North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire. These figures, broken down by tenure type, are tabled as follows:

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
North East Lincolnshire					
Total	2,890	3,001	2,628	2,689	2,727
Of which:					
Local authority (LA)	479	424	292	318	0
Registered social landlord (RSL)	52	46	61	77	311
'Other' public sector	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector (non RSL)	2,359	2,531	2,275	2,294	2,416
North Lincolnshire					
Total	3,361	3,020	2,522	2,143	2,035
Of which:					
Local authority (LA)	432	500	367	260	200
Registered social landlord (RSL)	53	27	29	40	18
'Other' public sector	0	74	37	62	41
Private sector (non RSL)	2,876	2,419	2,089	1,781	1,776

Source:
The figures for numbers of vacant dwellings given above are based on three sources: Total from ODPM's Council Tax Base 1 return; LA and 'Other' public sector from ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical return; RSL from Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return; and the private sector is obtained by subtracting all these three separate tenure figures from the total.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28970]

Jim Fitzpatrick: None—the pay rates of all staff employed in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are above the national minimum wage.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies *(a)* which the Government are required to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* whose advice the Government are required to publish. [29748]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister currently sponsors four advisory non-departmental public bodies:

the Advisory Panel on the Beacon Scheme;

the Advisory Panel on Standards in the Planning Inspectorate;

the Building Regulations Advisory Committee; and

the National Community Forum.

For *(a)*, the only one of these bodies that the Government are required to consult prior to the introduction of new legislation is the Building Regulations Advisory Committee for proposals on building regulations under Section 14(3) of the Building Act 1984. For *(b)* the Government are not required to publish advice provided by any of the bodies.

Overcrowded Housing

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his Department plans to monitor its performance in reducing the number of families with children living in overcrowded housing as part of public service agreement 5. [28895]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) currently uses five key indicators for monitoring performance on PSA5 including the number of families with children in temporary accommodation. On this, the trend has been stabilised since September 2004, with significant reductions since 2002 in the number of families with children living in cramped bed and breakfast hotels.

The ODPM is currently considering the way forward on addressing overcrowding including the statutory overcrowding standards.

Property Valuation

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the maximum penalties are for *(a)* refusing access to a valuation officer, *(b)* failing to give information about a house to a valuation officer and *(c)* giving wrong or misleading information about a house to a valuation officer. [30705]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* For council tax purposes under the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

(a) The maximum fine for refusing access to a valuation officer who has given notice as required of the exercise of the power of entry is level 2 on the standard scale.

(b) The maximum fine for failing to give information about a house to a valuation who has served notice as required is level 2 on the standard scale.

(c) The maximum penalty for giving wrong or misleading information to a valuation officer who has served notice as required, is imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale, or both.

No such fines or penalties have been invoked to date and any such fine or penalty would be imposed by the courts and not by the Valuation Office Agency.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish the full specifications of 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 4. [29953]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The target is being finalised and will be published together with a revised draft technical note shortly.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the special advisers in post in his Office, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29412]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

WALES

Consultants/Special Advisers

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects, how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed. [29050]

Mr. Hain: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). We follow DCA's guidance for the procurement and management of consultancy services. We have not assesses any projects as unsuccessful since 2000.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps his Department takes to ensure that consultancies engaged by his Department do not claim excessive expenses. [29051]

Mr. Hain: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA).

The Wales Office uses the DCA's standard contract documentation, which sets contract terms including the payment of expenses. Where payment of expenses is considered necessary, these must be based on actuals and in line with civil service travel and subsistence rates.

It is the responsibility of the individual contract manager to ensure that any payments of expenses are in line contract terms.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29052]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999, and since then the follow projects were conducted by consultants:

2000–01—£16,294 was spent to design the Wales Office logo and website.

2001–02—£31,084 was spent on reviews of staff and management systems and lawyer's fees.

2002–03—£10,758 was spent on lawyer's fees.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27418]

Mr. Hain: The information is as follows:

(a) The Wales Office was created in July 1999. The number and spend on consultants since then has been:

	Number	£
1999–2000	0	0
2000–01	2	16,294
2001–02	3	31,084

	Number	£
2002-03	1	10,758
2003-04	0	0
2004-05	0	0

(b) The number and salary range of special advisers were:

	Number
Salary range: £24,349 to £48,698	
1999-2000	1
2000-01	1
2001-02	1
2002-03	1
2003-04	2
2004-05	2

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate the Valuation Office Agency has made of the number of domestic dwellings that received *(a)* an external inspection and *(b)* an internal inspection as part of the council tax revaluation in Wales. [30281]

Nick Ainger: The Valuation Office Agency has made no such estimate.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31734]

Mr. Hain: None.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff in his Office were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27447]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Information relating to staffing numbers can be found in the Wales Office Annual Departmental Report 2005 section 5.7.

This publication is available via the Wales Office website: www.walesoffice.gov.uk and from the Libraries of the House.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27575]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Information relating to staffing numbers can be found in the Wales Office Annual Departmental Report 2005, section 5.7. Details of individual salaries are not published save the number of senior civil service staff and salary range in the annual report at annex 5.

These publications are available on the Wales Office website: www.walesoffice.gov.uk and from the Libraries of the House.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31736]

Mr. Hain: None.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31116]

Mr. Hain: None.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first-class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first-class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27669]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

For information on *(a)* my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office, (Mr. Murphy) has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004-05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000-01 to 2003-04, I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005. Also, to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

(b) and (c): Total ministerial rail travel costs each year since 1999-2000

	£
1999-2000	35,239
2000-01	62,121
2001-02	84,423

(b) and (c): Total ministerial rail travel costs each year since 1999–2000

	£
2002–03	124,035
2003–04	67,895
2004–05	10,568

Note:
These figures can be split between first-class and standard class, only at a disproportionate cost.

(d), (e) and (f): Air travel

	£
1999–2000	105
2000–01	6,851
2001–02	5,283
2002–03	695
2003–04	95
2004–05	4,366

Note:
These figures can be split between different classes only at a disproportionate cost.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29137]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office has not dismissed any staff in any of the last five years.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Ability Grouping

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 444W, on ability grouping, on what basis it was decided to remove the requirement for Ofsted inspectors to distinguish between setting and banding by ability in the information recorded about lessons. [29557]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his letter has been placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell to Mr. Nick Gibb, dated 21 November 2005:

Parliamentary Questions 29556/29557/29558: Setting and Banding by Ability

Your recent parliamentary questions have been referred to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, for reply.

In sum, you asked:

the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will revise Ofsted inspection criteria to include monitoring of the proportion of classes that are banded by ability (PQ 29556)

the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what basis it was decided to remove the requirement for Ofsted inspectors to distinguish between setting and banding by ability in the information recorded about lessons (PQ 29557)

the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of lessons was recorded as banded by ability in *(a)* Year 7, *(b)* Year 8, *(c)* Year 9, *(d)* Year 10 and *(e)* Year 11 in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted in each year between 1995 and 2004 (PQ 29558).

In response to Parliamentary Question 29556, Ofsted introduced a new framework and guidance for inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 from September 2005. Although these will be kept under review, there are no plans to change them in the immediate future. The observation of lessons is no longer conducted in the same way as under the previous inspection regime (under section 10 of the School Inspections Act) and in Ofsted's view it would not be appropriate to ask inspectors to collect information about the proportion of classes that are grouped by ability on every section 5 inspection.

In response to Parliamentary Question 29557, changes were made in 2003/04 so that Ofsted had information about the level of ability of groups as well as whether pupils were grouped by ability for their lessons. The information about ability levels was not previously available. To avoid over-complexity, the distinction between banding and setting was removed. In making judgements, Ofsted felt that it was not important for inspectors to know whether pupils were grouped by ability or not, rather than knowing the precise arrangements through which this was achieved. In some schools the distinction between banding and setting is blurred.

In response to Parliamentary Question 29558, the table (see Appendix 1) includes the information you required for the years 1996/97 to 2002/03. The data were not recorded in 1995/96 and from September 2003 inspectors were not required to distinguish between setting and banding in the information they recorded about lessons.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

Appendix 1: Percentage of banded lessons, 1996 to 2003

	1996/97		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000	
Year group	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons
Year 7	27,542	6.4	16,414	8.3	22,361	5.3	17,544	4.9
Year 8	27,431	8.1	16,341	9.6	21,792	6.3	16,769	6.1
Year 9	27,161	7.5	16,692	9.2	23,489	6.6	18,810	6.6
Year 10	24,651	3.9	17,047	5.2	24,481	4.0	18,536	3.3
Year 11	38,008	3.6	17,686	4.9	24,543	3.9	18,490	3.3
Total year 7–11	144,793	5.8	84,180	7.4	116,666	5.2	90,149	4.8

	2000/01		2001/02		2002/03	
Year group	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons	Total number of lessons observed	Percentage of banded lessons
Year 7	14,011	4.9	12,532	4.6	11,257	4.5
Year 8	13,416	6.1	11,552	5.1	10,255	5.5
Year 9	16,117	6.5	14,388	5.5	13,152	5.9

Year group	2000/01 Total number of lessons observed	2000/01 Percentage of banded lessons	2001/02 Total number of lessons observed	2001/02 Percentage of banded lessons	2002/03 Total number of lessons observed	2002/03 Percentage of banded lessons
Year 10	14,802	3.7	13,212	2.7	12,073	3.1
Year 11	15,108	3.2	13,812	2.5	12,982	2.8
Total year 7–11	73,454	4.9	65,496	4.1	59,719	4.3

Notes:
1. Framework changes occurred in January 2000 and September 2003. Changes in the way groupings in lessons were recorded may mean that data are not directly comparable from periods of one framework to another.
2. From January 2000 to July 2003, the inspection arrangements included full and short inspections. The majority of lessons observed will have been in full inspections. The most effective schools had short inspections.

Access to Learning

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what response her Department has made to the report of the National Audit Office on extending access to learning through technology; and if she will make a statement. [31263]

Phil Hope: My Department welcomes the National Audit Office's report on the Ufi and the learndirect service. Overall, the report is very positive. It points out that learndirect has been innovative and, within a few years, has become the largest educational provider of its type in the world. Ufi has an ambitious plan for working more with employers. The report also highlights that more than 1.7 million people have already used learndirect's services, many of whom would not otherwise have undertaken learning.

Adult Education

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of adult education courses on the quality of life of students; and if she will make a statement. [31226]

Phil Hope: The Government believe that the most important thing we can do to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged and excluded individuals and their families is to raise their prospects of a productive, sustainable employment. This is why the priorities for public funding of adult learning are helping individuals to attain the platform of employability represented by improved basic skills and a first full level 2 qualification. In addition, work for my Department by the centre for the wider benefits of learning shows that participation in adult learning has beneficial effects on a wide spectrum of measures which relate to the quality of life both for the individual and for society as a whole. These include smoking, exercise taken, life satisfaction, and attitudes such as race tolerance, authoritarianism, political cynicism, political interest, and voting behaviour.

Autism

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* primary care trusts are making use of the autism exemplar in the disabled children's module of the National Service Framework for Children 2004. [29259]

Maria Eagle: The Government do not keep records of which local authorities and primary care trusts are using the autism exemplar which was distributed widely as part of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. The exemplars included in the National Service Framework (NSF) are designed to illustrate the key themes of the NSF. It is the decision of local authorities and primary care trusts as to whether they use the exemplars. One example of the use of the exemplar is from the West Midlands Special Educational Needs Regional Partnership which is using it as part of a set of guidelines for local authorities when identifying or diagnosing Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many copies of her Department's Early Support publication Information for Parents: Autistic spectrum disorders and related conditions have been delivered to parents since 2004. [29260]

Maria Eagle: Since this publication was published alongside other Early Support materials in June 2004, some 35,000 copies have been sent out by the Department's Publications Centre. Copies have been sent to professionals and to autism support groups, such as the National Autistic Society and the Parents' Autism Campaign for Education who helped in the writing of the booklet, to distribute to parents. Other parents have requested the booklet directly. It is not possible to say how many copies of the total distribution have gone to parents.

Belford College, Werneth

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what criteria the decision to close Belford College in Werneth, Oldham, was based; how much notice was given to parents of learners; and what alternative provision will be made. [28688]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) informed Belford College on 17 October 2005 that it would terminate its contract for the provision of education and training. Pending a final decision about the College's future, the LSC has appointed a dedicated team of educational advisers, experienced in the field of complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to ensure appropriate alternative provision is focused for the young people affected. This team has been working with parents, Connexions and other local partners to explore appropriate options for the young people. They are now finalising the details of alternative arrangements that are intended to take effect from January 2006 for all 11 learners at the College. A further meeting with parents and the LSC is planned to take place shortly.

The parents of the learners at the College were informed in a letter from their local LSC in week commencing 17 October that the LSC had made a decision to terminate the contract for the provision of education and training with Belford College from 31 December 2005. The LSC's original intention was to

give the College notice that the contract would terminate in February 2006. Following discussion with the College, the LSC agreed to the College's request to terminate the contract on 31 December 2005. The College have since requested that his date be varied and the LSC are considering this request.

The funding decision follows an Ofsted and Adult Learning Inspectorate inspection of Belford College in February 2004 when overall provision was judged to be inadequate. Since then Ofsted has undertaken a series of monitoring visits and an annual assessment visit to the college. The LSC is concerned about the rate of progress made by Belford College in addressing the weaknesses identified in the Inspection. In view of this, the LSC has made the difficult decision to terminate the College's contract.

Business Studies

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the provision of education about business and enterprise in schools in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the most recent year for which information is available; which schools offered such education in each year since 1997; what average number of hours of such education was offered to pupils of (i) primary, (ii) secondary and (iii) sixth form age groups in each year since 1997; what proportion of teachers received training in the delivery of such education in each year since 1997; and what the Government's target level of provision for such teaching is for (A) hours per week and (B) proportion of schools. [31237]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect data of the type sought, nor set targets as described.

Enterprise education is a key factor in improving future competitiveness. Following the Davies Review of 2002, in 2003 we launched Pathfinders involving 700 schools over two years, to develop the first national guidance on Enterprise Education. This was disseminated at 47 regional conferences between May and July 2005, attracting 67 per cent. of all secondary schools. Business and Enterprise Colleges came into the specialist schools programme for the first time in 2002, and in March 2005 there were 201 such specialist schools. We have allocated £60 million a year for the three academic years from September 2005 to support a new focus on enterprise education in all secondary schools.

Child Protection

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have been placed on the child protection registers by child protection committees as a result of an allegation of Munchhausen Syndrome by Proxy in each year since 2002; and how many of those children were taken into care. [30111]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect this information, as 'Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy' is not a recommended category for registration on child protection registers, nor is it a ground for the making of care orders under section 31 of the Children Act 1989.

Children's Diets

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the relationship between pupils' diet and *(a)* behaviour and *(b)* academic attainment. [25185]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has made no assessment of the relationship between pupils' diet, behaviour and academic attainment. However, a healthy, balanced diet is a key factor in protecting health and promoting children's proper growth and development.

The Food Standards Agency has recently commissioned a review on diet and behaviour in school children that will scope the evidence base to assess the effect of nutrition, diet and dietary change on school children's learning and performance (i.e. on academic tests, behaviour, attendance and motivation). The final report is expected in April 2006.

Correspondence

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter of 10 October from the hon. Member for Walsall, North regarding a school in Walsall, North constituency. [30582]

Jacqui Smith: I responded to my hon. Friend's letter on 22 November.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by her Department. [27389]

Maria Eagle: The most valuable assets owned by the departmental group are as follows:

Movable assets (net book value as at 31 March 2005)

Owning organisation	*£000*
Work Based Learning software (LSC)	3,127
Sure Start IT system (DfES)	1,707
ESF software (LSC)	1,391
Bulk furniture 2003–04 (DfES)	1,355
Bulk computers 2004–05 (DfES)	1,210
Bulk furniture 2001–02 (DfES)	1,160
Dual datacentre computer system, Moorfoot (DfES)	1,014
Bulk furniture 2000–01 (DfES)	958
Online systems software (LSC)	932
Dual datacentre computer system, London (DfES)	871

Immovable assets (net book value as at 31 March 2005)

Owning organisation	*£000*
National College for School Leadership building (DfES)	25,660
Moorfoot, Sheffield building (DfES)	13,262
Castle View House, Runcorn building (DfES)	6,662
National office major structural fit out works (LSC)	5,340
Mowden Hall, Darlington building (DfES)	3,353
Culham Estate, Oxford building (DfES)	2,104
Caxton House, London capital expenditure on lease office 1998–99 (DfES)	1,396
Bircham training centre (CITB)	1,188
Greater Manchester major structural fit out works (LSC)	1,179
Moorfoot, Sheffield land (DfES)	1,171

CITB—Construction Industry Training Board.
DfES—Department for Education and Skills.
LSC—Learning and Skills Council.

Departmental Procurement

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on her Department's procurement policy. [28179]

Bill Rammell: My Department's procurement policy is to secure value for money, primarily through competition, in accordance with the Government and wider legal framework.

It is also departmental procurement policy to promote non-discriminatory competition and selection of contractors on criteria related to the economic benefits of the contract taking sustainability and diversity into account where appropriate.

Contracts are awarded on either:

(a) a lowest price basis which is used for very straightforward or closely specified goods and services where all other aspects for example delivery or quality, are standard across the market; or

(b) an economically most advantageous basis using a combination of whole life cost and quality to meet our requirements. The emphasis on whole life costs means that our purchasers take account of all aspects of cost, including running and disposal costs, as well as the initial purchase price.

Education Funding

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education's letter to hon. Members of 21 October, on what criteria she based her decision to withdraw funding for courses on the basis of course length rather than subject matter; and if she will make a statement. [23610]

Bill Rammell: I wrote to hon. Members on 21 October setting out the Government's strategy for funding the further education sector in 2006/07 and 2007/08—enclosing the Learning and Skill Council's document 'Priorities for Success' which explains its priorities and detailed approach. The strategy will ensure that substantial additional levels of public funding for FE and training are focused on the key priorities: embedding 14–19 reforms and raising attainment of Level 2 at 19, supporting low skilled adults in acquiring basic skills and progressing from basic skills to Level 2 and above, increasing employer engagement and increasingly meeting the needs of employers, and continuing to raise standards in all areas of education and training.

Limited public funding needs to be focused on key priority areas. For example, in supporting additional provision for 16 to 19-year-olds and continuing to provide free tuition for everyone studying literacy and numeracy skills or a first full Level 2 qualification, as well as providing free tuition for those on jobseeker's allowance or income-related benefits and their dependants. One of the measures that the LSC will be taking, to ensure those key priorities are met, is to cease funding for very short courses—below nine hours. Very short Skills for Life programmes should be part of larger programmes aiming towards a qualification achievement, while other very short courses appear to have limited benefits in terms of progression for learners.

Detailed funding decisions are a matter for the Learning and Skills Council.

Education White Paper

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, what additional curriculum flexibilities will be granted to trust schools. [31591]

Jacqui Smith: Trust schools will not be granted any additional freedoms and flexibilities over and above those enjoyed by all other maintained schools.

Like all maintained schools, trust schools will be able to apply for a Power to Innovate Order, under Section 2 of the Education Act 2002, which allows the Secretary of State to lift regulatory requirements that are preventing schools from developing work focused on raising pupils' standards of achievement. The forthcoming Education Bill will include provisions to enable trusts to apply for freedoms on behalf of all of their schools.

The national curriculum already contains flexibilities which ensure that teachers are able to take account of pupils' diverse learning needs.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial allocation the Department plans to make to the improvement of school transport under the provisions of the White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All". [31592]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper proposes legislation to improve home to school travel and transport arrangements in three main respects:

By placing a general duty on local authorities to support choice and flexibility of educational provision, to assess the travel and transport needs of all pupils, and promote safe and sustainable travel to school;

By extending entitlement to free home to school transport for low income families (for secondary aged pupils to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is between two and six miles; and for primary aged pupils aged over eight, to their nearest school where this is more than two miles from their home); and

By enabling a small number of local authorities to propose Pathfinder schemes to test innovative approaches to home to school transport to support school choice, reduce the distances pupils are expected to walk to school, and increase the proportion of pupils travelling by sustainable means.

The estimated cost of the new general duty is £4 million per annum; the extension of entitlement for low income families is estimated to be £40 million per annum; and the Department will support Pathfinder schemes with £4 million pump priming and annual revenue support building up over several years to £12 million. Full costings and related assumptions will be included in the Regulatory Impact Assessment that will accompany the Bill.

Epilepsy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what boarding capacity is available in state schools for children suffering from serious epilepsy; and what plans she has to increase such capacity. [29533]

Maria Eagle: There are currently 34 maintained boarding schools in England, educating approx 32,500 pupils of which 4,500 are boarders. Maintained boarding

schools do not offer specific provision for children with epilepsy. The circumstances of each applicant with epilepsy are considered on an individual basis.

It is for local authorities to decide the pattern of school provision in their area in meeting their duty to secure sufficient schools to meet the needs of children in their area.

Epilepsy is a medical condition and for some children may have implications for the way they function in school. In March 2004 the Department, with the Department of Health, published "Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings" to provide guidance on supporting children with medical needs, sets out a clear framework within which local authorities, NHS Primary Care Trusts, schools, early years settings and families are able to work together to develop policies to ensure that children requiring medicines receive the support they need. It contains specific guidance on epilepsy.

Extracurricular Activities

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information she collects on *(a)* extra-curricular activities offered and *(b)* the percentage of students involved in extra-curricular activities in (i) primary schools, (ii) secondary schools and (iii) sixth form colleges in (A) England, (B) London and (C) Kingston and Surbiton. [31376]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not available on a regional or local authority basis. However, my Department recently commissioned MORI to undertake a survey of study support (out-of-school-hours learning) activities in England. This showed that over 90 per cent. of primary schools and over 98 per cent. of secondary schools currently offer some study support. The most popular activities are PE/sport, followed by music and ICT. In addition, 97 per cent. of secondary schools offer activities specifically designed to promote study skills or to help with homework and revision.

Family Fund

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much grant aid has been provided to the Family Fund by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* other public funding sources in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [28770]

Maria Eagle: The Family Fund was set up by the Government in 1973 to give practical help to families with severely disabled and seriously ill children under the age of 16. Since 1998 the charity has received separate funds from the Governments of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Amounts allocated in each of the last five years are as follows:

Funding provided to the Family Fund by each Government

£ million

	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
2001/02	20.8	1.4	2.2	2.2
2002/03	21.8	1.4	2.2	2.4
2003/04	22.8	1.5	2.7	2.4
2004/05	22.8	1.5	2.7	2.5
2005/06	22.8	1.6	2.8	2.5

The Family Fund provides grants direct to approximately 45,000 families per year with severely disabled children, where the family income is less than £23,000 a year. Over 90 per cent. of the Family Fund's income is paid out in grants, reflecting efficient processes and low administrative costs.

How the grant is used will depend on the needs of the family. Examples include: family holidays for those who would otherwise not have a break, washing machines and other white goods, transport costs to help ease the burden of frequent hospital visiting and other practical support.

The Fund also holds a database which contains records on over 150,000 families. The database represents well over half of the population of all families with a severely disabled child and is used by Government Departments and others to inform policy developments.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of Family Fund grants on demand for NHS services. [28771]

Maria Eagle: No specific assessment has been made on the impact of Family Fund grants on demand for NHS services. The Family Fund was set up by the Government in 1973 to give practical help to families with severely disabled and seriously ill children under the age of 16. The Fund was established in recognition of the significant additional costs involved in caring for a severely disabled child. Grants are used to increase families' quality of life and can be used to purchase family holidays for those who would otherwise not have a break, washing machines and other white goods, transport costs to help ease the burden of frequent hospital visiting and other practical support. Family Fund grants are not intended to have any impact on demand for statutory services for families with disabled children.

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list courses under nine hours which further education colleges offered in their initial prospectuses for 2005–06; and which of these she expects will be affected by the changes in funding proposed in Priorities for Success. [28755]

Bill Rammell: On 21 October 2005, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published 'Priorities for Success'-a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce. This will mean that less provision outside these priority areas can be supported at previous levels, and that there has to be a new balance of responsibilities between government, employers and learners to achieve this.

The LSC are currently seeking views of its proposed funding changes for 2006/07 including the funding of very short courses. These very short learning aims (below nine guided learning hours [glh]) currently funded by the LSC fall into four groups; very short Skills for Life programmes, University for Industry (Ufi) Learn Direct programs, very short programs within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and other very short programmes.

From 2005/06 Skills for Life courses will be incorporated into larger programmes aiming towards the achievement of qualifications and will still be funded but in a different form. University for Industry Learn Direct courses and very short learning aims accredited within the NQF will also still be funded but other very short programmes will not.

The resource required to list all relevant courses in all 2005/06 college prospectuses would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold for answering Parliamentary questions. However, the generic names for very short programmes are listed in the four groups outlined.

Very short Skills for Life programmes of between three and six guided learning hours- LSC propose to incorporate into larger programmes aiming towards the achievement of qualifications

Diagnostic Test in Numeracy, 3 glh
Short Course in Literacy, 3 glh
Short Course in Numeracy, 3 glh
Diagnostic Test in ESOL, 3 glh
Short Course in ESOL, 3 glh
Diagnostic Test in Literacy, 3 glh
Short Course in Literacy, 6 glh
Short Course in Numeracy, 6 glh
Short Course in ESOL, 6 glh

Very short University for Industry (Ufi) 'Learn Direct programs-LSC propose to continue funding

Living Room
Numbers Taster
English Skills Check
Living Room (Mac version)
Going Up
Living Room
English Skills Check (CD ROM)
Number Tasters (Print)
Number Tasters (CD ROM)
Number Tasters (Online)
Numbers Skill Check
English Skills Check (Version 2 Online)
Using percentages
Word Skills Check
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) WordProcessing MS2002
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) DB MS2000
Prepare for CLAIT Plus Electronic Communications MS2000
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) Electronic Communications MS2002
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) Databases MS2002
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) Spreadsheets MS2002
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) Presentation Graphics MS2002
Prepare for CLAIT Plus Presentation Graphics MS2000
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) WP MS2000
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) EC MS2000
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) SS MS2000
Prepare for CLAIT Plus (MOS) PG MS2000
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Literacy Level 1 Cd Rom
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Literacy Level 2 Online
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Literacy Level 2 Cd Rom
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Numeracy Level 1 Online
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Numeracy Level 1 Cd Rom
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Numeracy Level 2 Online
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Numeracy Level 2 Cd Rom
Preparing for Testing (C&G Edx) Literacy Level 1 Online
Prepare for ECDL 3 (MS 2000)
MVT: Fuel Systems-Checking System Performance
MVT: Fuel Systems- Petrol Fuel Systems
MVT: Fuel Systems-Diesel Fuel Systems
MVT: Fuel Systems-Component Inspection
MVT: Engine Lubrication: Lubrication Technology
Surf.direct
P4ECDLptl
P4ECDLpt2
Return to Learn
Surf.direct Online Version

Very short programs within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)-LSC propose to continue funding

Certificate in Risk Assessment Principles and Practice
Award in Providing a Healthier School Meals Service
Certificate in Food Hygiene
Introductory Certificate in Conflict Handling
Introductory Certificate in Hospitality Conflict Handling
Introductory Certificate in Selling
Introductory Certificate in Customer Service (Service Sector)
Foundation Certificate in Meat and Poultry Hygiene
Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of Abrasive Wheel Machines
Certificate in Food Hygiene
Diploma in Bookkeeping
National Certificate for Licensees (Drugs Awareness)
Certificate of Competence in Manual Handling Operations Risk Assessment
Certificate in Health and Safety in the Workplace
Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene
Introductory Certificate in Hospitality Customer Service
Introductory Certificate in Hospitality Selling
Foundation Certificate in Wines

Other very short programs below 9 guided learning hour-LSC propose to stop funding. In many cases colleges will continue to provide the courses, but fully funded by employers and individuals

Basic Food Hygiene Certificate—Level 1
National Award in Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations
National Award in Influencing Skills
National Award in Lifting and Slinging
National Award in Fire Risk Assessment
First Steps on Your Computer
National Award in Basic Holistic Gas Turbines
Certificate in Care Skills
Certificate in Supervisory Development
1 day Appointed Persons First Aid Course
Certificate in Retailing
Emergency First Aid for Appointed Persons
C&G 2377–01 Code of Practice-Certificate of Competent Management of Electrical Equipment
Stress Awareness
Basic Food Hygiene Certificate
Principles of Manual Handling
Principles of COSHH
First Fix Commercial Appliances
Indirect Fired Heating Appliances
Direct Fired Heating Appliances
Overhead Radiant Heaters
Practical Computing Level 1
Practical Computing Level 3
Practical Computing Level 2
Medic First Aid-Care Initiator Course
Domestic Gas Fires and Wall Heaters
Domestic Gas Fired Central Heating Boilers
Domestic Gas Cooking Appliances
Emergency Aid Certificate
Public First Aid
Working Safely
Emergency Aid for Appointed Persons
All-Terrain Vehicles-Basic
Book-keeping and Accounts Second Level
Domestic Gas Water Heater Assessment
Certificate in Customer Care
Certificate in Occupational Safety-Health & Safety in the Office
Diploma in Performance Coaching
Certificate in Food Hygiene and Handling
Emergency First Aid (Appointed Person)
Health and Safety Awareness
Certificate in Fresh Foods (Fruit and Vegetables)
Initial Assessment of Basic Skills Need (CYCOL)
Basic First Aid
Preparing for an Emergency: The British Red Cross Response
Basic First Aid at Work Certificate
RYA First Aid Certificate
Manual Handling-Patient Handling
Emergency Aid
Lifesaver First Aid Course
Emergency Aid in the Workplace for Appointed Persons
Lifesaver for Babies and Children
Emergency Aid in Schools
International/European 6 glh
Health and Safety 6 glh
Union Learning Reps 6 glh
Working in Partnership 6 glh
Skills 6 glh
Personal and Professional Development 6 glh
Information Communications Technology 6 glh
Equality 6 glh
Employment Law 6 glh
Collective Bargaining/Industrial Relations 6 glh
Work Organisation 6 glh
Pensions 6 glh
Union Representatives 6 glh

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 595W, on further education, where the input of regional development agencies complements that of other bodies in tailoring further education courses to local needs. [31259]

Bill Rammell: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC works closely with Regional Skills Partnerships, whose role is to bring together key partners including the Regional Development Agencies, the Skills for Business Network, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities, and the LSC, to ensure that emerging skills needs are identified and addressed, and that further education courses are tailored to local needs.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether data are held centrally on the attendance of students on post-16 courses. [28585]

Bill Rammell: There are no centrally held records on whether or how often students attend the courses they are registered on.

Gifted/Talented Pupils

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1178W, on gifted and talented young people, how many and what proportion of schools to date have not nominated pupils to the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth, broken down by local education authority. [31016]

Jacqui Smith: Information supplied by the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) is set out in the following table, based on latest statistics for maintained secondary schools by local education authority. This shows that 1,379 (40.74 per cent.) of maintained secondary schools have no members of NAGTY. In its first three years of operation, NAGTY has recruited members in almost 60 per cent. of maintained secondary schools. NAGTY aims to offer membership to all pupils in the top 5 per cent. by the end of 2006.

NAGTY members in maintained secondary schools by local authority and Government Office Region in England

		Number	With NAGTY members	Without NAGTY members	Percentage without NAGTY members
	England	3,385	2,006	1,379	40.74
	North East	209	143	66	31.58
841	Darlington	7	4	3	42.86
840	Durham	36	22	14	38.89
390	Gateshead	10	10	0	0.00
805	Hartlepool	6	6	0	0.00
806	Middlesbrough	6	6	0	0.00
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	17	17	0	0.00
392	North Tyneside	15	15	0	0.00
929	Northumberland	59	17	42	71.19
807	Redcar and Cleveland	11	8	3	27.27
393	South Tyneside	10	10	0	0.00
808	Stockton-on-Tees	14	12	2	14.29
394	Sunderland	18	16	2	11.11
	Northwest	476	294	182	38.24
889	Blackburn with Darwen	9	7	2	22.22
890	Blackpool	8	7	1	12.50
350	Bolton	16	10	6	37.50
351	Bury	14	7	7	50.00
875	Cheshire	44	22	22	50.00
909	Cumbria	42	23	19	45.24
876	Halton	8	7	1	12.50
340	Knowsley	11	5	6	54.55
888	Lancashire	88	43	45	51.14
341	Liverpool	32	18	14	43.75
352	Manchester	22	15	7	31.82
353	Oldham	15	11	4	26.67
354	Rochdale	14	10	4	28.57
355	Salford	15	11	4	26.67
343	Sefton	22	15	7	31.82
342	St. Helens	11	11	0	0.00
356	Stockport	14	7	7	50.00
357	Tameside	18	12	6	33.33
358	Trafford	18	9	9	50.00
877	Warrington	12	9	3	25.00
359	Wigan	21	17	4	19.05
344	Wirral	22	18	4	18.18
	Yorkshire and the Humber	325	202	123	37.85
370	Barnsley	14	14	0	0.00
380	Bradford	28	13	15	53.57
381	Calderdale	15	6	9	60.00
371	Doncaster	17	12	5	29.41
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	18	13	5	27.78
810	Kingston Upon Hull, City of	15	11	4	26.67
382	Kirklees	32	10	22	68.75
383	Leeds	41	26	15	36.59
812	North East Lincolnshire	12	3	9	75.00
813	North Lincolnshire	14	11	3	21.43
815	North Yorkshire	47	26	21	44.68
372	Rotherham	16	13	3	18.75
373	Sheffield	27	27	0	0.00
384	Wakefield	18	6	12	66.67
816	York	11	11	0	0.00
	East Midlands	300	189	111	37.00
831	Derby	13	8	5	38.46
830	Derbyshire	47	33	14	29.79
856	Leicester	16	16	0	0.00
855	Leicestershire	54	43	11	20.37
925	Lincolnshire	63	24	39	61.90
928	Northamptonshire	40	20	20	50.00
892	Nottingham	17	17	0	0.00
891	Nottinghamshire	47	28	19	40.43
857	Rutland	3	0	3	100.00
	West Midlands	414	242	172	41.55
330	Birmingham	76	32	44	57.89
331	Coventry	19	19	0	0.00
332	Dudley	22	17	5	22.73
884	Herefordshire	14	5	9	64.29
333	Sandwell	18	11	7	38.89
893	Shropshire	22	15	7	31.82
334	Solihull	13	10	3	23.08
860	Staffordshire	69	37	32	46.38
861	Stoke-on-Trent	17	12	5	29.41
894	Telford and Wrekin	13	11	2	15.38
335	Walsall	19	14	5	26.32

NAGTY members in maintained secondary schools by local authority and Government Office Region in England

		Number	With NAGTY members	Without NAGTY members	Percentage without NAGTY members
937	Warwickshire	37	26	11	29.73
336	Wolverhampton	18	8	10	55.56
885	Worcestershire	57	25	32	56.14
	East of England	427	209	218	51.05
820	Bedfordshire	57	16	41	71.93
873	Cambridgeshire	31	20	11	35.48
881	Essex	80	36	44	55.00
919	Hertfordshire	82	61	21	25.61
821	Luton	12	12	0	0.00
926	Norfolk	52	26	26	50.00
874	Peterborough	13	8	5	38.46
882	Southend-on-Sea	12	7	5	41.67
935	Suffolk	78	16	62	79.49
883	Thurrock	10	7	3	30.00
	London	406	260	146	35.96
	Inner London	133	87	46	34.59
202	Camden	9	7	2	22.22
201	City of London	0	0	0	0.00
204	Hackney	8	6	2	25.00
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	9	8	1	11.11
309	Haringey	10	5	5	50.00
206	Islington	9	0	9	100.00
207	Kensington and Chelsea	4	3	1	25.00
208	Lambeth	10	6	4	40.00
209	Lewisham	13	6	7	53.85
316	Newham	15	10	5	33.33
210	Southwark	12	12	0	0.00
211	Tower Hamlets	16	11	5	31.25
212	Wandsworth	10	6	4	40.00
213	Westminster	8	7	1	12.50
	Outer London	273	173	100	36.63
301	Barking and Dagenham	9	7	2	22.22
302	Barnet	20	10	10	50.00
303	Bexley	16	6	10	62.50
304	Brent	13	13	0	0.00
305	Bromley	18	9	9	50.00
306	Croydon	21	17	4	19.05
307	Ealing	12	11	1	8.33
308	Enfield	17	5	12	70.59
203	Greenwich	15	8	7	46.67
310	Harrow	10	8	2	20.00
311	Havering	18	14	4	22.22
312	Hillingdon	16	9	7	43.75
313	Hounslow	14	12	2	14.29
314	Kingston upon Thames	10	6	4	40.00
315	Merton	8	3	5	62.50
317	Redbridge	17	13	4	23.53
318	Richmond upon Thames	8	8	0	0.00
319	Sutton	14	7	7	50.00
320	Waltham Forest	17	7	10	58.82
	South East	503	277	226	44.93
867	Bracknell Forest	6	2	4	66.67
846	Brighton and Hove	10	7	3	30.00
825	Buckinghamshire	34	14	20	58.82
845	East Sussex	27	13	14	51.85
850	Hampshire	71	45	26	36.62
921	Isle of Wight	21	9	12	57.14
886	Kent	104	46	58	55.77
887	Medway	19	7	12	63.16
826	Milton Keynes	10	7	3	30.00
931	Oxfordshire	34	29	5	14.71
851	Portsmouth	10	7	3	30.00
870	Reading	7	4	3	42.86
871	Slough	11	4	7	63.64
852	Southampton	14	6	8	57.14
936	Surrey	53	32	21	39.62
869	West Berkshire	10	8	2	20.00
938	West Sussex	40	22	18	45.00
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	13	8	5	38.46
872	Wokingham	9	7	2	22.22
	South West	325	190	135	41.54
800	Bath and North East Somerset	13	5	8	61.54
837	Bournemouth	10	4	6	60.00
801	Bristol, City of	17	17	0	0.00
908	Cornwall	31	23	8	25.81
878	Devon	37	26	11	29.73

NAGTY members in maintained secondary schools by local authority and Government Office Region in England

		Number	With NAGTY members	Without NAGTY members	Percentage without NAGTY members
835	Dorset	36	15	21	58.33
916	Gloucestershire	42	16	26	61.90
420	Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0.00
802	North Somerset	10	6	4	40.00
879	Plymouth	17	10	7	41.18
836	Poole	9	3	6	66.67
933	Somerset	39	30	9	23.08
803	South Gloucestershire	14	7	7	50.00
866	Swindon	10	9	1	10.00
880	Torbay	8	3	5	62.50
865	Wiltshire	32	16	16	50.00

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 118W, on gifted and talented youth, how many members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth there are in each school in West Sussex. [31017]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is given in the following table.

Table 1: Members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth in West Sussex by school attended

School	Membership numbers by school
Bishop Luffa Church of England School, Chichester	1
Boundstone Community College	23
Chichester High School for Boys	1
Christ's Hospital	1
Downlands Community School	1
Felpham Community College	1
Great Ballard School	1
Holy Trinity C of E Secondary School, Crawley	87
Hurstpierpoint College Senior School	9
Lavant House Rosemead	4
Midhurst Intermediate School	1
Millais School	28
Oakmeeds Community College	20
Oathall Community College	1
Seaford College	2
St. Andrew's C of E High School for Boys	1
Steyning Grammar School	1
The Angmering School	67
The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham	6
The Forest School	42
The Rydon Community College	2
Thomas Bennett Community College	1
Warden Park School	2
Worth School	1
Worthing High School	16
Total	320

This information is correct as at 18 November 2005

Higher Education

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of people aged 18 to 30 years entered higher education in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003, *(d)* 2004 and *(e)* 2005; [26786]

(2) if she will make a statement on the non-completion rate in higher education in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003, *(d)* 2004 and *(e)* 2005. [26787]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures are shown in the tables. The percentage of people aged 17 to 30 years entering higher education in 2004 will be published in April 2006; projected non-completion rates for students starting courses in 2003 will be published in July 2006. The figures in the tables show that, since 1999/2000, participation rates have risen and non-completion rates have fallen. Figures published in 2005 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that in 2003 the UK had one of the lowest non-completion rates among OECD countries.

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) for English domiciled first degree entrants (full-time and part-time) to higher education courses from 1999/2000 to 2003/04

Students starting courses in:	Percentage of 17 to 30-year-olds entering HE
1999/2000	41
2000/01	42
2001/02	42
2002/03	43
2003/04	43

Source:

DfES National Statistics Statistical First Release 14/2005, "Participation Rates in Higher Education: Academic Years 1999/2000—2003/2004 (Provisional)". Calculations are based on data provided by HESA and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Percentage of UK domiciled full-time first degree starters expected neither to obtain an award nor transfer, UK higher education institutions 1999/2000 to 2002/03

Students starting courses in:	Projected non-completion rate
1999/2000	15.9
2000/01	15.0
2001/02	14.1
2002/03	14.4
2003/04	n/a

n/a—not available

Source:

"Performance Indicators in Higher Education", published by HESA. For 2002/03, the projected outcomes summarise the pattern of movements of students at institutions between 2002/03 and 2003/04 and give the outcomes that would have been expected from starters in 2002/03 if progression patterns for the years after 2003/04 were to remain unchanged. The HESA data show the proportion of entrants who are projected to: obtain a qualification (either a first degree or another undergraduate award); transfer to another HEI; neither obtain a qualification nor transfer (i.e. fail to complete the course).

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff are employed in universities in England. [29281]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information is given in the following table:

All staff in higher education institutions in England 2003/04

	Full-time	*Part-time*
Academic staff	86,015	38,125
Non academic staff	96,935	56,450
Total	182,950	94,575

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of those studying science in higher education took *(a)* dual award science GCSE and *(b)* separate sciences at GCSE in the last period for which figures are available. [28582]

Bill Rammell: The information is not held centrally. The Higher Education Statistics Agency collects data on the entry qualifications held by entrants to Higher Education Institutions, which records the highest level of qualification held (e.g. A level, GCSE) but does not specify the specific subjects obtained by the student at these levels.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in her Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if she will list them. [26593]

Maria Eagle: One only—the Individual Learning Account (ILA) Programme[1].

[1] House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2003), "Individual Learning Accounts", Tenth Report of Session 2002–03 (Ref: HC 544), ISO, London.

Key Stage 3

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has undertaken into the merits of *(a)* reducing the period of teaching at Key Stage 3 from three years to two years and *(b)* reducing the number of teachers pupils see at (i) Key Stage 3 on (ii) attainment at Key Stage 3 and (iii) Key Stage 4. [31188]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is currently running a pilot exploring the condensed Key Stage 3 curriculum, which began in 2003. The Department has commissioned an independent evaluation of the pilot which is due to report at the end of 2006. The pilot is also being evaluated by Ofsted; due to report in December 2005.

The Department is also running a pilot aimed at raising the achievement of low attaining pupils and a small part of this pilot explores teaching approaches at Key Stage 3. A report on the first year is currently available for the schools and local authorities involved.

Labour Force Survey

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) for what reasons she has decided to use Labour Force Survey data for the purpose of assessing need for youth services; [29992]

(2) if she will reverse her decision to use Labour Force Survey data in place of Connexions Service data for the purpose of assessing need for youth services. [29993]

Maria Eagle: The Labour Force Survey is not used to assess need for youth services. Through our Every Child Matters reforms we are giving local authorities and their partners through children's trusts increasing freedom to make local assessments of the need for particular services and allocate resources accordingly. Data collected by Connexions Services is a powerful tool for partners to use in planning and commissioning services for young people, and this local data is used in assessing local performance.

The national public service agreement target for reducing the proportion of 16–18-year-olds not in education, employment and training is measured using the DfES annual participation estimates, which use the Labour Force Survey as one component. These statistics are a measurement of the overall impact of policies—not of the need for youth services.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanism is used for providing funds to the Learning and Skills Council additional to those set out in the grant letter, with particular reference to funds for administrative costs. [30815]

Bill Rammell: Each autumn the Department sets out its priorities and funding for the LSC in an annual grant letter. Where the need for additional resources for the LSC is identified the Department and the LSC agree the level of funding, including any additional administration costs. Funding to cover administrative costs is based on the clear demonstration of need. When agreement is reached the additional resources are formally notified, in writing, to the LSC as additions to the grant letter. The LSC's core administration costs have fallen steadily from 3.4 per cent. of total funding in 2001–02 to 2.5 per cent. of its planned total budget in 2005–06. Using the figures in LSC annual accounts for 2001–02, which include the set up costs occurred in the last seven months of 2000–01, gives the administration budget as 4.6 per cent. of total funding.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the restructuring of the Learning and Skills Council on 16 to 19 education. [31616]

Bill Rammell: The LSC's proposed restructuring is designed to achieve better focus and more consistent delivery at a local level through the creation of 148 local partnership teams. These partnership teams will lead and support the 14–19 agenda which is the LSC's number one priority. The LSC has a duty to provide quality provision for 16 to 19-year-olds and the grant letter, issued earlier this month, reiterated the aim of boosting participation rates, raising the quality of vocational provision and extending choice to learners.

Learning Methods

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official*

Report, column 1181W, on learning methods, whether learning multiplication facts up to 10x10 is identical to learning multiplication tables up to 10x10. [30939]

Jacqui Smith: By learning the multiplication tables up to 10x10, a child would learn all the individual multiplication facts up to 10x10.

Milwaukee Charter Schools Programme

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions representatives of her Department had with US *(a)* educators and officials concerned with the Milwaukee charter schools programme and *(b)* policy institutes during their recent visit to the US; and what assessment they have made of the programme. [30628]

Jacqui Smith: The discussions held with educators and officials concerned with the Milwaukee charter schools' programme included the teaching and learning strategies and curriculum used to engage and motivate young people; the implications of teacher led schools and the accountability systems in place to quality assure provision.

The official made the following observations based on his visit to Milwaukee:

1. The inclusive nature of new charter school creation has encouraged the involvement of people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Their expertise and enthusiasm helps practitioners see things from a different angle.

2. There is little intervention or co-ordinated response to prevent fragile charter schools from failing; although there is expertise in the system to share good practice to build capacity and ensure consistency of approach.

Ministerial Correspondence

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of ministerial correspondence from her Department was signed in a Minister's absence in the last period for which figures are available. [23644]

Bill Rammell: Information on ministerial letters is not collected in this form.

Music Teaching

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she plans to announce the details of annual funding arrangements for the promotion of music tuition in schools. [30696]

Jacqui Smith: Annual funding arrangements for the promotion of music tuition in schools will be announced in the near future, as part of the schools funding settlement.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in her Department were affected by the increase in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28930]

Maria Eagle: None of the staff in my Department were affected by the increase in the national minimum wage on 1 October 2005.

Nuffield Review

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect funding her Department has made to the Annual Nuffield Review of 14–19 Education and Training. [28180]

Bill Rammell: The Department has not made any direct or indirect funding to the Nuffield Review. This piece of work was funded entirely by the Nuffield Foundation itself.

Parental Rights

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure the rights of fathers are considered in legal disputes concerning parental rights; and what assessment she has made of the extent to which the current system considers the rights of fathers. [26998]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Government's position is that the needs of children, and not the rights of parents, should be at the heart of the law. The courts are required to have the welfare of the child as their paramount consideration in determining any question in relation to their upbringing. This paramountcy principle is focused on the child, and there is no legal bias toward or against either parent.

The Government take very seriously the need to support both parents in seeking to know and love their children, and we believe firmly that it is normally in the child's best interest to have a meaningful relationship with both parents.

Following on from the parental separation Green Paper, "Making Contact Work", we are introducing a raft of measures to support parents and children, both in legal disputes and in avoiding those disputes in the first place, through rolling out in-court conciliation, revising and updating parenting plans, launching a telephone helpline later this year, making new arrangements to incentivise solicitors to promote successful out-of-court contact settlements and increasing the availability of child contact centres.

On the more technical matter of parental responsibility (PR), fathers who have PR for their children have exactly the same level of rights and responsibilities as any other party with PR. We introduced new provisions to allow fathers to register as a child's parent through the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

Anyone with parental responsibility has all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property, including being consulted over important changes in the child's life, such as a change of name or taking the child abroad for longer than one month, and being entitled to information about the child such as school reports.

Plumbers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people undertook courses leading to a qualification in plumbing in each of the last 10 years. [31300]

Phil Hope: According to the National Information System for Vocational Qualifications (NISVQ), the number of awards of accredited qualifications in plumbing in the United Kingdom over the last 10 years is given in the following table:

	Number of awards (to the nearest 100)
1994/95	1,400
1995/96	2,500
1996/97	2,800
1997/98	2,700
1998/99	2,600
1999/2000	3,400
2000/01	3,900
2001/02	5,500
2002/03	8,600
2003/04	10,700

Note:
The National Information System for Vocational Qualifications (NISVQ) has been collecting information from awarding bodies on the achievement of vocational qualifications in the United Kingdom since 1992/93. The number of awarding bodies contributing data has risen from five in 1992/93 to 13 in 1997/98, 24 in 2002/03 and 36 in 2003/04 (the latest year for which information is available).

Source:
NISVQ.

Polish Resettlement Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of section 6 of the Polish Resettlement Act 1947. [29846]

Phil Hope: Section 6 of the Polish Resettlement Act 1947 was repealed by the Statute Law (Repeals) Act 2004. The provision was proposed for repeal by the Law Commission because it was no longer needed. The repeal took effect on 22 July 2004.

Positive Learning Environment

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by her Department to foster a positive learning environment for pupils *(a)* within schools, *(b)* at home and *(c)* within the community. [26173]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is taking a range of steps to ensure a positive learning environment for pupils.

We are supporting schools in making sure that each classroom is a positive and orderly place where pupils are free to learn. Our National Primary and Secondary Strategies are improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. We are also implementing a complementary and comprehensive programme of measures to strengthen schools' capacity to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance, which includes access to high-quality training for all school staff and extra support for schools facing the greatest challenges. In addition, we are currently considering the recommendations made in the recently published report by the Practitioners' Group to determine what else can be done to promote good behaviour in schools.

The Department's Extended Schools' programme aims to promote, encourage and develop links between schools and their communities, effectively making the school the heart of the community.

We want to help parents and schools to work well together and raise children's achievement. It is crucial we ensure that the importance of parental involvement is embedded throughout the education chain to establish a culture of parental involvement and encourage a positive, two-way partnership.

To enable this, we are actively encouraging parents to become more closely involved in their children's education and learning at home and at school by providing information for parents such as the Learning Journey guides and the Parents Centre website; and materials for schools such as the Involving Parents, Raising Achievement toolkit.

The family learning programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council enable parents and their children to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills together.

All these measures support the creation of a positive learning environment in schools, at home and in the community, as they all include an emphasis on work with parents and raising awareness of children and young people's position and responsibilities in the communities in which they live.

Schools

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have started primary schools in West Sussex in each of the last 10 years; and what her projections are for the next five years. [28233]

Jacqui Smith: The requested time series is not available due to changes in the way that information is collected on new admissions to primary schools. The table shows the number of four and five-year-olds in maintained primary schools in West Sussex from 1996 to 2005.

The Department does not produce projections of numbers of pupils starting schools in individual local authorities. The Department has recently released pupil number projections at local authority level for 2006 and 2007 which it plans to use in setting authorities' Dedicated Schools Grant guaranteed units of funding. These projections are for all children aged three to 15 funded by authorities. They can be seen at the following address: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9224

Maintained primary schools: number of pupils aged four and five[1] Position in January each year. West Sussex local authority

	Pupils aged:	
	Four	*Five*
1996	5,990	8,470
1997	6,120	8,510
1998	7,850	8,580
1999	8,060	8,250
2000	7,930	8,430
2001	7,900	8,190
2002	7,970	8,100
2003	7,970	8,160

Maintained primary schools: number of pupils aged four and five[1] Position in January each year. West Sussex local authority

	Pupils aged: Four	Five
2004	7,870	8,100
2005	7,760	8,020

[1] Age as at 31 August the previous year.
Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many *(a)* unitary and *(b)* metropolitan local authorities have received claims for compensation for (i) sexual and (ii) physical abuse in residential schools in the last five years; [28788]

(2) which local authorities have received claims for compensation for *(a)* sexual and *(b)* physical abuse in residential schools; and what the total value of such claims was in respect of each authority in 2004–05; [28789]

(3) how much has been paid in compensation to complainants by local authorities for *(a)* sexual and *(b)* physical abuse in residential schools since 1992. [28790]

Maria Eagle: My Department does not hold this information.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* classroom assistants and *(b)* full-time equivalent classroom assistant posts there were in schools in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25808]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in maintained sector schools, including pupil referral units, in Hemel Hempstead constituency in January of each year.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching assistant posts in Hemel Hempstead is not collected centrally.

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants[1] in maintained sector schools[2], including pupil referral units, in Hemel Hempstead constituency

	Teaching assistants FTE
1997	100
1998	130
1999	140
2000	180
2001[3]	220
2002	180
2003	290
2004	300
2005	340

[1] Includes teaching assistants, special needs support staff and ethnic minority support staff.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
[3] Data for 2001 may be affected by misclassification of support staff roles following major changes to information systems.
Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual School Census

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what remuneration was received by her adviser on specialist schools in each year since 1996. [23422]

Jacqui Smith: The adviser to the Secretary of State on specialist schools and academies, Sir Cyril Taylor, has not received remuneration for this position since his original appointment in 1987. His appointment is on a part-time and voluntary basis.

Special Educational Needs

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that children with autism receive the educational support they need. [29698]

Maria Eagle: Schools and local authorities have duties under the Education Act 1996 to identify, assess and make suitable provision for all children with special educational needs (SEN), including those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs). In making provision for children with SEN schools and local authorities have to have regard to statutory guidance set out in the SEN Code of Practice. With the Department of Health, we have also published non-statutory Good Practice Guidance on ASDs (2002) some 30,000 copies of which have been distributed on demand. The Guidance is designed to raise awareness and to give providers a tool with which to audit and develop their provision. The Department is aware that the Guidance is being used in this way by schools, local authorities and the Departmentally-funded SEN Regional Partnerships, nine of the 11 of which have established autism working groups.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to include compulsory modules on *(a)* identifying children with special educational needs and *(b)* developing appropriate teaching methods for them within initial teacher training courses. [29701]

Maria Eagle: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1002–03W, in response to her earlier question on training to equip the education workforce with the skills needed to improve attainment among pupils with special educational needs. That answer explained the SEN requirements already in place for teachers undergoing initial training and induction.

As part of a review of professional standards, including those for Qualified Teacher Status, the Training and Development Agency for Schools will be looking at whether there is a need to strengthen the Standards relating to special educational needs and inclusion. The Agency will also consider whether there is a case for expanding associated guidance. The Department will of course contribute to this process.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that special educational needs co-ordinators have appropriate training for the role they undertake. [29702]

Maria Eagle: Special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) are appointed by headteachers. It is for individual schools and their maintaining local authorities to arrange appropriate induction and

training. This would need to have regard to the existing experience and knowledge of the individual acting as SENCO, and the range and complexity of special educational needs represented within the school. Schools may use their School Development Grant to arrange appropriate training.

I would also refer my hon. Friend to the reply on SENCO qualifications and experience given on 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 810W.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils are in special needs schools in Surrey; how many pupils with special educational needs are in mainstream schools in Surrey; and how many special needs schools have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in Surrey since 1997. [30187]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is shown in the tables.

All special schools: number of pupils [1]—Surrey local authority area

January 2005	*Total pupils*
Maintained special	1,928
Non-maintained special	538

[1] Excludes dually registered pupils

Source:
Annual Schools Census

Mainstream schools: number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) by type of school—January 2005

Surrey local authority area	
Nursery	
Pupils on roll	348
Pupils with statements	12
% Pupils with statements	3.4
Pupils with SEN without a statement	60
% Pupils with SEN without a statement	17.2
Primary	
Pupils on roll	78,780
Pupils with statements	1,682
% Pupils with statements	2.1
Pupils with SEN without a statement	13,128
% Pupils with SEN without a statement	16.7
Secondary	
Pupils on roll	59,361
Pupils with statements	1,252
% Pupils with statements	2.1
Pupils with SEN without a statement	9,051
% Pupils with SEN without a statement	15.2

Source:
Annual Schools Census

Since 1997, there has been one non-maintained special school which has opened and one maintained special school has closed in Surrey local authority area.

Source:
Edubase

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many employees have been dismissed by her Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29126]

Maria Eagle: The number of Department for Education and Skills employees dismissed in each of the last five calendar years is as follows:

	Number
2000	8
2001	3
2002	5
2003	1
2004	3

University Staff

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average weekly number of hours was spent by full-time academic staff teaching undergraduates in universities in 2004–05. [29028]

Bill Rammell: The information is not held centrally. The Higher Education Statistics Agency collects data annually on staff in all higher education institutions in the UK, but does not collect any data on class contact time.

HEALTH

Abortion Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what advice her Department issues to members of the public wishing to report alleged abuses of the terms of the Abortion Act 1967; and if she will make a statement; [28200]

(2) how many allegations of abuse of the terms of the Abortion Act 1967 were made to her Department by *(a)* members of the public and *(b)* doctors in each of the last 20 years for which figures are available; and how many were dismissed for lack of evidence. [28201]

Caroline Flint: The Department has not issued any specific advice to members of the public about reporting alleged abuses of the Abortion Act. However, any member of the public has the right to raise any concern about abortion or any other medical procedure.

All allegations received about abortion are investigated and appropriate action taken. Information about the allegations received over the last 20 years can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Accident and Emergency Provision

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she will take to ensure the future provision of accident and emergency services to the residents of South East Hertfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [26192]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Decisions about the priorities and types of services that are available to South East Hertfordshire are made by the primary care trust based on the needs of the population it serves. This includes the siting of services.

Alcohol Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of the results of the national audit of available alcohol services. [30743]

Caroline Flint: A copy of the Alcohol Needs Assessment Research Project is available in the Library.

Alcohol-related Illnesses

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people under the age of 30 years in the area corresponding most closely to Lancaster and Wyre constituency were treated for alcohol-related illnesses *(a)* in the last 12 months and *(b)* in each year since 1997. [20514]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not held centrally on a constituency basis. The most current information available is shown in the following table.

Count of finished consultant episodes for selected alcohol related diseases in Lancaster and Wyre national health service hospitals, 1997–98 to 2003–04

Count of finished consultant episodes for selected alcohol related diseases in Lancaster and Wyre national health service hospitals, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes
1997–98	41
1998–99	39
1999–2000	39
2000–01	42
2001–02	57
2002–03	76
2003–04	39

Notes:

1. Finished consultant episode (FCE):
A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis):
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14, seven prior to 2002–03, diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:
F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
K70: Alcoholic liver disease
T51: Toxic effect of alcohol
3. Ungrossed Data:
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:
"Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre"

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people under the age of 30 years in the area corresponding most closely to West Lancashire constituency were treated for alcohol-related illnesses *(a)* in the last 12 months and *(b)* in each year since 1997. [27862]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Counts of finished consultant episodes and patients where there was a primary diagnosis for alcohol related diseases in West Lancashire NHS Hospitals 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
1997–98	34	32
1998–99	23	22
1999–2000	28	26
2000–01	32	23

Counts of finished consultant episodes and patients where there was a primary diagnosis for alcohol related diseases in West Lancashire NHS Hospitals 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
2001–02	26	23
2002–03	16	15
2003–04	37	34

Notes:

1. Finished Consultant Episode (FCE)
An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. Patient counts
Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HESID. This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.
3. Diagnosis (Primary Diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
4. Ungrossed data
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (ie the data are ungrossed).

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre

Ambulance Service (Hertfordshire)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were conveyed by ambulance to the Accident and Emergency departments of *(a)* Hemel Hempstead general hospital and *(b)* Watford general hospital in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [26848]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in Manchester triage system categories one and two were conveyed by ambulance to the accident and emergency departments of *(a)* Hemel Hempstead general hospital and *(b)* Watford general hospital in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [26849]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to put in place contracts to secure year-round supplies of eggs as described in the UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan. [23210]

Caroline Flint: It is the responsibility of vaccine manufacturers to make sure that they have contracts in place to ensure that they have a sufficient supply of eggs to fulfil their contracts to supply vaccine. The Department has met with manufacturers to discuss their preparedness for a possible pandemic.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the mechanisms by which mutagenesis towards human host adaptation could arise in relation to H5N1 avian influenza virus, with particular reference to the combination of clades within the host *(a)* from the same strain and *(b)* from different strains of the virus. [23987]

Caroline Flint: The mechanism by which one or any H5 avian virus adapts to humans is likely to be the same regardless of the clade, or strain. No data exist on this but we have no reason to believe that the mechanism of mutagenesis would be different for one versus any other strain.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice has been given *(a)* directly and *(b)* via health professionals to those people assessed as being most at risk from simultaneous co-infection of the H5N1 and a human host adapted influenza virus. [24017]

Caroline Flint: H5N1 is currently an avian influenza virus which mainly affects birds. We are working to ensure that both health professionals and the public have access to information about both avian and pandemic flu. The Chief Medical Officer has produced an explanatory guide which explains the difference between avian flu, seasonal flu and pandemic flu. A public information leaflet, Frequently Asked Questions and Key Facts sheets have also been developed. These are available on the Department's website and have been distributed to primary care professionals, to enable them to answer questions from members of the public.

The Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) generic exotic animal disease contingency plan includes provisions on health and safety for poultry workers and other stakeholders in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. This was supplemented by additional advice published on 31 October. Both documents are available on DEFRA's website at: www.defra.gov.uk.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the potential for virulence in avian influenza H5N1 to be replicated in a human host adapted strain following mutagenesis. [24023]

Caroline Flint: The virus causing human clinical H5N1 infection is highly virulent in birds but it remains an avian virus. There are little data available to indicate whether it will retain that virulence if it mutates into a human virus.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the safety of chicken and turkey products in the context of avian influenza. [27106]

Caroline Flint: On the basis of current scientific evidence, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises that avian influenza does not pose a food safety risk for United Kingdom consumers. This is because for people, the risk of catching the disease is from being in close contact with live poultry that have the disease and not through eating cooked poultry.

The FSA advises that poultry should always be cooked thoroughly before being eaten to avoid food poisoning due to salmonella and campylobacter.

Blood Tests (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have experienced delays in 2005–06 in receiving the results of blood tests because of staff shortages at Gravesend and North Kent hospitals. [28598]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Breast Cancer

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether primary care trusts (PCTs) are required to make herceptin available to women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer; and what guidance her Department has given to PCTs on this matter. [28324]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* As with other unlicensed drugs, it is down to individual clinicians to decide whether to prescribe herceptin. The clinician makes these decisions after discussions with the woman about the potential risks and taking into account her medical history.

The clinician's decision does, however, need to be supported by the primary care trust (PCT) as the PCT has to decide whether to support the clinician's decision and pay for herceptin.

On 25 October, I announced that PCTs should not refuse to fund herceptin solely on the grounds of cost, or rule out treatments on principle. They should consider individual circumstances.

The position on herceptin has been communicated to the national health service via the chief executive's bulletin of 10 November 2005. This bulletin is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has *(a)* issued and *(b)* plans to issue to primary care trusts regarding the prescribing of Herceptin, with particular reference to Bolton primary care trust. [28494]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:*

The position on the prescribing of herceptin has been communicated to the national health service via the chief executive's bulletin of 10 November 2005. This bulletin is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk. The guidance is aimed at all primary care trusts, including Bolton.

Carers

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her assessment is of the effects of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 on carers. [27006]

Mr. Byrne: The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 has been warmly welcomed by carers and the organisations that represent them. However, it is currently too early to have hard data on the effect of the new Act on carers.

Monitoring is being undertaken through the Commission for Social Care Inspection's performance assessment framework and data is collected via the referrals, assessments and packages of care return.

Childhood Vaccinations

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate of each vaccine offered as part of the routine childhood vaccination programme has been *(a)* in total and *(b)* in each (i) primary care trust and (ii) strategic health authority in each quarter since the quarter ending June 1997. [28667]

Caroline Flint: Annual England data for years 1997 to 2005 are available from national health service immunisation statistics on the department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/publicationsandstatistics/statistics/statisticalworkarea.

Quarterly cover of vaccination evaluated rapidly reports for the same period are available on the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) website at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/vaccination/vac_cover.htm.

Primary care trust (PCT) and strategic health authority (SHA) data is only available from April 2002. Annual data for PCTs and SHAs can be accessed in NHS Immunisation Statistics, England 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05 bulletins (tables seven and eight) from the Department's web link. Quarterly SHA tables are available from the above HPA link. PCT quarterly data is not published.

Children's Food

Mr. McFadden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with leading supermarket chains concerning reducing the *(a)* sugar, *(b)* salt and *(c)* fat content in children's food. [27115]

Caroline Flint: The chair of the Food Standards Agency and I have recently started a series of joint meetings with a number of the leading supermarket chains to discuss their plans to reduce salt, fat and sugar in all foods. The first of these meetings took place at the start of November, and others are scheduled through to the middle of December.

Dacorum Primary Care Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on expenditure by Dacorum primary care trust of the introduction of new contracts for *(a)* pharmacists, *(b)* dentists and *(c)* other frontline staff; and if she will make a statement. [26876]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No assessment has been made on Dacorum primary care trust's expenditure in relation to the new contracts for pharmacists, dentists and other frontline staff.

Dementia

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department is funding into the treatment and cure of cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarcts and leucoencephalopathy; what NHS treatments are available for this condition; and if she will make a statement. [29508]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC is currently funding one research grant of relevance to cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarcts and leucoencephalopathy (CADASIL). The MRC is additionally supporting a considerable programme of underpinning research in both neurology and genetics that may lead to a greater understanding of the condition.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of current and completed individual projects, including a number concerned with CADASIL, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

There is currently no specific treatment available for CADASIL, although the associated migraine, anxiety and depression can be controlled using standard treatments. The recently published national service framework for long-term conditions focuses on the health and social care needs for people living with neurological conditions, including those with CADASIL.

Dentistry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have de-registered children from NHS work in each primary care trust in Gloucestershire in the last year for which figures are available. [25368]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect this information in the format requested.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many dentists serve the Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth Primary Care Trust; [26157]

(2) how many dentists in Tamworth constituency *(a)* operate fully within the NHS and *(b)* only offer NHS treatment for children. [26160]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 30 September 2005, there were 71 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust (PCT).

As at 30 September 2005, there were 38 NHS dentists with a GDS or PDS contract within Tamworth parliamentary constituency.

The data source is the Dental Practice Board. A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with the PCT. The Dental Practice Board has no information concerning the amount of time dedicated to private or NHS work by individual dentists.

Information about who dentists offer to treat is not collected centrally. However, an analysis of NHS patient registrations data as at 1 June 2005 show that within Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth PCT there was one dentist having only children registered. This analysis is not available at parliamentary constituency area.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role the Dental Practice Board will play in the Business Services Authority from 1 April 2006. [26804]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The existing functions of the Dental Practice Board will be absorbed into the Business Services Authority from April 2006. The Dental Practice Board will be abolished on 31 March 2006.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether flexible funding will be given to primary care trusts in 2006–07 in relation to the implementation of the new general dental services contract. [26807]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts' (PCTs) budgets for local dental services in 2006–07 will reflect the historic spend in general dental services, personal dental services, emergency dental services and salaried dentists. We are currently finalising decisions on the level of any growth in this budget. PCTs will also have the flexibility to invest additional resources from within their main budgets allocations if they wish.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to initiate a review of the conclusions of the 2004 dental work force study. [26813]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no current plans to initiate a review on the conclusions of the 2004 dental work force study. We shall, however, wish to look again at future work force requirements once the impact of the new local commissioning arrangements for dentistry from April 2006 can be taken into account.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Polish dentists worked for the NHS in the last year for which figures are available. [26839]

Ms Rosie Winterton: At the start of November 2005, there were 312 national health service dentists with a general dental services or personal dental services contract in England, who were qualified in Poland.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent per capita on NHS dentistry in West Lancashire in each of the last five years. [27659]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Estimated spend per capita on the general dental service (GDS) in West Lancashire Primary Care Trust for the financial years ending 31 March 2001 to 2005

West Lancashire	*£ per capita*
2001	23.74
2002	25.30
2003	26.55
2004	29.86
2005	27.17

Note:
During 2004–05, the proportion of dentists working in personal dentist service (PDS) increased from 7 per cent. to 23 per cent. This will lead to a significant break in the GDS spend per capita series. Comparable data on PDS expenditure are not held centrally.

Expenditure has been defined as gross fees plus commitment payments less patient charges. This excludes some payments to dentists.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will take steps to prevent private dentistry practices from actively persuading dentists to leave the NHS. [28277]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is not the role of the Department to intervene in individual discussions between one dental practitioner and another. However, we are actively promoting the benefits of the new national health service dental contracts to dentists, for instance through communication to all NHS dentists from the Chief Dental Officer and meetings with local groups of dentists across the country.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many calls to NHS Direct were about NHS dentistry in the latest month for which figures are available; and what percentage of those callers were advised of NHS dentists they could *(a)* register with and *(b)* be treated by within locally agreed standards. [18890]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The data requested is not centrally collected. However, it may be available locally from NHS Direct and the hon. Member may wish to contact the Chairman of NHS Direct for details.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will compensate pensioners for private dental charges incurred where NHS dental treatment is not available. [24279]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In England, we have no plans to compensate pensioners for private dental charges. Our programme of investment in national health service dentistry has been focused on increasing the number of dentists providing NHS services and improving access for patients. Since 2003–04, we have invested approximately £250 million in primary dental care services in England.

Departmental Estate

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 760W, on Departmental Land Property, if she will list all properties in London that her Department is renting that are empty; when they were last in use; and what was the amount spent in rent of these properties in the last year for which figures are available. [28736]

Jane Kennedy: The following former Community Health Council premises vacated in December 2003 are currently vacant and for these the Department is currently paying rent. Having established that there was no national health service interest they have been actively marketed.

22–24 High Road, Willesden-annual rent £29,375. A notice to break the lease from June 2006 has been served.

128 The Grove, Stratford-annual rent £24,000. An assignment of the lease to a third party is imminent.

42 Fulham Palace Road, Fulham-annual rent £28,000. The lease expires in December 2005.

45–47 Praed Street, Paddington-annual rent £130,000. Part sub-let at £72,000 per annum.

Departmental IT Projects

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list for each IT project her Department

has undertaken since May 1997 which has incurred a total expenditure of £5 million or more, *(a)* the name of the project, *(b)* its intended purpose, *(c)* the principal contractors involved and the payments made to each, *(d)* the original estimate of the cost of the project, *(e)* the actual outturn of expenditure on the project, *(f)* the intended date on which the project was to be fully implemented, *(g)* the actual date on which it was fully implemented or cancelled, *(h)* modifications which have been made to the project since it was first commissioned, *(i)* contractors on the project whose contracts have been cancelled, *(j)* replacement or additional contractors on the project, *(k)* the most reliable estimate of public expenditure saved as a result of implementing the project and *(l)* the most reliable estimates of improved performance of departmental functions as a result of implementing the project. [20624]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Departmental Secondment

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many officers seconded from accountancy houses are working in her Department; and how many of her officials have worked on secondment to outside accountancy houses. [20737]

Jane Kennedy: The Department's human resource (HR) system does not currently show where a person has been seconded to or from. The total number of staff on secondment or loan out of the Department on 31 October 2005 was 184 full- time equivalents (FTE). The number of staff on secondment or loan into the Department and recorded on the HR system on 31 October 2005 was 50 FTE. However we are in the process of improving the data coverage of our HR system and are working to include fuller information on all non-permanent departmental staff. The figure of 50 may therefore rise once the data has been improved.

Diabetes

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether a choice of insulins is made available to *(a)* patients and *(b)* to next-of-kin in cases where the patient is unable to express a preference. [28674]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The choice of insulin is made as a result of a joint decision making process between the patient, their clinician or, when appropriate, their next-of-kin or carer.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether animal insulins are generally available to treat hospital patients according to their preference. [28675]

Jane Kennedy: Animal insulins are generally available in the United Kingdom to treat patients in hospitals, as well as those in the community. It is up to the clinician, in consultation with the patient, to decide which treatment is most suitable.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Department plans to arrange for pre-clinical trials of insulin analogues. [28678]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to undertake pre-clinical trials of insulin analogues at this time.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to ensure that people with insulin-requiring diabetes can make informed choices about alternative treatments following the discontinuation of some synthetic human insulin products. [28680]

Ms Rosie Winterton: When a product is discontinued the choice of an alternative insulin is made as a result of a joint decision making process between the patient and their clinician. The choice of an alternative insulin should be based on a sound clinical decision based on the needs of each individual patient.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will reconsider the referral of insulin treatments and their cost-effectiveness to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence with a view to developing standard guidance. [28681]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The choice of insulin is made as a result of a joint decision making process between the patient and their clinician. Any decision should be made on a sound clinical decision based on the needs of each patient. I see no reason to refer insulin treatments to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence at this time.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will incorporate the conclusions reached in the recent World Diabetes Federation position statement into her Department's guidance on insulins. [28684]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The choice of insulin is made as a result of a joint decision making process between the patient and their clinician. The World Diabetes Federation position statement is one of a number of balanced reflections on the use of insulin, which I am sure clinicians and patients will consider along with other views as part of their decision making process.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will issue guidance to the appropriate agencies that diabetes patients should have access to all animal, GM synthetic human and analogue insulin. [28724]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are a number of different insulin regimes available and the choice of insulin is made as a result of a joint decision making process between the patient and their clinician.

East Midlands Ambulance Service

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with East Midlands Ambulance Service on *(a)* its investigation into the delayed response to a 999 call by a constituent, Mr. Derek Latham, and *(b)* when it plans to respond to the letters from the hon. Member for Bassetlaw of April and August on this matter. [27876]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has no record of outstanding correspondence relating to this issue.

The East Midlands Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust is in the process of responding to the hon. Member for Bassetlaw on the issues relating to its delayed response to Mr. Derek Latham.

Eye Health Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many eye hospitals designated as preferred providers have fully implemented a fast track referral pathway for patients with early wet age-related macular degeneration; and what her estimate is of the average waiting time for treatment following initial contact with an eye care professional. [28215]

Ms Rosie Winterton: *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* National health service specialised services commissioners are responsible for commissioning photodynamic therapy for age related macular degeneration. Guidance to commissioners has stressed the importance of ensuring the development of fast track systems to ensure that the time between the initial referral and the treatment is as short as possible.

Data on average waiting times for treatment following initial contact with an eye care professional are not centrally collected. Information is, however, available on waiting times for hospital admissions for those with a primary diagnosis of degeneration of the macular and posterior pole. In 2003–04, the average time between a decision to admit and the date of admission was 41 days.

Fertility Treatment

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many primary care trusts in England are not providing at least one cycle of IVF to eligible couples with infertility; and if she will make a statement; [28504]

(2) what assessment she has made of the practice of primary care trusts of limiting the provision of NHS-funded infertility treatment to couples with no existing children; and if she will make a statement; [28505]

(3) what assessment she has made of whether primary care trusts are applying more restrictive female age criteria than the 23 to 39 years range set by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to couples seeking NHS-funded infertility treatment; and if she will make a statement; [28506]

(4) what action is being taken to ensure that the social eligibility criteria applied by primary care trusts to couples seeking infertility treatment is the same throughout the country. [28507]

Caroline Flint: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has carried out surveys following up the implementation of the clinical guideline on the assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems published in 2004. The surveys measuring the impact of the guideline, available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk, have found that 95 per cent. of the primary care trusts (PCTs) who responded are offering at least one cycle of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) to those defined as eligible according to local criteria. We advised PCTs to offer a minimum of one cycle of IVF by April 2005 to those who meet the clinical criteria in the guideline, giving priority to couples with no children living with them. We also advised that we expected the national health service to make progress to full implementation of the guideline in the longer term.

The primary responsibility for the implementation of the NICE guidelines rests with the NHS at local level, in discussion with patients' groups and local health bodies. Local policies will reflect local needs and priorities.

Health Statistics (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals in West Lancashire suffer from *(a)* coronary heart disease, *(b)* stroke and *(c)* diabetes; and what steps are being taken to reduce the numbers of people suffering from such diseases. [27684]

Mr. Byrne: There are 4,685 patients with diagnosed coronary heart disease and 3,691 patients with diabetes in the West Lancashire Primary Care Trust. Information from the West Lancashire PCT indicates that there are 1,795 patients with strokes in the West Lancashire PCT. It should be noted that the total number of diagnoses may not equate to the total number of patients as some may have more than one condition.

West Lancashire PCT is implementing the standards contained in the National Service Frameworks (NSFs), and have implementation groups covering all disease areas. Stroke is addressed specifically in the older persons NSF and coronary heart disease and diabetes have separate working groups.

Source:

Department of Health statistics and PCT monitoring returns.

Healthcare Commission

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints there have been to the Healthcare Commission in each year since it was established; what the backlog is of complaints waiting to be considered by the Healthcare Commission; how many complaints have been considered and determined in each year since the Healthcare Commission was established; and what the estimated cost of considering a complaint is. [28682]

Jane Kennedy: The Healthcare Commission was established on 1 April 2004 and its function for handling complaints was introduced on 31 July 2004.

I understand from the Chairman of the Healthcare Commission that from 31 July 2004 to 31 March 2005, 5,753 complaints were received. 830 of those were considered and determined. From April 2005 to date, 4,694 complaints have been received with 4,981 considered and determined within this period.

The Healthcare Commission's target is for 95 per cent. of cases to be resolved within six months. There are currently 1,543 cases over six months old awaiting determination.

The cost per case depends on the complexity of the case but typically ranges from less complex cases being in the region of £500 to those cases needing further investigation being in the region of £1,125.

Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Strategic Health Authority

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of the Hertfordshire and

Bedfordshire strategic health authority is for 2005–06; and what plans she has to increase this budget for the next financial year. [25583]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strategic health authority (SHA) has a resource budget of £4.8 million for its running costs in 2005–06.

The Department has not determined SHA budgets for 2006–07.

It is for primary care trusts to commission services for the population that they service and we have set their revenue budgets for 2006–07 and 2007–08 to give them continued certainty of funding for three years.

Hospital Cleanliness

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the standards of cleanliness in hospitals. [25188]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has a comprehensive and multi-faceted programme of work around cleaner hospitals covering a wide range of issues, including:

setting standards that are monitored by the Healthcare Commission,

increased investment,

involving ward sisters and charge nurses,

inspecting hospitals,

awareness campaigns,

issuing guidance and

research into alternative cleaning and monitoring technologies.

Hospital cleanliness is measured annually as part of the patient environment action team (PEAT) assessment. The process has been reviewed this year, and the proportion of the assessment form that relates to cleanliness, as opposed to other environmental factors has increased from around 11 per cent. to almost 25 per cent.

The inspection standards for hospital cleanliness have been made tougher year on year.

Hospital Travel Costs Scheme

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to alter the income eligibility threshold above which help is not available under the hospital travel costs scheme. [27337]

Jane Kennedy: The hospital travel cost scheme is part of the national health service low income scheme and there are currently no plans to alter the low income scheme eligibility criteria.

Independent Nurse Pharmacist Prescribing

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her written statement of 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 24WS, on Independent Nurse Pharmacist Prescribing, whether independent nurse prescribers allowed to prescribe controlled drugs will continue to be allowed to do so when the relevant regulations are amended; and if she will list the controlled drugs nurses are currently able to prescribe independently. [29856]

Jane Kennedy: The nurse prescribers' extended formulary currently includes the following controlled drugs:

diazepam, lorazepam and midazolam for use in palliative care only;

codeine phosphate, dihydrocodeine tartrate and co-phenotrope.

These controlled drugs will continue to be prescribable by extended formulary nurse prescribers.

A further six controlled drugs will shortly be added, subject to amendment of all relevant regulations, the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2005 and the Prescription Only Medicines Order 1997.

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what support she is providing to pharmaceutical companies to provide mock-up vaccines against possible strains of pandemic influenza. [23011]

Caroline Flint: A specific pandemic flu vaccine cannot be manufactured until the exact flu strain is known. The Department has met with vaccine manufacturers to discuss their preparedness for a flu pandemic and their progress towards producing a mock up vaccine.

We are working closely with other countries, the World Health Organization, and the European Commission and are in regular dialogue with manufacturers to ensure that a vaccine can be developed as quickly as possible once a pandemic influenza strain emerges. This will allow us to put arrangements in place to ensure production of vaccine for the United Kingdom population.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* England have received a free influenza vaccine. [26159]

Caroline Flint: The percentage uptake of those aged 65 and over immunised in Staffordshire at the end of October was 53 per cent. The percentage of at risk groups vaccinated was 31 per cent.

The number of people in England immunised at the end of October was 49 per cent. in those aged 65 and over and 25 per cent. in at risk groups.

Learning Disability

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether an individual with an IQ of 70 or above meets the definition of learning disability used in Valuing People if they also have a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills, and a reduced ability to cope independently, which started before adulthood and has a lasting effect on their development. [28037]

Mr. Byrne: Considering intelligence quotient (IQ) alone is not sufficient to determine whether someone meets the definition of learning disability. An IQ slightly above 70, if associated with impaired social functioning may mean that services view someone as having a learning disability.

However, an IQ substantially above 70, even if associated with impaired social functioning, would mean that someone would not be considered to have a

learning disability. Valuing People covers adults with autism who also have learning disabilities. It is for local service providers to assess the individual's need, look at the balance between the determining factors and decide on the appropriate services to meet those needs.

Medical Staff (Hertfordshire)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many accident and emergency *(a)* consultants, *(b)* middle grade doctors, *(c)* junior doctors and *(d)* nursing staff were employed by the West Hertfordshire NHS trust at 31 March (i) 2002, (ii) 2003, (iii) 2004 and (iv) 2005; and if she will make a statement. [26829]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following table shows the number of hospital, public health medicine and community health services, medical staff employed by West Hertfordshire hospital national health service trust within the accident and emergency (A and E) medicine specialty by grade and year. It is not possible to identify A and E nurses separately.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) medical staff employed by West Hertfordshire hospitals NHS trust within the A and E medicine specialty by grade and year[1]

	Number (headcount)			
	2002	2003	2004	2005[2]
All staff	26	29	33	[3]
Of which:				
Consultant	6	5	4	6
Non-consultant career grade staff	4	4	2	[3]
Doctors in training and equivalents[4]	15	18	26	[3]
Other staff	1	2	1	[3]

[1] All data as at 30 September each year, except for 2005 where data as at 30 June.
[2] Data for June 2005 is taken from the Medical and Dental Workforce Mini Census which collected consultants only.
[3] Denotes not available.
[4] Doctors in training and equivalents (previously known as junior doctors) includes the registrar group, senior house officer, house officer and other staff working at equivalent grades that are not in an educationally approved post.
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census.

Mental Health

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was budgeted for *(a)* talking therapies and *(b)* drugs for the treatment of mental health patients in the last year for which figures are available. [25354]

Ms Rosie Winterton: None of the latest round of allocations made to primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2003–04 to 2005–06 has been identified for specific purposes. It is for PCTs, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how to use the funds allocated to them to meet the health care needs of their populations.

"The 2004–05 National Survey of Investment in Mental Health Services" reported that in 2004–05 planned investment by adult mental health service providers on psychological therapy services was £141,378,000. The survey did not capture planned investment on prescription costs. It is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/52/96/04115296.pdf

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many black and ethnic minority mental health services she expects to participate in the race equality impact assessment for the draft Mental Health Bill; [28049]

(2) what community involvement there has been in arranging the community consultation as part of the race equality impact assessment for the draft Mental Health Bill; [28050]

(3) on what date the race equality impact assessment for the draft Mental Health Bill began; [28051]

(4) whether the Department has followed the Commission for Racial Equality guidelines in the race equality impact assessment for the draft Mental Health Bill. [28052]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A formal race equality impact assessment (REIA) on the Mental Health Bill began at the end of 2004. Prior to this, the Bill and the preceding Green Paper received a wide consultation over a period of four years with various parties including black and minority ethnic (BME) stakeholders.

Officials conducted a series of roadshows after the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill in September 2004, at which BME communities and stakeholder groups participated. The pre-legislative scrutiny committee also received substantial written and oral evidence from BME stakeholders.

We have also published our action plan to tackle racial discrimination in mental health services "Delivering Race Equality", January 2005, which also covered our response to the David Bennett inquiry. These factors have influenced our decision to re-examine the concerns expressed by BME stakeholders about the Bill, and to our carrying out a formal REIA on the Bill before its introduction, in accordance with current race relations legislation. We have had close regard to the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE's) guidance in undertaking the REIA, and Officials met with the CRE to discuss our approach.

As an initial part of the process we planned a series of regional meetings with service users and carers from the BME stakeholder community this spring. These events were cancelled when the general election was called. However, we have since established an advisory group chaired by Rabinder Singh, QC, whose report we expect to receive shortly, and which will inform the REIA which is to be published with the Bill.

The advisory group's summer workshop assessed the potential impact of the Bill. We have more recently held regional consultations attended by more than 200 people, mostly BME service users, carers and community groups. These events were organised with the help of race equality leads from the care services improvement partnership, a relatively new and powerful resource. These leads have strong and extensive links

with the communities they serve, enabling events such as these to be organised quickly. Again, the outcome of these events will feed into the REIA when this is published.

We remain confident that these processes will identify the key concerns that will enable us to respond to the REIA. We are also considering with the BME mental health network what further consultation(s) might be possible before the Bill is introduced. We will continue to engage with BME stakeholders as the Bill progresses through Parliament. We consider that it is particularly important to secure the strong engagement of BME stakeholders in developing the code of practice for the Bill, and the Bill's implementation.

Midwifery

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many midwifery assistants have been employed by Southampton University Hospitals Trust in each of the last five years. [29188]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected centrally by the Department.

MRSA

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA have been identified in hospitals within Cumbria in each year since March 2003, broken down by national health service trust. [29967]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

	North Cumbria National Health Service Trust	*Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust*
April 2003 to March 2004		
Number of methicillin resistant Staphylococus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemia reports	22	30
MRSA rate per 1,000 bed days	0.09	0.10
April 2004 to March 2005		
Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	24	30
MRSA rate per 1000 bed days[1]	0.10	0.10

[1] Per 1,000 bed days data is provisional, as final 2004–05 activity data is not available.

Note:
Data is only collected for acute trusts.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement about the funding of genetic research into myalgic encephalomyelitis. [27324]

Mr. Byrne: The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC does not normally allocate funds to particular topics: research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available. When appropriate, high quality research in particular areas of strategic importance may be given priority in competition for funds, but research excellence and importance to health continues to be the primary considerations in funding decisions. The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding.

NHS Estates

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the chief executive of NHS Estates is; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26321]

Jane Kennedy: The post of chief executive of NHS Estates no longer exists. In July 2004, the Department published the report "Reconfiguration of the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies", which outlined its programme of reducing arm's length bodies by approximately 50 per cent. One of the outcomes of the report was to abolish NHS Estates as an executive agency. The agency ceased all trading with effect from 31 July 2005 and closed on 30 September 2005.

NHS Staff (Assaults)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many reported physical assaults against NHS staff there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each NHS trust in each year since 1997. [26547]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested was not collected in the required format prior to April 2004. The NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS) has collected data on the number of physical assaults for England for the period 2004–05. On 19 October 2005, NHS SMS released figures about the numbers of these assaults on staff who work in mental health or services for people with learning disabilities; which totalled 43,309. Information relating to the number of physical assaults for the acute, primary care and ambulance services is currently being validated and will be released in the near future.

Non-EU Nationals (Hospital Treatment)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the estimated number of non-EU nationals who received hospital treatment in England in 2004–05; what the estimated cost is; how many were long-term cases; how many were asylum seekers; and if she will make a statement. [27972]

Jane Kennedy: Successive governments have not required the national health service to provide statistics on the number or nationality of overseas visitors treated under the provisions of the NHS (Charges to Overseas

Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended, or on the costs of treatment. It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

Palliative Care

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many palliative care places for *(a)* cancer patients and *(b)* heart patients there are in each local health authority area in England. [25603]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Palliative care services should be available to all patients, irrespective of diagnosis. The Department does not routinely collect data on palliative care places in each local health authority. Data supplied by Hospice Information, an independent organisation, states that there are approximately 2,110 specialist palliative care beds in the voluntary sector and 448 beds in the NHS in England. We also know that there are 213 day care places in England. The data in the 2005 directory is shown in the table.

Palliative care places

	Adult units	*NHS units*	*Voluntary units*	*Beds*	*NHS beds*	*Voluntary beds*
London	17	6	11	394	86	308
Midland and East of England	42	12	30	592	154	438
North	62	12	50	840	94	746
South	53	12	41	772	154	618
England	174	42	132	2,598	488	2,110

Patient Safety

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the cost of the taxonomy produced by the National Patient Safety Agency to establish agreed definitions of patient safety incidents; [27536]

(2) for what reasons the roll-out of the National Patient Safety Agency's National Reporting and Learning System was delayed, as described in paragraph 17, page 5 of the National Audit Office report, "A Safer Place for Patients"; [27543]

(3) what steps she is taking to ensure NHS trusts report all *(a)* patient safety incidents and *(b)* near-misses; [27547]

(4) if she will permit the National Clinical Assessment Service to provide support to poorly performing clinicians other than doctors; [27548]

(5) what steps she is taking to ensure that patients are informed when a patient safety incident involving them is reported to the NHS trust in which they were treated. [27549]

Jane Kennedy: The Department welcomed the publication of the matters identified in the National Audit Office report, "A safer place for patients: Learning to improve patient safety". It will be discussed in detail at a committee of public accounts hearing early in 2006. The Government will respond to the committee's subsequent report in the form of a Treasury Minute.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many recorded deaths there were as a result of patient safety incidents in 2004 at *(a)* Hemel Hempstead general hospital and *(b)* Watford general hospital; and if she will make a statement. [27985]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Anonymised information on patient safety incidents and near misses is collected by the National Patient Safety Agency through its national reporting and learning system for adverse events. However, this is a confidential reporting system because experience from across the world in both health and other industries that providing a means for reporting incidents confidentially promotes reporting and facilitates the necessary learning.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* recorded patient safety incidents and *(b)* near misses there were in 2004 at (i) Hemel Hempstead general hospital and (ii) Watford general hospital; and if she will make a statement. [27986]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Anonymised information on patient safety incidents and near misses is collected by the National Patient Safety Agency through its national reporting and learning system for adverse events. However, this is a confidential reporting system because experience from across the world in both health and other industries that providing a means for reporting incidents confidentially promotes reporting and facilitates the necessary learning.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will conduct a review into effects on NHS care of changes proposed in the West Suffolk primary care trust's public consultation. [17699]

Ms Rosie Winterton: West Suffolk primary care trust is currently consulting on proposed changes. It would be inappropriate for the Department to review proposals in these circumstances. These are matters currently for local consideration.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on progress with the proposed reform of primary care trusts in London. [23487]

Jane Kennedy: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have recently submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs), which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. The proposals for London are available from the SHA. These proposals have been assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS" (July 2005).

Where the criteria are judged to have been met, the proposals will go forward to a three-month public consultation. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

Prisons

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1126W, on prisons, where sexual activity in prisons is permitted; and whether she has issued guidance, regulations or directions to HM Prison Service regarding sexual activity in prisons. [27475]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The facts and purposes of custody, including the need to protect the vulnerable and to maintain good order and discipline, mean that it would be inappropriate for prisons to condone or encourage sexual activity between prisoners. However, the Prison Service recognises that sex in prisons is a reality and prison doctors were advised in 1995 that they should make condoms available to individual prisoners, on application, if in their clinical judgment, there is a risk of transmission of HIV infection during sexual activity. The Prison Service is planning to issue, in 2006, revised guidance and instructions which aim to clarify the policy on condoms so that it can be applied more evenly across the prison estate. The intention is to preserve individuals' health rather than to encourage sexual relationships.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to support the development of screening technology for prostate cancer; and how much funding has been provided from *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Medical Research Council for this purpose in each year since 1997–98. [26014]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department supports the development of screening technology for prostate cancer by having a comprehensive research strategy into all aspects of prostate cancer. By providing both funding and structure we are improving the knowledge base of prostate cancer, opening up new possibilities for screening, treatment, care, etc.

We are jointly with other National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) members, such as the Medical Research Council, funding two NCRI prostate cancer collaboratives, one based at the University of Cambridge and the other at the Institute of Cancer Research. The Department is funding half of the total £7.4 million cost.

The research undertaken by the collaboratives covers all aspects of prostate cancer and has already generated the groundbreaking discovery of the overactive E2F3 gene in prostate cancer tumours. This discovery provides the potential not only to identify those at risk of developing the disease, but for the first time allows the prediction of how aggressive the cancer will be.

It is important to note that in order for a screening technology to contribute to saving lives it is essential for there to be effective treatments for the disease detected. That is why the Department is funding a £20 million trial of treatments for prostate specific antigen (PSA) screen-detected early prostate cancer (the ProtecT trial).

The Department directly commissioned funding for prostate cancer research, including screening, as shown in the table.

Commissioned funding for prostate cancer research, including screening, 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	Funding amount (£)
1999–2000	200,000
2000–01	1,200,000
2001–02	2,200,000
2002–03	3,200,000
2003–04	4,200,000
2004–05	4,200,000

The level of funding of £4.2 million will be maintained for future years, subject to the quality of research proposals.

Room for Review

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reasons timescale for the publication of part one of the Taskforce on Medicine Partnership's evaluation of Room for Review was changed; [20665]

(2) pursuant to her answer of 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1198W, when publication of part two of the Taskforce on Medicine Partnership's evaluation of Room for Review will take place. [20671]

Jane Kennedy: The plan was to publish both parts, part one on the survey of primary care trusts (PCTs) and part two on the views of patients, at the same time. As part two of the evaluation involved patients, ethics approval was required, which took longer than expected. To avoid further delay in sharing the results from the PCT survey, part one of the evaluation was published in March 2005. It is expected that the report of part two of the evaluation will be available by the end of 2006.

St George's Hospital, Hornchurch

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future of St. George's Hospital, Hornchurch. [21540]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Any plans relating to the reconfiguration of service of St. Georges hospital in Hornchurch. Are a matter for Havering primary care trust (PCT) as PCTs are responsible for commissioning services for the population that they serve.

Tamiflu

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what distribution arrangements will be made for Tamiflu to ensure it is taken shortly after onset of symptoms. [21786]

Caroline Flint: Antivirals will provide the first form of defence against pandemic influenza. We have purchased 14.6 million courses of oseltamivir, Tamiflu, to treat the 25 per cent. of the population that may fall ill. Deliveries will be complete by September 2006 and we have published a framework for the national health service for stockpiling, distributing and using antivrals which is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

Primary care trusts will be responsible for developing plans to enable patients to access antivirals. The overall aim is to ensure that antiviral medicines are available to treat patients suffering from influenza as soon as possible and within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms. As more information about the virus and its symptoms emerges, we will develop clinical definitions of the disease and Tamiflu will be distributed on this basis.

West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her latest estimate is of the outturn against planned expenditure in 2005–06 of West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust; and if she will make a statement. [25572]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The latest financial year for which the audited financial information of all national health service organisations, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts, is available is 2004–05. A copy of this information is available in the Library. It can also be accessed via the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en. The final position for West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust for 2004–05 is an overspend against their revenue resource limit of £10 million.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carers

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of benefits available to carers; [27008]

(2) what his estimate is of the number of carers *(a)* in England and *(b)* in the county of Devon, broken down by local authority area, who are not taking up their entitlement to benefits. [27051]

Mrs. McGuire: Carers may be entitled to the full range of social security benefits depending on their individual circumstances. Information and advice about entitlement to carer's allowance and other benefits are available from a range of outlets including social security offices, Jobcentre Plus offices, DWP and other helplines, DWP and other internet sites, local authorities, Citizens Advice and welfare benefit offices, public libraries, health clinics, doctors' surgeries and health visitors. Officials from the Department's disability and carers service also discuss carer's allowance at outreach events up and down the country.

In addition, the extensive pension credit take-up campaign, recently mounted by the Pension Service, has helped many older carers to benefit from the Government's abolition of the upper age limit on claims to carer's allowance and provided advice on other benefits.

The carer's allowance claim pack is kept under review and improvements are introduced on an ongoing basis. Claims can be made in writing, by phone and on-line, and can be accepted by organisations such as Age Concern and Citizens Advice as well as DWP offices.

Entitlement to benefits for carers depends on whether the qualifying conditions are satisfied, and this can be reliably established only after a claim has been made. There are no data available which would provide an estimate of the number of carers who would meet the conditions for these benefits if they claimed.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of how many recipients of carers' allowance ceased to receive it on reaching pensionable age in each of the last five years; [22542]

(2) what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department arising from ceasing to pay carers' allowance to carers on reaching pensionable age, broken down by region. [26984]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the following table.

The rules which preclude the payment in full of more than one non-income-related benefit for income maintenance purposes are common to a wide range of benefits. Payment of carer's allowance is withdrawn from carers who receive state pension, either in full where the weekly rate of state pension exceeds the weekly rate of carer's allowance, or in part where the weekly rate of state pension is less than the weekly rate of carer's allowance. This means that carers of state pension age[1] receive at least as much by way of state benefits as they did before state pension age. They may retain entitlement to carer's allowance for so long as they continue to meet the entitlement conditions and, if they have a low income, may also be entitled to pension credit which includes an additional amount for carers, currently £25.80 per week.

Estimates of (i) the number of people in Great Britain who ceased to be paid carer's allowance when state pension became payable to them and (ii) what the cost would have been of continuing to pay the allowance to them.

[1] State pension age is 60 for women and 65 for men.

	12-month period ending on 31 May	
	2004	*2005*
Estimated number of people in the period to whom carer's allowance ceased to be paid when state pension became payable[1]	4,100	6,800
Estimated cost if carer's allowance had been paid to the end of the period (£ million)[2]	4.8	8.1

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

[2] Estimates exclude increases for adult dependants and assume that *(a)* the dates on which people started to receive state pension were evenly distributed throughout the period; and *(b)* those people would have continued to meet the entitlement conditions for carer's allowance after state pension became payable.

Note:

From August 2003, figures are drawn from a new 100 per cent. data source, the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS). Owing to the limitations of earlier data it is not possible to provide estimates for earlier 12 month periods.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate—Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and 100 per cent. samples.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the oral answer of 16 November 2005 from the Prime Minister to the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, *Official Report*, column 964, what plans he has to *(a)* reform and *(b)* abolish the Child Support Agency; and if he will make a statement. [30864]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Department has spent on external media relations in each month of the last year. [14682]

Mrs. McGuire: This information is not available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Overseas Pensioners

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the number of British pensioners living in Commonwealth countries who have paid pension contributions and who do not receive pension increments; [29814]

(2) what representations he has received from British pensioners living in Commonwealth countries on payment of pension increments; [29824]

(3) whether he plans to change the current law affecting pensions entitlement for British pensioners living in Commonwealth countries. [30615]

Mr. Timms: We uprate the state pension in countries with which the UK has a reciprocal agreement or a legal obligation to do so. There are some 490,000 recipients of a UK state pension living in Commonwealth countries with which we do not have reciprocal agreements. We do, from time to time, receive correspondence from recipients who do not benefit from uprating of their state pension. However, we have no plans to change the current arrangements.

Source: DWP Information Directorate—Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Pension Credit

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Great Yarmouth constituency are in receipt of pension credit; how much they receive on average; what estimate he has made of the number who are eligible; and what steps he is *(a)* taking and *(b)* plans to take to encourage those who are not claiming pension credit to do so. [28020]

Mr. Timms: The average weekly pension credit payment to household recipients in Great Yarmouth as at June 2005 is £40.03. Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly Pension Credit progress report published on 20 October. A copy of the report is in the Library.

It is becoming clear that the number of people who are eligible for pension credit is somewhat less than the initial estimate. National statistics showing the number of pensioners entitled to pension credit at a national level in the first six months after its introduction and the subsequent take-up rate are expected to be available in December. Information at constituency level will not be available. The date of release of these statistics and the publication plans for the following set, covering 2004/05, will be pre-announced in "National Statistics Updates"; the diary of statistical releases.

Steps are being taken to ensure that everyone who is likely to be entitled to pension credit knows what they need to do to take up their entitlement. A letter has been sent out to every pensioner household to inform them about pension credit. New marketing campaigns have been developed to target regions and demographic groups that have a low take-up of pension credit. Data-matching techniques are being used to increase the accuracy with which invitations are targeted and further contact is also being made with those households we believe to be eligible for pension credit, but who have not so far responded.

The Pension Service's Local Service continues to work closely with local partners such as Help the Aged, Age Concern to help ensure pensioners take up their entitlements.

Pensions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Gravesham *(a)* received the state pension and *(b)* (i) applied for and (ii) received the pension credit in each of the last five years; and what the average pension credit payment was in each year. [29898]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the tables. Information on the number of people who have applied for pension credit is not available in respect of individual constituencies, pension credit was introduced from October 2003. Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly Pension Credit progress report published on 20 October. The report is available in the Library.

Number of people in Gravesham parliamentary constituency receiving pension credit and the average weekly amount

	Household recipients	*Individual beneficiaries*	*Average weekly amount (£)*
May 2005	3,900	4,800	40.46
May 2004	3,600	4,300	39.65
November 2003	2,900	3,400	41.68

Number of people in Gravesham parliamentary constituency receiving state pension in each of the last five years

May	*Claimants*
2005	17,100
2004	16,900
2003	16,800
2002	16,600
2001	16,300

Notes:

1. May 2001 state pension data are taken from 5 per cent. extract of PSCS as at 31 March 2005, thus figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall GB/overseas caseload from the WPLS.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and expressed in thousands.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
4. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) in October 2003.

Source:

Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample
DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (100 per cent. data).

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the number of single women pensioners who live below the poverty threshold. [27975]

Mr. Timms: The seventh annual "Opportunity for All" report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators.

The table shows the number and percentage of single women pensioners living in households in relative and absolute low income. They show that in 2003–04 there were 700,000 single women pensioners living in households in relative low income, measured after housing costs—the number in relative low income has fallen by almost a half since 1996–07.

Relative low income[1]

	Number (million)	*Percentage*
After housing costs		
1996–97	1.2	37
2003–04	0.7	21
Before housing costs		
1996–97	0.9	26
2003–04	0.8	24

[1] i.e. based on contemporary income thresholds.

Absolute low income[1]

	Number (million)	*Percentage*
After housing costs		
1996–97	1.2	37
2003–04	0.3	11
Before housing costs		
1996–97	0.9	26
2003–04	0.4	13

[1] i.e. based on 1996–97 income thresholds held constant in real terms.

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain.
2. Data are from the Family Resources Survey based on HBAI methodology.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress towards the establishment of a comprehensive legal system in Afghanistan; and what assistance the UK is providing for this process. [29596]

Dr. Howells: The creation and consolidation of a national Afghan government and institutions, including a comprehensive legal system, will be the key to establishing long-term stability and security within Afghanistan. After nearly three decades of war, these institutions needed to be created from scratch.

Italy is the G8 lead nation for Afghan justice reform, of which legal reform is a part. The UK is the G8 lead nation on Counter Narcotics (CN) and is working in support of the Afghan government's eight pillar 2005 implementation plan, of which criminal justice is a key pillar.

We are spending over £270 million over the three financial years 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 on CN activity. Over 50 per cent. of the UK's budget for Afghan CN will go towards law enforcement and criminal justice; we are doubling our previously planned expenditure on criminal justice. The Government of Afghanistan, with our support, is on track to put in place the key foundations of a CN criminal justice system. This includes a new counter narcotics law, which is currently being drafted and is due to be finalised by the end of this year. The UK has also worked with the international community to recruit and train a CN Criminal Justice Task Force of Afghan investigators, prosecutors and judges, currently 80-strong, to work with the CN Police, to be able to push through successful investigations and prosecutions. The Criminal Justice Task Force has made 150 convictions since it became operational in May and are currently investigating 247 cases.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress the UK has made in delivering capability in its lead responsibility for counter-narcotics in Afghanistan. [29597]

Dr. Howells: The UK, as lead nation on counter narcotics (CN), remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive 2005 CN Implementation Plan. A UK advisor is also currently working with the Ministry of Counter Narcotics Strategy Unit to update the National Drugs Control Strategy for the new five-year period. We continue to work with the Afghan Government and others to increase activity in all areas of their strategy. As well as co-ordinating the activity of international partners, we are providing substantial financial and practical support, spending over £270 million over the three financial years 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 on CN activity.

Significant steps have already been taken to build Afghan capacity to tackle the drugs problem. At the end of last year, the Government of Afghanistan established the Ministry of Counter Narcotics charged with co-ordinating the fight against drugs. This year, the Ministry has organised on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan a series of high profile provincial CN "jirgas"—meetings of local leaders, to persuade local communities to not plant poppy this year, these meetings have taken place with the support of our ambassador in Kabul. The UK is funding a £12.5 million Institution Development project to further strengthen the Ministry of Counter Narcotics and other institutions in Afghanistan. On 29 October, a CN Trust Fund was officially launched at the Afghan Ministry of Finance. The Fund will give the Government of Afghanistan more money for CN activities and greater say over how this money is spent.

The UK has helped to establish and provide training for the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA)—the lead drugs law enforcement agency, headquartered in Kabul with seven provincial offices. The CNPA is currently around 500 strong, but will be expanded further to give it the capacity to operate nation-wide. The UK is also providing training for the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), an elite and highly trained force equipped to tackle high value targets across the country. Since January 2004, the CNPA and ASNF have seized approximately 150 tonnes of opiates, destroyed over 264 drugs labs and made a significant number of arrests.

We are also working with the international community to recruit and train a counter narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force of Afghan investigators, prosecutors and judges to work with the Counter Narcotics Police, to be able to push through successful drugs investigations and prosecutions. The Criminal Justice Task Force is currently around 80 strong and made its first convictions in May this year for drug trafficking in Kabul. President Karzai also signed off a decree on 25 July, to establish Counter Narcotics divisions in Kabul's primary and appeals courts with jurisdiction over the whole of Afghanistan.

Ambassadors

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will list the frais allowance for each UK ambassador for each of the past five years; [26866]

(2) what methods of accounting and audit UK ambassadors frais allowances are subject to; and if he will make a statement. [26868]

Mr. Straw: Heads of Mission receive frais de representation (Frais) and some other senior officers receive frais-type allowances to enable them to offer official entertainment in support of Government objectives. These allowances are individually assessed on the basis of previous budgetary evidence, agreed adjustments to reflect local costs and practice and the needs of the job.

Officers in receipt of Frais are required to provide a certificate of expenditure against Frais at the end of each financial year and at the end of their posting. They are required to keep an account of expenditure to provide evidence that it was necessarily incurred in the public service, that costs were not covered elsewhere, e.g. through personal allowances, and that the amount spent was reasonable. The accounts are subject to audit by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) auditors and form the basis for reviewing subsequent Frais allocations.

I am arranging for a copy of a schedule showing the information on individual Frais allocations to be placed in the Library of the House.

Arrangements for Frais will shortly change. Budget allocations will be devolved from the centre from 1 April 2006 and new accounting arrangements will be brought in thereafter, as the FCO's new financial management IT system is rolled out to posts.

China

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese Government regarding alleged abuse of those who protest against the one child policy in China; and if he will make a statement. [29907]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise concerns about abuses of human rights activists in China, including those who peacefully protest against the one child policy. Under the UK presidency, the EU raised the case of Chen Guang-Cheng, who is one such activist, with the Chinese Government in October and November 2005.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of China about the cases of *(a)* Mao Hengfeng and *(b)* Chen Guangcheng; and if he will make a statement. [29908]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise individual human rights cases with the Chinese Government. The EU has raised the cases of Mao Heng-Feng and Chen Guang-Cheng with the Chinese Government several times. Mao Heng-Feng's case was included on the list of individual cases handed to the Chinese at the October 2005 round of the EU/China Human Rights Dialogue. The EU, under the UK's presidency, raised the case of Chen Guang-Cheng with the Chinese Government in October and November 2005.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of the EU stability instrument upon the Common Foreign and Security Policy. [30266]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: It is clearly important that there should be no overlap or lack of coherence between the proposed new stability instrument and work undertaken under Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Discussions on the scope, objectives and programming of the Stability Instrument continue in Brussels. We have been working with others to ensure that the new Regulation defines what activities may be funded under the Instrument in a very clear way and that member states have sufficient control over programmes to ensure close co-ordination with CFSP actions, while still enabling the Commission to act flexibly, quickly and effectively in response to crises.

Cote d'Ivoire

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on future elections in Cote d'Ivoire. [30297]

Ian Pearson: Presidential elections scheduled for 30 October were postponed. This was due to a delay in the preparations required to make free and fair elections possible. The African Union and the UN Security Council have since called for elections to be held within the next 12 months. The onus now is on the Ivorian government and opposition parties, with the support of the international community, to ensure that elections occur in the given timeframe and are free, fair, credible and transparent. We are urging all those involved to take the necessary steps towards this objective.

Date-based Export Scheme

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the European Commission regarding the lifting of the date-based export scheme; and when the scheme will be lifted. [31083]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The Government are in regular contact with the European Commission at all levels about lifting the beef export ban which will end the need for the date-based export scheme.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Bradshaw) today (UIN 2052).

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support the Government are giving to the *(a)* demobilisation, disarmament and integration into civilian society and

(b) integration into the national army of the members of militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [31295]

Ian Pearson: We continue to press the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to accelerate its efforts to disarm militias and integrate all combatants into the national army or civilian life.

The UK has committed £25 million over five years to the Multi-Donor Regional programme for disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration (MDRP).

The UK has also contributed two of the eight officers in the EU's Security Sector Reform Mission (EUSEC). This has recommended action to the DRC Government to speed up disarmament and army integration and to improve the transparency of paying its soldiers. We have offered the DRC Government US$5million to support newly-integrated brigades, if they implement the EU's recommendations.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in encouraging ethnic minority recruitment within his Department. [30508]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is fully committed to improving the diversity of its workforce. Part of the FCO's work towards achieving this goal is positive action, involving the encouragement of candidates from under-represented groups to enter and progress in the organisation. Along with the rest of the civil service, we are committed to improving the representation of these groups, while ensuring that all recruitment and promotion is fair and achieved on merit.

The FCO participates in the Summer Development programme, which is a Cabinet Office run programme offering minority ethnic graduates the chance of working within Government Departments each summer. In 2005 we took on 10 participants, all of whom spent part of the summer working in an overseas mission.

We place advertisements for our generalist recruitment campaigns in the following minority ethnic newspapers and magazines: Works for Me, The Voice and the Ethnic Media News covering Eastern Eye, India Weekly, Asian Times, Caribbean Times, African Times and New Nation. We also advertise throughout the year in a number of minority ethnic publications and websites aimed at school leavers and graduates.

The following statistics show that, although the percentage of minority ethnic staff in the FCO has remained constant since 2002, recent recruitment figures show that there has been an increase in the number of minority ethnic recruits across the grades in 2005.

	Total staff	*Minority ethnic*
April 2002	5,678	326 (5.7%)
April 2003	5,915	338 (5.7%)
October 2005	6,014	345 (5.7%)

FCO Minority ethnic recruitment statistics

	Total recruited	*Minority ethnic (percentage)*
C4 Policy Entrants		
2004	21	9
2005	24	21
B3 Operational entrants		
2004	25	8
2005	30	23
A2 Executive assistants		
2004	14	0
2005	17	41
A1 Admin assistants		
2004	29	52
2005	65	51

As this data illustrates more progress on this issue is necessary.

Ethiopia

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are being taken to help people residing in the United Kingdom reclaim properties in Ethiopia that were confiscated between 1977 and 1991 under the Derg regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam; and if he will make a statement. [28318]

Ian Pearson: Compensation for claims registered against the Derg regime was managed by the Ethiopian Ministry of Finance, which dealt directly with the individual claimants through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office did not espouse these claims, but we did assist claimants with finding local lawyers to prepare and submit their claims. As far as we are aware the deadline for submitting claims expired in June 2001.

EU Secondary Legislation

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of EU secondary legislation has been passed under first round reading agreements between the European Parliament and Council in each year since such fast track procedures came into operation. [29450]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since the entry into force of the treaty of Amsterdam on 1 May 1999, when the more streamlined co-decision procedure came into operation, the following proportion of legislation was concluded at first reading. From 1 May 1999 to 31 December 2000, of 82 co-decision matters, 19.5 per cent.—16 cases, were concluded at first reading. In 2001, of 78 co-decision matters, 29.5 per cent.—23 cases, were concluded at first reading. In 2002, of 79 co-decision matters, 25.3 per cent.—20 cases, were concluded at first reading. In 2003, of 104 co-decision matters, 36.5 per cent.—38 cases, were concluded at first reading. In 2004, of 85 co-decision matters, 60.0 per cent.—51 cases, were concluded at first reading. From 1 January 2005 to 30 June 2005, of 39 co-decision matters, 56.4 per cent.—22 cases were concluded at first reading.

EU-ASEAN Meetings

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the EU expects to make a decision on the approach it will take to participating in the EU-ASEAN meetings in July 2006, chaired by Burma. [30402]

Ian Pearson: Burma announced on 26 July that it would not be taking over the Chair of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2006. Burma will not therefore be chairing any EU/ASEAN meetings in July 2006.

Malaysia is the current chair of ASEAN and will host the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference and the ASEAN Regional Forum in Malaysia from 24–28 July 2006.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress of the US in bringing the suspected terrorists detained at Guantanamo Bay to trial. [29511]

Dr. Howells: The trial of those detained at Guantanamo Bay is currently subject to debate in the US Congress.

Nigeria

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with his counterpart in Nigeria measures to deal with email scams emanating from there. [29579]

Ian Pearson: We are helping the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to develop the capacity to tackle e-mail fraud as well as other forms of financial crime. The Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act was passed in 1995. The Nigerian Government have proposed draft legislation to strengthen the law and make it easier to catch and prosecute fraudsters, including through increased monitoring of email traffic in cybercafes and telecommunications companies.

We regularly raise the issue of financial crime with the Nigerian authorities and will continue to do so. It was discussed at the UK/Nigeria ministerial bilateral forum on judicial co-operation, attended by the then Nigerian Attorney-General, in May 2005.

Poland

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has extended his congratulations to the newly elected *(a)* Prime Minister and *(b)* President of Poland. [26069]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[pursuant to the reply, 10 November 2005, Official Report, c. 747W]:* It was my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, and not I, who congratulated the new Polish Foreign Minister.

Sharm el-Sheikh (Bombing)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* support and *(b)* financial assistance has been given to families of British victims of the Sharm el-Sheikh terrorist bombing; and if he will make a statement. [30380]

Dr. Howells: The British Embassy set up an emergency response team in Cairo and an office in Sharm el-Sheikh. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) also sent a Rapid Deployment Team comprising Consular Officers, Red Cross Support Personnel and a medical team from International SOS to provide support to victims and families in Egypt. Special Branch and anti-terrorist police officers were also deployed with the team. Police Family Liaison Officers were attached to each bereaved family in the UK.

The 7 July Assistance Centre has agreed to help anyone affected by the Egypt bombings who approaches them. The Assistance Centre provides a co-ordinated response for those requiring advice as well as a sophisticated sign-posting and advice service, providing details of relevant counselling services/organisations. They will either deal with inquiries by telephone, or make an appointment to meet people to talk through their needs and concerns.

The Law Society has agreed to extend their pro-bono legal service to those affected by the Egypt bombings. In addition, free financial advice is available from a group of companies led by Origen Financial Services.

The FCO Aftercare Plan for victims of acts of terrorism overseas (Aftercare Plan) was activated immediately. The Aftercare Plan has paid for two members of each family who wished to travel to Sharm el-Sheikh to do so and for their accommodation while in Egypt. It paid for the medical repatriation of two victims and for the personal belongings of the injured and deceased to be returned. It also paid for the repatriation of the bodies of the three people who had not taken out an insurance policy. Death certificates will also be paid for.

The Department for Culture, Media arid Sport are in contact with families to arrange a suitable memorial service.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many families of British victims of the bombing in Sharm el-Sheikh were assisted by his Department to visit Egypt. [30381]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has paid for members of five of the eight families to travel to Sharm el-Sheikh. We will assist the other families should they wish to travel and when they are ready to do so.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the disapplication of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in St. Helena. [29423]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The English Law (Application) Ordinance provides for the law of England to be applied in St. Helena provided it is not inconsistent with a local law and is appropriate to local

circumstances. There is provision in the Ordinance for specific English laws to be declared to be inappropriate to local circumstances.

That provision was used to declare that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 was inappropriate to local circumstances because the Governor in Council considered the provisions in that Act to be incapable of effective application in the context of the financial and human resources available in the Territory.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will require information held by the government of St. Helena in respect of the proposed airport on the island to be eligible for release under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [29426]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not apply in St. Helena. The Government are therefore unable to require information, in respect of the proposed airport on the island, which is held by the Government of St. Helena to be eligible for release under the Act.

Considerable material related to the proposed airport is, however, already in the public domain in the UK and on St. Helena.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons publicly funded legal representation has not been made available to islanders on St. Helena who are opposed to the building of an airport on the island. [29428]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are no lawyers in private practice in St. Helena, however, the Public Solicitor is required to provide independent legal advice to members of the public. Such advice is provided either free of charge, or subject to contribution under the St. Helena Legal Aid and Advice Ordinance. The Public Solicitor is funded by the Department for International Development.

In addition, local legislation provides for a system of Lay Advocates, whose activities are also publicly funded, and who have access, in appropriate cases, to overseas lawyers.

Trade Justice

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will press for trade justice at the meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Hong Kong in December. [29476]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Holloway) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1092W. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear in his speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on 14 November, the current round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations is an opportunity to tackle some of the most fundamental injustices at the heart of world trade and to help millions of people to escape poverty. We are making the same argument to our EU partners, the European Commission and to other WTO members and stakeholders.

A successful, pro-development outcome to the WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong in December remains a priority for the UK as presidency of the EU. The EU has agreed to negotiate an end to agricultural export subsidies, which are damaging to developing country producers, provided that other developed countries follow suit. The UK believes this date should be 2010. The EU is also pushing developed countries to extend tariff and quota free access to least developed countries, as the EU has already offered under the Everything But Arms initiative.

This is also why my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that the UK will treble aid to £100 million a year by 2010 in order to help the poorest countries develop their capacity to trade. At the G8 Gleneagles summit, the European Commission already pledged to increase its aid for trade to €1 billion per year. We have called for EU member states to match that amount. We have also challenged other G8 countries to increase their aid for trade ahead of the Hong Kong ministerial conference.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Consultants/Special Advisers

Martin Horwood: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses whilst working for her Department and its agencies. [29096]

Ms Harman: Expenses payable to consultants are governed by our terms of contract. It is general practice to only allow expenses where these have been actually and necessarily incurred in undertaking the work involved up to an agreed maximum for the assignment. It is standard practice to pay in line with civil service travel and subsistence rates.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29097]

Ms Harman: My Department does not use consultants to conduct projects. However, appropriate consultancies may be engaged to assist with specialist work, advice or other support.

An exhaustive list of past and present Departmental projects is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The total cost of consultants in each of the financial years since 2000–01 is as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	2.6
2001–02	6.5
2002–03	5.7
2003–04	9.0

This information is not held centrally by my Department, but is collected retrospectively. The data collection exercise relating to expenditure on consultancy in 2004–05 is under way, and on completion, details will be sent to the hon. Member.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in her Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29117]

Ms Harman: My Department does not use consultants to conduct projects. However, appropriate consultancies may be engaged to assist with specialist work, advice or other support.

Consultants engaged by my Department are required to deliver against the commitments they are contracted to deliver.

It is the responsibility of individual project managers to monitor consultants' performance and to ensure that they meet contractual obligations.

Appropriate sanctions for breach of contract are contained within our contract terms.

No records are held centrally of sanctions applied within contracts and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by her Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if she will make a statement. [27416]

Ms Harman: My Department uses consultants for expert professional advice and support on specific, time-limited tasks, usually in support of projects, but sometimes in the ongoing operation of the Department. However, information on the number of individual consultants involved in these exercises is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

My Department does collect details of expenditure with consultants on a financial year basis. From April 1997 until March 2004, my Department's expenditure with consultants was as follows:

	£ million
1997–98	0.7
1998–99	1.2
1999–2000	1.9
2000–01	2.6
2001–02	6.5
2002–03	5.7
2003–04	9.0

This information is not held centrally by my Department, but is collected retrospectively. The data collection exercise relating to expenditure on consultancy in 2004–05 is under way, and on completion, details will be sent to the hon. Member.

The level of expenditure reflects the wide-ranging and fast-paced programme to modernise the Department's work, to increase efficiency, provide better customer service, and value for money for the taxpayer.

The numbers of special advisers employed by my Department appears as follows:

1997–2002: 1 special adviser per year

2003–05: 2 special advisers per year

The hon. Member is referred to the Cabinet Office response given by the Parliamentary Secretary (Jim Murphy) on 16 November 2005, which reads:

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Court Security

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many courts in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Tees Valley do not have security personnel to protect the premises. [26491]

Ms Harman: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The number of courts whose premises are known to have no security guarding is currently 53, the majority of which are county courts.

(b) All courts in the Tees Valley area do have security guards.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent on security in *(a)* county courts, *(b)* magistrates courts and *(c)* Crown courts in each of the last five years. [26492]

Ms Harman: The information is found in the following table.

£

	Crown and county	*Magistrates*
2004–05	10,089,096	9,932,848
2003–04	10,818,965	9,694,162
2002–03	9,181,097	7,769,358
2001–02	8,077,677	6,640,247
2000–01	7,545,521	3,839,638

Please note the figures in the table are for pre-HMCS period and represent best available information on magistrate courts. This is because the magistrate courts, pre-HMCS, were self-autonomous organisations and were grant funded by the Department. The split between Crown and county security costs is not available.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many contracts were signed by her Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05 for direct mail; and what the value was in each case. [27789]

Ms Harman: My Department commissioned the following direct mailings detailed as follows. Information about newsletters is not held centrally; to collate that information would be disproportionate to cost.

Date	Purpose of direct mail	Value of contract (£)
FY 2005–06 to date		
June 2005	Letter to MPs and Peers to provide background information about the reforms proposed for Legal Aid	1,674.50
October 2005	As above	1,580.00
October 2005	Brochure and DVD sent to employers in the UK to raise awareness of the magistracy and to promote the business benefits of having lay magistrates as staff	8,559.78
October 2005	Leaflets and letters sent to targeted offenders to recoup unpaid court fines from defaulters, as part of Operation Payback 3 campaign	430
October and November 2005	Letter from DCA/ Law Society sent to 8,000 lawyers to raise their awareness of judicial appointments (part of drive to increase diversity within the Judiciary)	1,285
FY 2004–05		
November 2004	Leaflets and letters sent to targeted offenders to recoup unpaid court fines from defaulters (Operation Payback 2)	839.95
January 2005	Leaflets and posters sent to FOI Officers in public authorities, solicitors, Advice Centres, Jobcentres, GP surgeries etc. to raise awareness among staff of new responsibilities as a result of introduction of Freedom of Information Act	86,628.51

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for her Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31043]

Ms Harman: The information requested is as follows:

(a) (i) The average annual real terms growth rate in allocated budget between 1997–98 and 2004–05 was 3.7 per cent. for Resource DEL and 16.2 per cent. for Capital DEL.

(a) (ii) The year on year real terms change was as follows:

Resource DEL

	Percentage
1998–99	[1]-3.4
1999–2000	[1]3.2
2000–01	[1]6.5
2001–02	9.4
2002–03	9.8
2003–04	-2.8
2004–05	4.3

[1] Cash basis.

Capital DEL

	Percentage
1998–99	-10.7
1999–2000	-39.4
2000–01	68.2
2001–02	22.4
2002–03	23.4
2003–04	65.3
2004–05	25.8

(b) (i) The average annual real growth rate in allocated budget between 2005–06 and 2007–08 is -1.7 per cent. for Resource DEL and -10.7 per cent. for Capital DEL.

(b) (ii) The year on year real terms change is as follows:

Resource DEL

	Percentage
2006–07	-2.0
2007–08	-1.4

Capital DEL

	Percentage
2006–07	-23.0
2007–08	3.5

Electoral Commissioners

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will seek to amend the relevant legislation to allow *(a)* local councillors, *(b)* other publicly elected office holders, *(c)* people who have made donations to a registered political party within the last 10 years and *(d)* (i) officers, (ii) employees, (iii) members, and (iv) people who have been members within the last 10 years of a registered political party, to serve as electoral commissioners. [29834]

Ms Harman: There are currently no plans to amend the eligibility criteria for appointment as an Electoral Commissioner as set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000.

Electoral Fraud

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many arrests there have been in each year since 1997 for non-voter registration. [20773]

Ms Harman: It is not an offence in electoral law to fail to register to vote although it is an offence to fail to complete and return an annual registration canvass form to an electoral registration officer (ERO). EROs are responsible for compiling a register of eligible electors for their registration area and would hold locally any records regarding prosecutions for failure to supply information requested as may the police in respect of any related arrests. Such information is not collected centrally for the UK.

Gravesend County Court

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average waiting time for small claims from allocation to hearing was at the Gravesend county court in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [30300]

Ms Harman: The average waiting time for small claims for 2003–04 was 72.7 per cent. and for 2004–05 were 63.8 per cent. of claims heard within 15 weeks of allocation.

The latest data (September 2005) indicates that performance now shows 100 per cent. of small claims heard within 15 weeks.

The key factors related to previous performance are judicial allocations and courthouse capacity.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many drugs possession cases were heard at the Gravesend and Dartford county court in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [30306]

Ms Harman: When referring to Drugs cases I can only assume that the hon. Member means drug testing and treatment orders (DTTOs) which is a criminal matter and are therefore not heard in any county court; county courts deal with civil matters only.

No drugs cases were heard in Gravesend or Dartford county courts for the specified period.

Her Majesty's Courts Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what funding has been made available for the start-up costs of Her Majesty's Courts Service. [27476]

Ms Harman: The resource budget for HMCS' first year of inception in 2005–06 is £962.52 million. The funding allocation is net of income and efficiency savings. The difference in the running costs of pre and post HMCS included in the funding is £217 million.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many employees in her Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28968]

Bridget Prentice: None of our employees were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October.

Postal Voting

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make it a requirement for the returning officer to make available a marked register indicating postal voters in West Lancashire. [27696]

Ms Harman: There is currently no provision in electoral law for a Returning Officer to prepare a register of postal voters marked to show which of them returned their postal votes. However, the Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament does make such provision, and our intention is that marked registers of returned postal votes will therefore be available after future elections.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the extent of postal vote fraud in *(a)* the last round of local elections and *(b)* the last general election. [30937]

Ms Harman: We are aware of allegations of electoral fraud in five areas at the last general and local elections on 5 May 2005. some of which are currently the subject of police investigation. However, no systematic central record is kept of such allegations and there may be others of which we are not aware. Where incidences of electoral fraud are discovered, or allegations made, they should be reported to, and investigated by, the relevant police authority.

The Government are nonetheless aware that these and previous cases have highlighted areas for improvement in the process of postal voting. Our policy paper 'Electoral Administration-a policy paper for discussion', published on 25 May 2005 put forward a number of proposals aimed at increasing the security of postal voting. We intend to introduce secondary legislation to implement these proposals in time for the local elections in May 2006.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the special advisers in post in her Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to her Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29415]

Bridget Prentice: Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Teesside Coroner

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Lord Chancellor has continued to require the Teesside coroner to provide monthly reports since the end of June. [30401]

Ms Harman: The coroner for Teesside has continued to provide monthly reports to the Lord Chancellor since the end of June. The last report was for September 2005 and the position with regard to outstanding inquests at that time was that a total of 193 inquest cases were outstanding with 44 of those over six months old.

Young Offenders

Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average

time was between arrest and sentence for convicted young offenders in Merseyside in 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [29688]

Ms Harman: The Department does not collect this information centrally for all convicted young offenders but it does collect information for all offenders who are classified as Persistent Young Offenders.

The most recent figures available are for Persistent Young Offenders sentenced during August 2005. They indicate that the average time between arrest and sentence in Merseyside is 56 days compared to a target of 71 days. For the whole of 2005 to the end of August the figure is 58 days.

Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what monitoring is being carried out on the take-up and impact of special measures under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. [30427]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

Two major research studies on special measures were commissioned by the Home Office. The first assessed the satisfaction of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. The report 'Are special measures working? Evidence from surveys of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses' (Home Office Research Study 283, available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hors283.pdf) was published in June 2004. Key findings from the research were also published in Home Office Findings 240 and are available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/r240.pdf.

Key points are that a third of witnesses using special measures would not have been willing and able to give evidence without the availability of these measures and that those who used the measures were significantly more likely to express satisfaction with the criminal justice system. The report of the second study evaluating the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in implementing the special measures is likely to be published in early 2006.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol and Drug Misuse

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of prisoners in Welsh prisons have been tested for drug use in the last four years, broken down by prison. [27926]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are three main types of drug testing in prisons: clinical, mandatory and voluntary. Full data on clinical and voluntary testing is not held centrally.

Under the mandatory programme, prisons are required, depending on population size to random test either five or 10 per cent. of their population each month. Targeted mandatory tests are also undertaken. Voluntary tests at a minimum of 18/yr are undertaken as part of a voluntary agreement or compact between a prison and prisoner. The number of compacts, details of which are held centrally, is an indirect measure of number of tests. The table sets out the percentage of tests in Welsh prisons in each of the last four years, along with the percentage of voluntary compacts.

Percentage

	2001–02			2002–03		
	Random	*Target*	*Compacts*	*Random*	*Target*	*Compacts*
Cardiff	4.9	2.7	38.3	5.0	2.0	56.7
Parc	4.9	0.5	3.6	4.6	0.2	18.9
Swansea	9.4	2.5	12.3	13.6	2.3	24.9
Usk/Prescoed	10.1	1.0	99.0	10.0	0.6	119.2

Percentage

	2003–04			2004–05		
	Random	*Target*	*Compacts*	*Random*	*Target*	*Compacts*
Cardiff	5.2	2.4	41.7	5.3	2.7	62.6
Parc	5.0	0.6	19.7	5.0	0.3	32.7
Swansea	9.4	0.8	31.8	9.8	1.0	31.1
Usk/Prescoed	10.0	0.7	29.0	10.0	1.1	26.8

Notes:

1. The voluntary compact per cent. figures are those quoted by the establishments as at the end of March of the financial year.
2. Some prisoners will be tested more than once in any one year, particularly for targeted testing.
3. Percentage figures are based on the average population.

Animal Testing (Attacks)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to improve the security of animal testing centres from attack by extremists. [25266]

Paul Goggins: We condemn outright the harassment and intimidation by animal rights extremists of those going about their lawful business. Our aim is to eradicate this despicable threat and ensure that life saving research and testing can continue freely in the UK. We have in place a tough interdepartmental strategy to do this. We will maintain pressure on animal rights extremists and, in co-operation with law enforcement agencies and industry, will continue to develop protective measures against the extremist threat.

Steps we have recently taken include: new legislation to protect animal research organisations which has led to the arrests of several individuals; additional resources for the police; and the appointment of a National Co-ordinator for Domestic Extremism with a central team to drive forward police action nationally. Several leading extremists have been convicted this year and others face charges.

Car Seizures

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cars were impounded in Leeds North West in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [29433]

Paul Goggins: We do not collect centrally data on the numbers of vehicles removed or seized by the police or on the associated costs.

Children Act (Smacking)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suspects have been *(a)* arrested for and *(b)* charged with smacking children under the Children Act 2004 since it came into force. [30235]

Fiona Mactaggart: None. The Children Act 2004 simply removes the defence of 'reasonable punishment' in relation to certain criminal offences, such as assault causing grievous bodily harm. Charges against a person alleged to have assaulted a child would be brought under the relevant criminal legislation, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Information on arrests collected centrally is based on persons arrested for 'notifiable' offences by main offence group. It does not distinguish between specific offences. Information on the number of persons charged by offence is not collected centrally.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood of 19 September to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport regarding the domestic violence register on behalf of Debra Michele Powell which was forwarded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to his Department, DCMS reference CMS/23392. [29286]

Fiona Mactaggart: A response to the letter from my right hon. Friend of 19 September to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport regarding the domestic violence register on behalf of Debra Michele Powell, which was forwarded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to the Home Office, DCMS reference CMS/23392, was sent by Baroness Scotland, on 18 November 2005.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reasons were for the reduction in funding for the Criminal Cases Review Commission between 2003 and 2005; and if he will make a statement. [26633]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) received a total budget in 2004–05 of £8,462,000 compared with £8,080,000 in 2003–04. The CCRC received less grant in aid in 2004–05 because of the requirement to use cash reserves which they had accrued from previous years, in accordance with the rules of 'Government Accounting'. This is the Treasury guidance which specifies that grant in aid should not be issued in advance of need and that cash balances should be kept at a minimum.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the members of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; what the qualifications are of each member; and how long each has served as a member of the Board. [29744]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board administered the non-statutory criminal injuries compensation scheme in force until 31 March 1996. The Board was wound up on 31 March 2000. The old scheme was superseded, from 1 April 1996 by a new, statutory, tariff based scheme. The tariff scheme is administered by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). CICA does not have a board of members. Claims are determined by 'claims officers', who are civil servants seconded to the Authority from the Home Office and the Scottish Executive. Appeals against decisions of CICA are considered by adjudicators in the independent Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel (CICAP). Curriculum vitae of CICAP adjudicators are given in the Panel's annual reports and accounts, copies of which are placed in the Library.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 772W, what measures are being taken to decrease the length of time spent processing an application for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001. [28426]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) are recruiting more staff to deal with claims. The statutory 'Code of Practice for Victims of Crime', published in October 2005, requires both CICA and the police to meet obligations set out in the code about dealing with applications for criminal injuries compensation. And CICA and the police have concluded a new protocol to ensure a more rapid turn-round by the police of CICA requests for information.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many awards were made for criminal injury compensation in each year from 2001 to 2005; what the *(a)* average and *(b)* maximum period of time taken to make the award was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [16933]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following information has been provided by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

Financial year	*Money awards made*	*Median time to make awards (months)*
2000–01	36,924	6–8
2001–02	39,813	6–8
2002–03	42,283	6–8
2003–04	41,354	6–8
2004–05	35,446	8–10

Some claims can take many years before final settlement is possible. For example, cases involving serious injuries to children, where the final prognosis and settlement may have to be deferred until the claimant reaches adulthood. Pending final settlement of cases like these, interim awards can be made.

Dental Treatment (Compensation)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure compensation awarded as a result of an assault covers costs incurred for dental treatment. [24829]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme pays compensation on the basis of a tariff (scale) of awards that groups together injuries of comparable severity and allocates a financial value to them. Awards for dental injuries range from a level 2 award of £1,250 to a level 8 award of £3,800.

Drug Abuse

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the cross-departmental plan to tackle drug abuse among young people, with particular reference to the 30 high-focus areas referred to on page 103 of the 2005 Departmental Report. [26698]

Paul Goggins: Good progress is being made in implementing the cross departmental plan to tackle drug misuse among young people. The 2004–05 British Crime Survey shows that in the past year Class A drug use by 16 to 24-year-olds has been stable while the number using any drug has fallen. Closer links between drugs services and children's services are being developed; underpinned by joint Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Home Office (HO) guidance issued as a part of the Every Child Matters Change for Children Programme. 30 High Focus Areas are leading the way in implementing this guidance through the delivery of effective prevention and early intervention services for young people most at risk from drugs.

Drug Smugglers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug smugglers have been convicted in each year since 1998. [22956]

Paul Goggins: The available information relates to the unlawful importation or exportation of a drug controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

The number of persons found guilty by the courts, cautioned by police or dealt with by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise compounding in England and Wales for these offences totalled 1,340 in 1998, 1,310 in 1999, 1,290 in 2000, 1,800 in 2001, 1,740 in 2002 and 1,170 in 2003. Data for 2004 are scheduled to be published in November 2005.

Drug Treatment

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has commissioned on the effectiveness of drug treatment programmes in *(a)* HMP Wandsworth and *(b)* other prisons in England and Wales. [17658]

Fiona Mactaggart: Research into the Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt) programme, currently running at Her Majesty's prison Wandsworth, has shown positive results—with 40 per cent. of graduates, rather than an expected 51 per cent. reoffending within two years.

Wider research also demonstrates the effectiveness of drug treatment programmes, which can achieve a reduction of up to 15 per cent. in the extent of reoffending.

The research emphasises that such results can only be achieved where effective through-care arrangements are made and timely after-care services are available in the community.

Drug-related Crime

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of drug-related crime was in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [24287]

Paul Goggins: Recorded crime figures are used to measure the extent of crime in local areas. Although these include statistics on drugs offences, such as possession and supply, and acquisitive crimes which may be drug-related, such as burglary and shoplifting, they do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to provide reliable estimates from these statistics of the numbers of crimes that are drug-related in different areas.

Forgery Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under sections (A) 34 and (B) 36 of the Forgery Act 1861 in each year since 1984. [27144]

Fiona Mactaggart: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

Data collected on the Home Office Court Proceedings database for offences under the Forgery Act 1861 are in paper format prior to 2003. As these records need to be manually analysed, sample years have be selected and are shown in the table. The number of convictions under S34 of the Forgery Act 1861 'Acknowledge bail in false name' is contained in the table for years 1992, 1997, 2002–04. There were no convictions under S36 of the Act 'Destroying, injuring, forging or falsifying registers of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths or burials or certified copies'.

Paper records prior to 1992 are no longer available.

Number of males and females convicted at all courts under S.34 Forgery Act 1861 in England and Wales, 1992, 1997, 2002–04[1]

Offence: Acknowledge bail in false name
Statute: Forgery Act 1861 S.34

	Found guilty	
	Male	*Female*
1992	20	–
1997	13	–
2002	9	3
2003	16	2
2004	7	1

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Homophobic Crime

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidences of crime

involving an element of homophobia were reported in each year between 1999 and 2004, broken down by police authority. [28332]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally as offences involving homophobia are not separately identified in the recorded crime series.

Illegal Drugs Trade

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the value of the illegal drugs trade in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* the Metropolitan police area of London in the past 15 years. [16593]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office does not estimate the value of the illegal drugs trade at a local level. We do, however, estimate the overall size of the market for illicit drugs on a national basis. In 2001, the Home Office published an estimate of the size of the market for illicit drugs in the UK which amounted to around £6.6 billion in 1998. Full details of this study (Occasional Paper 74) are available to download at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/drugs1.html.

Jury Trials

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to bring into force part 7 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 relating to conducting complex trials without a jury; and if he will make a statement. [21995]

Fiona Mactaggart: Further to the statement made in both Houses on 21 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 35WS, a draft order to bring section 43 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (which makes provision for serious or complex fraud cases to be tried without a jury) into force on 1 January 2006 was laid before Parliament on 27 October. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Commencement No. 12 and Transitory Provisions) Order 2005 requires an affirmative resolution of both Houses.

Learco Chindamo

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make inquiries of the Parole Board whether it is intended to release Learco Chindamo from prison in the near future; and if he will make a statement. [30493]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The independent Parole Board cannot consider the question of Mr. Chindamo's suitability for release on life licence until he has served the minimum period of imprisonment necessary to meet the requirements of retribution and deterrence (the tariff). Mr. Chindamo's tariff was set at 12 years and will not expire until 2008.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will provide the Parole Board with his view of Mr. Chindamo's potential risk and he will also be represented at the parole hearing. However, the decision on whether or not to release Mr. Chindamo on tariff expiry will be a matter for the Parole Board panel. That decision will be based on the level of harm to the public that the panel considers he presents at that time.

Murder

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were successfully prosecuted for murder, where they were judged to have been provoked *(a)* between 1996 and 2001 and *(b)* since 2001. [21053]

Fiona Mactaggart: The available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of successful prosecutions for murder and manslaughter, 1996 to 2003, is contained in the table. It is not possible to identify those convictions where the defendant was judged to have been provoked, as the circumstances surrounding an offence are not centrally collected.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts for certain offences under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861[1], England and Wales 1996 to 2003

	Found guilty	
	Murder	*Manslaughter[2,3]*
1996	257	529
1997	275	541
1998	256	549
1999	252	484
2000	261	505
2001	285	565
2002	324	619
2003	277	561

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Covers: manslaughter, infanticide, child destruction, causing death by dangerous driving, diminished responsibility and causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.

[3] Found guilty figures may include those prosecutions for murder that were reduced to manslaughter.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2004 will be published in late November.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are for the replacement of the chief executive of the National Offender Management Service; and what the recruitment arrangements will be. [22675]

Fiona Mactaggart: The chief executive post will be subject to an external recruitment campaign. The Department is being assisted in this process by a specialist, external recruitment agency.

The Civil Service Commissioners are fully involved in this process, and a Commissioner will chair the selection panel.

The post is permanent and pensionable.

Parole

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list *(a)* the crimes committed by prisoners released on parole and *(b)* the number of individuals who committed each crime while on parole in the last year for which figures are available. [29351]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information is not recorded in this format centrally and is thus not available.

Passports

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passport applications have been refused *(a)* to prevent individuals from leaving the UK to avoid prosecution or legal action, *(b)* to individuals considered to be notoriously undesirable or dangerous and *(c)* to prevent the international abduction of children in the last 10 years; and whether there are any other circumstances in which passports have been refused. [18435]

Andy Burnham: Passports are issued at the discretion of the Secretary of State in exercise of the Royal Prerogative. Apart from those applications that are unsuccessful because the applicant does not hold British nationality or because identity is not satisfactorily established, there are additionally four separate circumstances where an individuals passport application is refused. These are

1. a minor whose journey is known to be contrary to a court, order, to the wishes of a parent or other person or authority who has been granted a residence or care order and in other similar circumstances;

2. a person for whose arrest a warrant has been issued in the United Kingdom or who is wanted by the police on suspicion of a serious crime;

3. in very rare cases, a person whose past or proposed activities were so demonstrably undesirable that passport facilities would be contrary to the public interest; and

4. a person repatriated from abroad at public expense until the debt has been repaid.

The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 makes provision for the Crown Courts to impose travel restriction orders on certain drug trafficking offenders and to confiscate the passports of those who are British nationals for the period of the travel ban. The courts provide details to the UKPS of those subject to a travel restriction order.

The UKPS records of other unsuccessful applications are not held in a form which distinguishes between those where the claim to a passport is not established and those refused on one of the grounds above.

Police Reform Act (Schedule 4)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vehicles being used in a manner which contravened sections 3 or 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 have been seized by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers under paragraph 9 of schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29354]

Paul Goggins: The figures requested are not collected centrally.

Politically Exposed Persons

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures his Department has in place for *(a)* identifying and *(b)* tracking politically exposed persons who bring wealth derived from the illicit acquisition of foreign states' public assets into the United Kingdom. [29693]

Paul Goggins: The National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) has procedures in place to identify persons, including politically exposed persons, suspected of being in possession of criminal property and to refer the intelligence to law enforcement agencies. Much intelligence of this nature comes by way of suspicious activity reports made to NCIS by UK banks and others within the 'regulated sector' under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The Home Office works closely with NCIS, other Government Departments, law enforcement and industry to ensure the effectiveness of these procedures.

Prisons

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to provide more prison places over the next five years. [29353]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is a funded building programme to increase operational capacity to 79,100 by June 2006 and 80,400 by 2007.

We continue to investigate options for providing further increases in capacity.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the prison population has been *(a)* in total, *(b)* in the Prison Service and *(c)* within private prisons in each of the last five years. [25452]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information for England and Wales is in the following table, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

Population of prison population by category and year. England and Wales 30 June

	Contracted out	*Prison service establishments*	*Total*
2001	7,722	58,681	66,403
2002	8,975	62,243	71,218
2003	9,270	64,387	73,657
2004	9,265	65,223	74,488
2005	9,990	66,200	76,190

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being taken to reduce the availability of illegal drugs in prisons. [29918]

Fiona Mactaggart: A comprehensive framework exists to reduce the availability and spread of illegal drugs in prisons. It includes:

passive and active drug dogs;

closed circuit television systems and fixed and low-level furniture;

closed visits and visit bans on visitors suspected of smuggling drugs;

sharing of intelligence with police about drug routes into prisons;

the use of the Supply Reduction Good Practice Guide; and mandatory drug testing.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will increase the amount spent on drug rehabilitation schemes in prisons. [29919]

Fiona Mactaggart: Given drug treatment's key role in rehabilitating offenders and reducing re-offending, the Government have invested heavily in a wide range of drug treatment in prisons. In the past year alone, an additional £3.4 million made available for intensive drug rehabilitation programmes. Substantial funding is also being invested over the next three years to boost the amount and quality of treatment available to drug-misusers in prison—crucially during the first 28 days in custody.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what specific training is given to staff working with girls under 18 years in prisons. [30366]

Fiona Mactaggart: In March 2004 the Prison Service and Youth Justice Board introduced the Juvenile Awareness Staff Programme to set a minimum standard of training for those working with children and young people, both boys and girls, in custody. The programme was reviewed in 2005 and new modules were added to the existing programme. The programme now includes modules on, among other things, safeguarding, child protection, mental health, substance misuse, vulnerability assessment, resettlement planning and managing difficult behaviour. This training has been delivered to all existing and new staff who work on the dedicated units for young women. Overall 1,000 staff have completed the programme to date.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what criteria life prisoners are assessed by the Parole Board for release. [30386]

Fiona Mactaggart: In considering the possible release of any tariff expired life sentence prisoner, the Parole Board is required by statute to satisfy itself that

"it is no longer necessary for the protection of the public that the prisoner should be confined".

The Parole Board makes risk assessments of life sentence prisoners against criteria contained in directions given by the Secretary of State under Section 32 (6) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. In addition, Rules made under Section 32(5) of that Act outline the procedural arrangements for the appointment of board panels to consider lifer cases and the provision of evidence. The directions and rules were amended on 1 August 2004 following changes to the release arrangements for mandatory life sentence prisoners as introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003. My predecessor (Paul Goggins) announced those changes in a written ministerial statement on 22 July 2004. A copy of his statement is available in the Library.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the requirements for parole for life prisoners; and if he will make a statement. [30389]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no plans to review the parole system for life sentence prisoners. The release of all life sentence prisoners who have served the minimum period of imprisonment for the purposes of retribution and deterrence (the tariff), is entirely a matter for the independent Parole Board.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners are waiting to attend *(a)* lifer victim awareness courses and *(b)* alcohol management courses; [30394]

(2) how many prisons are running *(a)* alcohol management and *(b)* lifer victim awareness courses. [30385]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on *(a)* alcohol management and *(b)* lifer victim awareness courses is not collated centrally.

A number of prisons run alcohol management courses. There are no nationally accredited lifer victim awareness courses run by the Prison Service. Her Majesty's prison The Mount delivers a lifer victim awareness course.

Information on the number of prisoners waiting to attend such courses is not collated centrally.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many lifer victim awareness courses are accredited for prisons in the UK. [30395]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no nationally accredited lifer victim awareness courses run by the Prison Service. However, accredited general offending behaviour courses do include a victim perspective, and programmes such as the Sex Offender Treatment Programme also engage offenders in victim empathy work.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how courses are chosen for life prisoners in order that they can demonstrate they have progressed before they are considered for parole. [30396]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prison staff are required to complete a life sentence plan (LSP) for all life sentence prisoners. The LSP framework provides the prisoner with a series of objectives designed to help him or her reduce their risk, and the means by which such a reduction might be achieved.

Specific risk reduction work, in the form of offending behaviour programmes, courses and other treatment options will be identified and managed throughout sentence by prison staff and treatment managers. The prisoner is involved in the LSP process and will be aware of the various targets and objectives. Selection for particular interventions will depend on a number of factors. These include, for example, an assessment of suitability, the prisoner's motivation to address the various treatment needs, the availability and location of the intervention, the proximity of the tariff expiry date, the sequencing of the individual's treatment needs alongside areas like work, education or vocational training. Treatment managers in prisons are largely responsible for prioritising cases and managing waiting lists for programmes and courses. In this respect, the treatment needs of life sentence prisoners would also have to be prioritised as appropriate, alongside those of determinate sentence prisoners.

Reoffending Statistics

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rate of reoffending

within *(a)* three years, *(b)* four years, *(c)* five years and *(d)* 10 years has been for prisoners released in each of the last 10 years. [29210]

Fiona Mactaggart: Actual re-offending rates are not available. Reconviction rates are a commonly used proxy and two year reconviction rates are published annually.

The most recent data are shown in the table. Owing to the administrative costs of matching criminal histories, the results shown relate to the reconviction results for samples of offenders.

There are no recent data on longer term reconviction rates.

Year of discharge[1]	*Percentages of prisoners reconvicted of standard list offences within two years of discharge from prison*
1992	51
1993	53
1994	56
1995	58
1996	57
1997	58
1998	59
1999	59
2000	N/A
2001	61

[1] The reconviction rates are based on all those prisoners discharged in the first three months of the years shown.

Road Safety

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people received a positive breathalyser test in the Cleveland police area in each of the last five years, broken down by basic command unit. [25677]

Paul Goggins: Information from 1999 to 2003 (latest available) for Cleveland police area is given in the table. The information is collected centrally at police force area level only. Data for 2004 will be published early in 2006.

Number of positive/refused screening breath tests, Cleveland 1999–2003[1]

Cleveland	*Numbers*
1999	800
2000	800
2001	800
2002	800
2003[1]	1,100

[1] Following comparisons between the number of positive breath tests requested by each police force in 2003 and the number of court proceedings drink/driving related offences, it became clear that there was under-reporting in a number of forces. As a result Cleveland court proceedings figures have been substituted for the positive breath test figure.

Note:
Numbers in the table have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Sex Abuse Investigations

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a Royal Commission to examine the processes used in sex abuse investigations. [26687]

Paul Goggins: The Government and the police continue to work together in order to ensure that investigations of allegations of sexual abuse are effective as well as sensitive to the needs and concerns of complainants and alleged offenders. In the light of such initiatives, we do not consider that the case for setting up a Royal Commission has been made.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of seeking to introduce a new offence of intentionally transmitting a serious disease. [26017]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office consulted on the issue of offences of violence in 1998, and this included the issue of causing harm by transmitting a serious disease.

Anyone who intentionally transmits a serious disease and thereby causes harm may be guilty of an offence of intentionally causing Grievous Bodily Harm under section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. Recent cases have confirmed that anyone who recklessly sexually transmits a serious disease may be guilty of an offence of maliciously causing grievous bodily harm under section 20 of the 1861 Act. Home Office officials are working with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to develop guidelines for prosecutors and information for the public which will help clarify what the CPS take into account when deciding whether to prosecute.

Steven John Toplass

Mr. Flello: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide financial compensation for Stephen John Toplass, in connection with his incarceration in Spain. [29520]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

The Government do not pay compensation to UK citizens who are detained overseas. Compensation is a matter for the host Government. If Mr. Toplass wishes to pursue this question further, he should seek the advice of his lawyer.

Terrorism Bill

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Cambridgeshire Constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Cambridgeshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30238]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October, on which the chief constable or other senior police officers of Derbyshire constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Derbyshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form of contact that took. [30478]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Derbyshire constabulary.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Greater Manchester police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Greater Manchester about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30610]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Greater Manchester police.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Cheshire constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Cheshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30693]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Cheshire constabulary.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Merseyside police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Merseyside about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30694]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Merseyside police.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October, on which the (i) chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Hertfordshire constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Hertfordshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30871]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Hertfordshire police.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October, on which the (i) chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Nottingham Police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Nottinghamshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30872]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Nottinghamshire Police.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which the (i) acting chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Norfolk constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Norfolk about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30934]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Norfolk constabulary.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Dorset police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Dorset about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29772]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Dorset.

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October, on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Cumbria constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Cumbria about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29776]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Cumbria constabulary.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which the (i) chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of the Metropolitan Police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in London about the Terrorism Bill; and what form the contact took. [29879]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of the Metropolitan Police.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Staffordshire Police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Staffordshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form the contact took. [29880]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of the Staffordshire Police.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Essex police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Essex about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that took. [29910]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Essex police.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of North Wales Police/Heddlu Gogledd Cymru contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in North Wales about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29972]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constables of North Wales and Heddlu Gogledd Cymru constabularies.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the

chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of West Midlands police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in the West Midlands about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29973]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of West Midlands police.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Lancashire constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Lancashire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29974]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Lancashire.

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of City of London police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in the City of London about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29975]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constables City of London police.

Mr. Mackay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Thames Valley police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Thames Valley about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29976]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Thames Valley police.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Kent police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Kent about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29977]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Kent constabulary.

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Northamptonshire police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Northamptonshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [29980]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Northamptonshire constabulary

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of (A) Cleveland police, (B) Northumbria police and (C) Durham police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in the relevant police force area about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30054]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constables of Cleveland, Northumbria Durham constabularies.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Surrey police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Surrey about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30183]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Surrey constabulary.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Wiltshire Constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Wiltshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30257]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Wiltshire Constabulary.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Bedfordshire Police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Bedfordshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30258]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Bedfordshire Police.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Leicestershire Constabulary contacted honourable Members representing constituencies in Leicestershire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30277]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Leicestershire Constabulary.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Avon and Somerset Constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Avon and Somerset about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30296]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Dyfed Powys

Police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Dyfed Powys about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30302]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Dyfed Powys Police.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October, on which the (i) chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Hampshire Constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Hampshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30305]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Hampshire Constabulary.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October, on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of North Yorkshire Police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in North Yorkshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30314]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of North Yorkshire Police.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October, on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Gloucestershire Constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Gloucestershire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30315]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Gloucestershire Constabulary.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of West Yorkshire police contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in West Yorkshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30321]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of West Yorkshire Police.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before 26 October and *(b)* after 26 October on which the (i) chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of South Wales Police/Heddlu De Cymru contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in South Wales about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30322]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of the South Wales Police.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October, on which the (i) chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of Gwent police/Heddlu Gwent contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Gwent about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30329]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Gwent police.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of South Yorkshire constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in South Yorkshire about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30334]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of the South Yorkshire constabulary.

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of the Police Service of Northern Ireland contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Northern Ireland about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [30347]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the Chief Constable of the Northern Ireland Police Service.

Young Offenders

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young offenders aged 18 to 20 years were received into prison under sentence or remand in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* ethnic group and *(b)* sex. [21789]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information is in the table, as recorded on the central Prison Service IT system.

Total number of young adult (18 to 20 years old) receptions into prison establishments by sex England and Wales

	Number
2004	
Males	17,713
Females	1,401
Total	19,114
2003	
Males	18,297
Females	1,607
Total	19,904
2002	
Males	19,869
Females	1,784
Total	21,653
2001	
Males	20,133
Females	1,701
Total	21,834
2000	
Males	20,624
Females	1,599
Total	22,223

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 24 November 2005

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crime Victims

24. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Solicitor-General if he will make a statement on his role in enhancing the position of victims of crime in the criminal justice system. [31304]

The Solicitor-General: The Government are committed to placing victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

The prosecutors' Pledge, issued last month, sets out for the first time the level of service victims can expect to receive from prosecutors. Separately, the "No Witness, No Justice" programme is being implemented and there are now some 131 witness care units providing support to victims and witnesses. The CPS has recently concluded a pilot of the use of independent advisers to help victims of domestic violence through the prosecution process, and I am looking at ways of building on its success by piloting a similar project in rape cases.

Crown Prosecution Service

25. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Solicitor-General if he will make a statement on the co-location of Crown Prosecution Service offices with police stations. [31305]

The Solicitor-General: CPS staff are located in a number of police stations under the charging scheme. This enables the CPS and police to work together effectively as part of the prosecution team, to bring more offences to justice and improve public confidence.

Incitement to Religious Hatred

26. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment he has made of whether it will be necessary for the Law Officers to recruit additional staff to prosecute cases of incitement to religious hatred if Parliament legislates to make this an offence. [31306]

The Solicitor-General: As with the existing offences of incitement to racial hatred, we do not consider that there will be a large number of prosecutions. Prosecutions for racial hatred offences, have averaged around four a year since 1987.

Fraud Bill

27. **Janet Anderson:** To ask the Solicitor-General what recent discussions the Attorney-General has had with the senior judiciary on the common law offence of conspiracy to defraud and whether to include provisions to repeal it in the Fraud Bill. [31307]

The Solicitor-General: Yes. Following the committee stage of the Fraud Bill on 19 July, the right hon. Lord Justice Rose wrote to the Attorney-General expressing the unanimous view of the Rose Committee that conspiracy to defraud should be retained as it can be the most effective charge in a case where multiple defendants are engaged in a fraudulent course of conduct.

Community Justice

28. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Solicitor-General what steps the Crown Prosecution Service has taken to support the concept of community courts and community justice panels in Nottingham and other parts of England; and if he will make a statement. [31308]

The Solicitor-General: The CPS is committed to improving the way it engages with the communities it serves and published a Community Engagement Strategy in May 2005. The CPS has played an important role in developing the first community court projects in North Liverpool and Salford. It will, however, be necessary to carefully evaluate these projects before considering wider roll out. In Nottingham, the Chief Crown Prosecutor intends to explore options for developing community justice approaches through the local Criminal Justice Board.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list the special advisers in post in the Law Officers Departments, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to these Departments of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29419]

The Solicitor-General: None; the Law Officers Departments employ no special advisers.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Targets

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to meet her Department's 2004 public service agreement (PSA) number 4; what assessment she has made of the extent to which the indicators associated with PSA 4 relate to matters that fall within her ministerial responsibilities; and what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on meeting PSA 4. [30675]

Jim Knight: In relation to rural economic productivity the regional development agencies (RDAs) have been tasked as key strategic partners for the delivery of PSA 4. This is reflected in the Government's tasking framework and RDA corporate plans. To support the RDAs in their work DEFRA has increased its contribution to the RDA single pot to £72 million per annum from April 2005.

This challenging target, including the section dealing with rural access to services, also requires a wider effort ensuring that the effectiveness of the all Departments and delivery agents in delivering to all communities, including rural ones, is maximised. My responsibility is to ensure that rural proofing, now a requirement of all Departments in the development of policy and delivery

of services, is taking place. Defra continues to work closely with partners at all levels to ensure that spending is effectively aligned and contributes to the target.

In the previous Parliament the Minister of State for Rural Affairs regularly met with cabinet colleagues to discuss their part in the developing rural agenda, and plans are in hand to hold further meetings over the coming months. PSA targets are regularly discussed in PSX cabinet committee.

Endangered Species (Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her latest assessment is of the most endangered species of *(a)* flora and *(b)* fauna in Northamptonshire; and what steps are being taken to reverse their decline. [30855]

Jim Knight: As with so many other lowland areas in England, wildlife habitats in Northamptonshire have been deteriorating in quality and becoming more fragmented. This has been due to a number of factors, such as:

past intensification of agriculture;

water management;

invasive non-native species;

inappropriate management of woodlands;

development pressures;

and more recently, climate change.

As a result there has been a decline in the area and quality of wildlife habitat and their associated species, in particular traditional hay meadows and birds such as snipe and lapwing.

A number of measures are in place to address these issues:

The new agri-environment schemes (Higher Level and Entry Level Stewardship Schemes) are being taken forward across the county;

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) has identified a number of priority actions and targets, such as re-creation of limestone grassland on arable land, led in Northamptonshire by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough;

The Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area has focused efforts on the contribution to sustainable communities of "green infrastructure". A great deal of work, led by the River Nene Regional Park, has been carried out to determine how and where natural assets (including BAP habitats) should be restored, and recreated to protect and enhance Northamptonshire's natural environment, alongside the growth agenda;

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI will be notified on 24 November 2005, safeguarding 1,390ha of gravel pits and wet woodland, as well as internationally important number of wintering birds. Approval is currently being sought from Defra for consultation on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits pSPA

Government objectives for planning as stated in PPS9 are to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology;

For the future, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill provides an extension of the CROW biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

Snares

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her response is to the recommendations of the independent working group on snares; if she will review her Department's Code of Practice on snares; and if she will bring forward proposals to make the code legally binding. [30491]

Jim Knight: DEFRA has produced a Snares Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the Independent Snares Working Group. DEFRA's Code of Good Practice on the use of Snares in Fox and Rabbit Control was published on 19 October 2005. DEFRA will review the Code of Practice during the next three years and will also consider making the Code of Practice legally binding.

Warm Front Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households were helped by the Warm Front programme in the latest year for which figures are available. [30830]

Mr. Morley: During 2004–05 some 187,940 households received assistance from the Warm Front scheme.

Water Supply (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the quality of the water supply in Coventry. [31095]

Mr. Morley: Drinking water is supplied to the constituency of Coventry South by Severn Trent Water. The water supply is made up of two water supply zones for monitoring purposes—the Coventry City Centre and Whitely Zone and the Tile Hill, Balsall Common and Knowle Zone.

The independent Drinking Water Inspectorate has scrutinised the results of the 3,812 tests of samples of drinking water collected in these two zones between 1 January and 31 August 2005. I am advised by the Chief Inspector of Drinking Water that all these tests (most taken at consumers kitchen taps) met the very strict European and national drinking water quality standards.

Severn Trent Water is required by the health authority to artificially fluoridate drinking water in the constituency of Coventry South. The Drinking Water Inspectorate have advised that tests in 2005 show that the drinking water health standard for fluoride (1.5 mg/l) has not been exceeded and the dental health fluoride dosing target value (1.0 mg/l) has been achieved.

WALES

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27384]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office movable assets are its furniture pool, with a net book value (NBV) of £61,904 as of 31 March 2005. The only immovable asset is Gwydyr House and surrounding grounds based on Whitehall. The net book value as of 31 March 2005, is shown as £2,950,000.

Ministerial Travel

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within his Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if he will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27808]

Mr. Hain: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used, (and shows how many officials accompanied Ministers in those circumstances). The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

Since the Wales Office was established in July 1999 we have never used helicopters.

Detailed information requested in respect to the number of flight taken by Ministers can be provided only at a disproportionate cost, for the years 1999 to 2003–04.

(a) No charter flights were taken during financial year 2004–05.

(b) A total of four first class tickets were purchased during period 2004–05, to Hong Kong where two officials and one special adviser accompanied the Minister.

NHS Complaints

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had in Cabinet concerning complaints made by patients about the NHS in Wales. [31488]

Mr. Hain: The management of patient complaints in Wales is the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government. In my role as Secretary of State for Wales, I discuss issues relating to health service delivery regularly with the First Minister.

I also regularly discuss matters relating to health services in Wales with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health. For example, in the current Session, my right hon. Friend has introduced two Bills, the Health Bill and the NHS Redress Bill, which contain provisions relating to Wales.

I will continue to raise such matters with Cabinet colleagues when it is appropriate to do so.

NHS Finance

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had in Cabinet regarding budget deficits of Welsh *(a)* NHS trusts and *(b)* health boards. [31487]

Mr. Hain: The financial management of NHS trusts is the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government. In my role as Secretary of State for Wales, I discuss issues relating to health service delivery regularly with the First Minister, including NHS trust finances.

I also regularly discuss matters relating to health services in Wales with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Wales, recently met the Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services to discuss this particular issue.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learning

12. **Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to target the engagement of adult learners in former coalfield areas. [31320]

Phil Hope: Our priorities for adult learners in former coalfield areas are to help them gain skills for life through improving their literacy, language and numeracy skills; and a platform of skills for employability through a first full level 2 qualification. We are targeting the engagement of low skilled individuals wherever they live, through a range of measures in the Skills Strategy such as the Skills for Life provision and the Level 2 Entitlement.

Bullying

13. **Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the level of bullying in schools. [31321]

Beverley Hughes: Statistics on bullying across the country are not available and we think it would be unwise to make an estimate. While cases now appear to be reported more often, we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children. As children and young people become increasingly confident that bullying will not be tolerated, we would expect an increase in the number of incidents recorded.

Secondary Schools (Wellingborough)

14. **Mr. Bone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Government plan to fund the building of a new secondary school in the Wellingborough constituency. [31322]

Phil Hope: Planning for school buildings is undertaken locally by authorities. We are allocating Northamptonshire schools over £78 million of capital over the next three years, and expect this to be used for its priority needs. In the longer term, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) will support investment in all secondary schools in Northamptonshire, including new

schools, where there is need. The Wellingborough area of Northamptonshire is prioritised in BSF towards the end of the programme.

Specialist Teachers

15. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to address shortages in specialist teachers. [31323]

Jacqui Smith: Since 2000, we have provided £6,000 bursaries to PGCE trainee teachers in a range of priority subjects. We have also provided them with a £4,000 "Golden Hello". From September 2005 the bursary for mathematics and science trainees rose to £7,000, and from September 2006 it will increase to £9,000 for all priority subject trainees. Mathematics and science teachers will also be provided with an increased "Golden Hello" of £5,000 (£2,500 for other priority subjects).

University Access

16. **Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress is being made on increasing the number of children from socially deprived backgrounds going to university. [31324]

Bill Rammell: In the past few years, we have seen a steady widening of participation in higher education. Performance indicators published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that the proportion of students from non-traditional backgrounds has increased across a range of measures. The proportion from low participation neighbourhoods, for example, rose from 12.1 per cent. to 13.9 per cent. between 1997/98 and 2003/04, the latest year for which figures are available.

19. **Mr. Iain Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to require university places to be allocated after A-level grades have been awarded. [31327]

Bill Rammell: The Department is currently consulting on a number of proposals for changes to the higher education applications process, including the option of introducing a system of "post-qualification applications" (PQA). The consultation offers two possible PQA models and welcomes the idea that new approaches may appear as a result of the discussion the consultation will stimulate. The consultation ends on 5 December after which there will be a period to analyse the responses.

Further Education

17. **David Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Foster review of further education. [31325]

Ruth Kelly: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire.

Local Education Authorities

18. **Stephen Hammond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the likely effect on the roles of local education authorities of the proposals in the recent schools White Paper. [31326]

Ruth Kelly: The White Paper sets out an enhanced role for local authorities as the champions of parents and pupils, rather than the direct provider of school places. Local authorities will have new powers to commission school places and to intervene where provision is poor.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each local education authority in England received in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 1996–97. [31333]

Jacqui Smith: Comparable figures are not available for 1996–97. The following table sets out the figures for 1997–98 and 2005–06. *Total funding includes funding* via education formula spending/standard spending assessment and revenue grants allocated at an LEA level. It excludes the pensions transfer to EPS and the Learning and Skills Council, and is in real terms.

1997–98 and 2005–06 total funding by LEA, real terms

£ million

LEA no.	*LEA*	*1997–98*	*2005–06*
202	Camden	96.9	133.6
203	Greenwich	136.8	200.5
204	Hackney	114.7	172.1
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	68.3	103.9
206	Islington	99	142.9
207	Kensington and Chelsea	42.2	69.2
208	Lambeth	118.8	178.2
209	Lewisham	134.5	196.8
210	Southwark	131.9	205.4
211	Tower Hamlets	152.5	235.4
212	Wandsworth	108.3	159.8
213	Westminster	72.3	115
301	Barking and Dagenham	87	143.1
302	Barnet	144.4	211.9
303	Bexley	110.5	164.9
304	Brent	133.8	205.7
305	Bromley	131.2	206.3
306	Croydon	147.8	221.6
307	Ealing	135.6	208.1
308	Enfield	147	228.8
309	Haringey	117.5	178.5
310	Harrow	88.1	129.4
311	Havering	105.9	152.8
312	Hillingdon	114.9	183.2
313	Hounslow	116.6	172.9
314	Kingston upon Thames	57.6	91.2
315	Merton	71.8	103.5
316	Newham	163.7	257.7
317	Redbridge	122.8	190.7
318	Richmond upon Thames	57.1	83
319	Sutton	83.4	134.2
320	Waltham Forest	118	175.6
330	Birmingham	542.6	811.6
331	Coventry	145.6	210
332	Dudley	124.6	192.7
333	Sandwell	145	212
334	Solihull	92.1	134.5
335	Walsall	133.4	195.3
336	Wolverhampton	120.5	175.1
340	Knowsley	91.1	118.9
341	Liverpool	256.4	338.3
342	St. Helens	82.2	117.8
343	Sefton	130.2	186
344	Wirral	157.7	222.1
350	Bolton	124.7	185.8
351	Bury	75.5	110.8
352	Manchester	223.1	309.9
353	Oldham	116.7	171.2

1997–98 and 2005–06 total funding by LEA, real terms

£ million

LEA no.	*LEA*	*1997–98*	*2005–06*
354	Rochdale	102.4	153.2
355	Salford	101.4	140.8
356	Stockport	110.9	155.3
357	Tameside	101.2	145.2
358	Trafford	96.2	137.7
359	Wigan	135	191.5
370	Barnsley	94	137
371	Doncaster	145.6	204.1
372	Rotherham	125.3	184.7
373	Sheffield	207.5	313.2
380	Bradford	255.4	370.8
381	Calderdale	94.1	142.7
382	Kirklees	176.2	260.7
383	Leeds	312.9	450.4
384	Wakefield	137.9	202.7
390	Gateshead	83	120.8
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	124.3	165.9
392	North Tyneside	84	121.1
393	South Tyneside	73.4	102
394	Sunderland	139.5	188.2
800	Bath and North East Somerset	66.1	98.8
801	Bristol, City of	144.8	204
802	North Somerset	73	110
803	South Gloucestershire	98	152.7
805	Hartlepool	45.1	67
806	Middlesbrough	74.3	90.3
807	Redcar and Cleveland	71.5	97.6
808	Stockton-on-Tees	87.8	124
810	Kingston upon Hull, City of	124.7	168.9
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	127.1	194.4
812	North East Lincolnshire	78.9	107.6
813	North Lincolnshire	69.3	99.4
815	North Yorkshire	229.9	349.1
816	York	64.4	91.8
820	Bedfordshire	174	258.3
821	Luton	95.9	141.1
825	Buckinghamshire	209.3	314.7
826	Milton Keynes	102.3	156.7
830	Derbyshire	290.2	442.2
831	Derby	103.1	155.2
835	Dorset	143	219.9
836	Poole	54	74.8
837	Bournemouth	60.4	82.4
840	Durham	219.5	311.1
841	Darlington	42.2	62.7
845	East Sussex	184.5	278
846	Brighton and Hove	87.7	127.2
850	Hampshire	475.4	685.2
851	Portsmouth	76.5	105.5
852	Southampton	91.2	125.5
855	Leicestershire	244	366
856	Leicester	148.1	206.3
857	Rutland	13	20
860	Staffordshire	343.1	486.9
861	Stoke-on-Trent	107.2	154.5
865	Wiltshire	168.8	263.3
866	Swindon	77	113.5
867	Bracknell Forest	45	63.5
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	54.9	82.7
869	West Berkshire	64.3	104.1
870	Reading	50.3	75.2
871	Slough	61.2	95.7
872	Wokingham	62.5	95.7
873	Cambridgeshire	202.7	309.8
874	Peterborough	86.7	127.1
875	Cheshire	283	409.3
876	Halton	65.2	86.7
877	Warrington	83.7	119.9
878	Devon	257.4	389
879	Plymouth	118.1	160.9
880	Torbay	52.8	77.1
881	Essex	556.9	833.5
882	Southend-on-Sea	72.5	115.3
883	Thurrock	63.3	97.7
884	Herefordshire	64.7	98.8
885	Worcestershire	217	309.9

1997–98 and 2005–06 total funding by LEA, real terms

£ million

LEA no.	*LEA*	*1997–98*	*2005–06*
886	Kent	585.2	895.1
887	Medway	126.9	180.8
888	Lancashire	497.5	705.8
889	Blackburn with Darwen	76.7	113.1
890	Blackpool	54.5	89.2
891	Nottinghamshire	308.8	452.1
892	Nottingham	137.7	175.8
893	Shropshire	108.6	106.4
894	Telford and Wrekin	70.4	160.4
908	Cornwall	199.6	293
909	Cumbria	204.7	308.8
916	Gloucestershire	227.5	343.2
919	Hertfordshire	474.7	693
921	Isle of Wight	56.6	84.2
925	Lincolnshire	262	419.8
926	Norfolk	306.2	457.5
928	Northamptonshire	273.1	408.4
929	Northumberland	140.6	203.2
931	Oxfordshire	237	346.9
933	Somerset	185.2	282.1
935	Suffolk	270.3	391.5
936	Surrey	380.1	573.7
937	Warwickshire	198.7	300.9
938	West Sussex	289.9	426.4

Notes:

1. Price base: real terms at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 28 September 2005.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EPS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude education maintenance allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. Where responsibility for funding a school has transferred from an LEA, related funding no longer appears in the series.
5. Rounding: figures are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million.
6. Status: 2005–06 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.
7. 1997–98 figures for LEAs subject to local government re-organisation in that year have been estimated, pro-rata to their post LGR figures.

Education Maintenance Allowance

20. **Laura Moffatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people in *(a)* Crawley constituency and *(b)* England have been granted an education maintenance allowance. [31328]

Maria Eagle: By the end of October 2005 3,710 young people in the West Sussex local education authority area, and 327,500 in England had received one or more EMA payment.

Adult Education

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what Government funding for adult education courses has been in each of the last five years for which records are available, broken down by local authority. [17795]

Phil Hope: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including adult education, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body.

In 2001-02 the Learning and Skills Council spent £2,236 million on adult programmes including FE, Work Based Learning, Adult and Community Learning and other programmes. This increased to £2,427 million in 2002-03 and to £2,866 million in 2003-04. These figures are available in the LSC's published accounts. Figures for adult education for the years prior to 2001 are not comparable as the budget was split between a range of different organisations. The Departmental Annual Report sets out total expenditure on Further Education, Adult Training and Skills and Lifelong Learning for this period.

My Department does not hold funding figures for adult education at the local level. As the allocation of funding in local areas relates to the LSC's operational responsibilities, the LSC's Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested. A copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 4 November 2005:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, referred to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) by Phil Hope, regarding funding for adult education courses in the last five years.

Unfortunately the LSC does not hold this information broken down by local authority. However, we are able to provide the information you requested broken down by local LSC area for each of the years since the inception of the LSC, in 2001.

I attached 2 spreadsheets, the first listing the funding allocations as above, the second explaining the programme funding contained within the "Other" column for each year.

Expenditure on Adult Education Programmes: Financial Year 2001-02

LSC	*LSC name*	*ACL*	*FE*	*WBL*	*Other*	*Total*
EE060	Norfolk	1,491,252	17,564,780	1,836,697	1,411,227	22,303,956
EE070	Cambridgeshire	1,525,848	17,509,709	1,518,644	1,737,492	22,291,693
EE080	Suffolk	1,884,708	11,974,544	1,996,544	1,395,186	17,250,982
EE090	Bedfordshire and Luton	1,239,216	17,774,462	859,639	1,211,184	21,084,501
EE100	Hertfordshire	1,853,772	23,140,444	1,851,169	2,048,265	28,893,650
EE110	Essex	5,396,508	26,951,950	3,144,294	2,837,725	38,330,477
EE900	East England Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
EM010	Derbyshire	4,726,184	34,043,535	2,253,311	2,726,306	43,749,336
EM020	Nottinghamshire	2,286,396	55,236,902	3,413,353	2,927,240	63,863,891
EM030	Lincolnshire and Rutland	1,743,888	17,773,016	1,867,103	1,491,945	22,875,951
EM040	Leicestershire	4,780,836	35,549,033	1,350,876	2,445,267	44,126,012
EM050	Northamptonshire	1,488,048	14,579,674	1,847,237	1,256,980	19,171,939
EM900	East Midlands Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
GL120	London—North	3,461,880	53,794,704	1,569,344	3,300,310	62,126,238
GL130	London—West	4,842,252	59,113,594	1,986,021	4,048,885	69,990,752
GL140	London—Central	9,125,808	110,550,419	2,756,463	8,265,431	130,698,121
GL150	London—East	11,091,060	97,639,299	3,121,406	6,887,834	118,739,599
GL160	London—South	5,726,880	39,341,618	2,552,931	2,828,792	50,450,221
GL900	Greater London Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
NE170	Northumberland	167,043	5,980,322	881,131	533,884	7,562,380
NE180	Tyne & Wear	3,149,412	53,547,415	3,600,054	3,215,160	63,512,041
NE190	County Durham	1,495,452	16,434,382	1,050,307	1,159,926	20,140,067
NE200	Tees Valley	2,782,788	26,526,548	2,625,859	2,568,828	34,504,023
NE900	North East Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
NW210	Cumbria	1,023,492	13,376,794	1,403,428	1,069,267	16,872,982
NW220	Lancashire	6,475,500	56,873,632	3,603,830	3,699,169	70,652,132
NW230	Greater Merseyside	5,343,300	57,133,442	5,987,930	4,122,187	72,586,860
NW240	Greater Manchester	9,651,933	98,995,154	7,899,402	8,838,023	125,384,512
NW250	Cheshire and Warrington	1,508,292	23,207,549	2,864,273	1,999,872	29,579,987
NW900	North West Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
SE260	Milton Keynes, Oxon and Bucks	4,158,048	29,746,359	3,299,050	3,262,785	40,466,242
SE270	Berkshire	2,588,940	23,642,736	2,405,102	2,028,302	30,665,080
SE280	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	1,618,716	50,265,847	3,441,615	3,698,675	59,024,853
SE290	Surrey	2,832,696	19,134,168	782,527	1,752,752	24,502,143
SE300	Sussex	3,218,568	33,310,850	2,831,186	2,832,082	42,192,686
SE310	Kent and Medway	6,036,432	35,109,395	3,332,919	2,935,675	47,414,421
SE900	South East Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
SW320	Devon and Cornwall	4,598,964	45,709,961	4,716,282	3,292,954	58,318,162
SW330	Somerset	2,780,688	15,981,793	822,292	2,182,567	21,767,339
SW340	Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	1,336,668	18,529,074	2,038,351	1,449,215	23,346,309
SW350	West of England	1,339,944	39,204,702	1,813,922	2,320,398	44,678,967
SW360	Wiltshire and Swindon	468,388	20,413,021	1,131,243	1,469,035	23,481,687
SW370	Gloucestershire	1,891,656	13,949,740	1,340,082	1,100,466	18,281,944
SW900	South West Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
WM380	Shropshire	486,120	12,941,103	3,093,089	880,770	17,401,082
WM390	Staffordshire	2,161,200	33,609,202	2,660,575	2,364,946	40,795,923
WM400	Black Country	3,745,591	52,371,633	3,147,419	3,943,365	63,208,008
WM410	Birmingham and Solihull	4,342,824	78,758,818	3,111,389	9,490,332	95,703,363
WM420	Herefordshire and Worcestershire	399,528	21,069,563	1,812,696	1,790,840	25,072,627

Expenditure on Adult Education Programmes: Financial Year 2001–02

LSC	LSC name	ACL	FE	WBL	Other	Total
WM430	Coventry and Warwickshire	3,948,360	36,668,744	2,084,865	2,804,470	45,506,438
WM900	West Midlands Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
YH440	North Yorkshire	2,175,720	20,179,281	1,703,836	1,455,046	25,513,883
YH450	West Yorkshire	4,361,988	67,440,906	4,405,869	5,806,952	82,015,716
YH460	South Yorkshire	1,959,144	46,502,082	3,416,988	3,590,644	55,468,858
YH470	Humberside	2,718,720	30,983,254	2,117,560	1,860,028	37,679,562
YH900	Yorkshire Regional Office	0	0	0	0	0
AA*	National Office	0	59,160,075	34,864,843	2,295,860	96,320,778
Total		153,430,650	1,769,295,232	154,207,949	138,634,545	2,235,568,877

Key:
ACL—Adult Community Learning.
FE—FE Participation.
WBL—Work Based Learning (19+ Apprenticeships).
Other—Other Adult Programmes.

2001–02

PQ Cat	L2 Description
Other	Adult Discretionary Student Support
	Adult Information Advice and Guidance
	FE Summer Schools
	Local Workforce Development
	MG Rover Inward Investment
	Neighbour Learning in Deprived
	New Entrepreneur Scholarships

2002–03

PQ Cat	L2 Description
Other	Adult Discretionary Student Support
	Adult Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
	Adult Information Advice and Guidance
	Bite Size Courses
	Family Learning and Adult Learning Promotion
	Family Literacy and Numeracy
	FE (New) Childcare Places
	FE Summer Schools
	Health and Safety Booklets
	Improving the Training Market
	Local Workforce Development
	Local Workforce Development—PBR Pilots
	MG Rover Inward Investment/BMW Hams Hall
	National Promotions
	Neighbour Learning in Deprived
	New Entrepreneur Scholarships
	Promoting Vocational Qualifications
	Skill and View
	Skills Intelligence Network

2003–04

PQ Cat	L2 Description
Other	Adult Discretionary Student Support
	Adult Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
	Adult Information Advice and Guidance
	Adult Learning Grant—Marketing
	Bite Size Courses
	Family Learning and Adult Learning Promotion
	Family Literacy and Numeracy
	FE (New) Childcare Places
	FE Summer Schools
	Health and Safety Booklets
	Improving the Training Market
	Local Workforce Development
	Employer Training Pilots
	MG Rover Inward Investment/BMW Hams Hall
	National Promotions
	Neighbour Learning in Deprived

2003–04

PQ Cat	L2 Description
	New Entrepreneur Scholarships
	Promoting Vocational Qualifications
	Skill and View
	Skills Intelligence Network
	Union Learning Fund
	Workforce Development—IIP Small Firms Initiative

2004–05

PQ Cat	L2 Description
Other	Adult Discretionary Student Support
	Adult Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
	Adult Information Advice and Guidance
	Adult Learning Grant—Marketing
	Adult Policy Development
	Adult Skills Pilot
	Basic Skills
	Bite Size Courses
	Equality and Diversity Support
	ESF Match Funding
	Family Learning and Adult Learning Promotion
	Family Literacy and Numeracy
	FE (New) Childcare Places
	FE Summer Schools
	Footballers Programme
	Health and Safety Booklets
	Improving the Training Market
	Local Workforce Development
	Employer Training Pilots
	MG Rover Inward Investment/BMW Hams Hall
	National Promotions
	National Rates Advisory Group
	NCS Delivery
	NCS Employer Pilots
	Neighbour Learning in Deprived
	New Entrepreneur Scholarships
	New Technology Institutes
	NIACE Memo of Understanding
	Offenders in the Community
	Promoting Vocational Qualifications
	Regional Skills Funds
	Research
	Skill and View
	Skills Intelligence Network
	TUC Course Materials
	Union Learning Fund
	Voluntary and Community Strategy
	Work Based Learning—Skills Task Force Rec
	Workforce Development—IIP Small Firms Initiative

Children's Trusts (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children's trusts there are in *(a)* Hemel Hempstead constituency and *(b)* Hertfordshire. [25809]

Beverley Hughes: Hertfordshire is integrating services for children and young people through children's trust arrangements that will cover the entire county. Therefore there is one children's trust that covers Hertfordshire. The local authority was chosen as a pathfinder children's trust authority and is testing provider arrangements in the Stevenage area in order to identify good practice that will influence wider implementation.

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of section 8 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. [29847]

Maria Eagle: Section 8 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 refers to the design of, and access to, the buildings of educational institutions. Although this Act is still in force, Section 8 has since been superseded by other legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and the Building Regulations 2000. The provisions in these later Acts and Regulations are more comprehensive than those in Section 8 of the 1970 Act.

Schools now have a planning duty under Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to prepare accessibility plans for increasing over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils and prospective pupils. This planning duty covers: improving access to the curriculum, the physical environment of schools and provision of written materials in alternative formats, and will lead to access improvements that will have a positive impact on all aspects of school life.

The Learning and Skills Council monitor the extent to which further education college premises are accessible to disabled learners and, since SENDA was introduced in 2001, it has approved funding to enable colleges to undertake adaptations that will help them comply with the Act. So far over £160 million has been made available. All colleges have made, or are making, adaptations or have plans in hand. Higher education institutions are also subject to the legislation and regulations mentioned above (apart from the School Premises Regulations), but as autonomous organisations are responsible for ensuring that they comply.

Education (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Tamworth constituency attended nursery in each of the past 10 years; and how many have taken up free nursery places since the policy was introduced. [27490]

Beverley Hughes: All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-years-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three- year-olds and 568,300 four-year olds.

The available information on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Tamworth parliamentary constituency area and Staffordshire local authority is shown in the tables.

For 2005, information for private and voluntary providers is available for Staffordshire but not currently available for Tamworth constituency.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds
Parliamentary constituency: Tamworth
Position in January each year

	Three-year-olds		*Four-year-olds*	
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[5]*
2004	260	610	900	120
2005	310	n/a	900	n/a

n/a = Not available

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds
Local authority: Staffordshire
Position in January each year

	Three-year-olds			Four-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3- year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	3,500	[4]—	3,500	[4]—	[4]—	[5]9,600
1998	2,700	[4]—	2,700	[4]—	[4]—	[5]9,700
1999	2,700	[4]—	2,700	[4]—	[4]—	[5]9,500
2000	2,600	[6]0	2,600	[4]—	[4]—	[5]9,400
2001	2,600	[6]440	3,000	[4]—	[4]—	[5]9,200
2002	2,600	[6]1,700	4,200	8,400	[7]640	9,100
2003	2,300	[6]3,500	5,800	8,500	[7]810	9,300
2004	2,200	[6]4,500	6,700	7,900	[8]860	8,800
2005	2,600	[6]4,100	6,700	7,500	[8]950	8,400

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Not available.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.
[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[9] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local authority area and other factors. However, my Department doesn't publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Education Act 1996

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of sections *(a)* 403, *(b)* 404, *(c)* 405, *(d)* 406 and *(e)* 407 of the Education Act 1996. [29850]

Jacqui Smith: The Department issued "Sex and Relationship Guidance" to head teachers and school governors in 2000. This outlines the requirement to have an up-to-date policy on sex and relationship education available to parents for inspection. The guidance reminds schools to teach children about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life. The guidance also outlines the right of parents to withdraw children from the non-statutory elements of sex education. We have explained the rights of parents in the SRE and Parents leaflet and on the DfES Parents Centre website. Ofsted in its survey "Sex and Relationship Education in Schools" (2002) reported that over nine out of 10 schools have a sex and relationship education policy. Ofsted has also indicated that 0.04 per cent. of parents exercise the right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons.

DfES offers guidance to school governors on political activities in schools through the "Governors Guide to the Law".

Education White Paper

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures will be taken to address the underperformance of pupils from *(a)* black and *(b)* gypsy and traveller communities under the provisions of the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. [31593]

Jacqui Smith: As outlined in the Schools White Paper, this Government is committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their background, achieve their potential.

We will focus on raising the attainment of black, and gypsy, roma and traveller pupils by putting in place targeted national programmes designed to provide advice, training, resources and challenge to schools with large numbers of underachieving pupils from these groups. These programmes will build on the test bed work that we have piloted through the Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils strategy.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether restrictions will be introduced to the freedom self-governing schools have to set their own admissions criteria under the provisions of the White Paper Higher Standards, 'Better Schools for All'. [31597]

Jacqui Smith: The existing regime which is designed to ensure a fair admission system, that is flexible enough to take account of local circumstances, will apply to trust schools in the same way as it does to other maintained schools. No trust school will be able to introduce any form of selection by ability and all will have to comply with the restrictions on selection by aptitude that apply to all maintained schools. Admission authorities for

maintained schools must comply with admissions and equal opportunities legislation, and have regard to the School Admissions Code of Practice when setting their admission criteria. Other schools and local authorities can object to the Schools Adjudicator about any criteria that they consider are unfair or are not in line with the Code. Where the Adjudicator upholds an objection, his decision is binding.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, what she expects the buildings of schools closed due to failure will be used for. [31598]

Jacqui Smith: It will be a local decision what use is made of the buildings of schools which close due to failure. Our expectation is that they will continue to be used for educational purposes where they are suitable. This could include replacement schools, additional schools for new providers, or resited schools. Local authorities may also consider other educational or community use where this will give value-for-money. Where a closed school is sold, we expect that the proceeds will be reinvested in other schools to improve educational provision and attainment in the area.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures will be taken under the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, to encourage poorer parents to become more involved in their children's education. [31599]

Jacqui Smith: The Schools White Paper proposes a series of measures to support increased parental engagement in their child's learning and increased influence in the schools system as a whole, enabling parents to support their own child's achievement and promote system-wide improvement. We will ensure that new measures will reach all parents, particularly those who might not normally engage. Parents find it difficult to engage for many reasons, not just poverty or socio-economic factors.

To enable parents to become more engaged in their child's learning, we will require schools to share progress on children's learning three times a year, rather than annually. We also recognise that some parents, including from poorer families, do not feel they have real choices available to them. We will improve the information available to parents, enabling them to make informed decisions when choosing a secondary school. Through the White Paper, we will provide choice advice, focused on those who need it most, to support parents to make the best choice for their child.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what safeguards will be put in place under the provisions of the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All", to prevent a significant number of large failing schools being closed in the same area. [31600]

Jacqui Smith: The proposals in the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All" strengthen the intervention powers available to local authorities to tackle failing schools.

Authorities are expected to consider the appropriate solution for a failing school in the light of the circumstances of the school. Under the White Paper's proposals they are expected to consider closure where a failing school is making inadequate progress after 12 months.

However, authorities will retain the responsibility to secure the provision of school places and to promote high standards. Where there is a need for a new school either to replace an existing closing school or to meet population growth, the LA will be able to hold a competition and invite promoters to bring forward proposals for a new school.

Further Education Spending

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of funding per pupil in further education has been in each year since 1997 in Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency. [19184]

Bill Rammell: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body.

Since 1997 government funding for further education has increased by around £2.5 Billion—equivalent to around 48 per cent. in real terms. Between 1997 and 2005 funding on participation per full-time equivalent student has increased by 49 per cent. in cash terms and 23 per cent. in real terms

My Department does not hold figures on what the level of funding per pupil in further education has been in each year since 1997 in Westmorland and Lonsdale constituency. As the allocation of funding in local areas relates to the LSC's operational responsibilities, the LSC's Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested. A copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Tim Farron, dated 26 October 2005:

As you will be aware Bill Rammell, in the written reply he gave you on 17 October to your Parliamentary Question, indicated that he would ask me to write to you.

The LSC came into being on 1 April 2001 and the information you have asked for is, therefore, only available for 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06. The figures for 16–18 year olds (average rate per full-time equivalent) are shown below for Kendal College, the only further education college in your constituency, and distinguishes between the Council's allocation and the College's final claim (except for 2005/06 which, of course, is not yet known).

	Number
2002/03	
Allocation	2,936
Final claim	3,096
2003/04	
Allocation	3,510
Final claim	3,678
2004/05	
Allocation	3,800
Final claim	3,728
2005/06	
Allocation	4,103

You may be aware that a recent independent report by the Learning and Skills Development Agency identified a number of technical "anomalies" where the application of the LSC's methodology differs between the school and further education sectors. The report highlighted these anomalies as contributing to the difference in the funding for 16–18 year old students in school sixth forms and those in sixth form and FE colleges.

The statement on schools' funding made in July 2005 by Jacqui Smith, the Schools Minister, included a programme of work to address the anomalies between school sixth form and college funding. This will be taken forward as part of the LSC's *agenda for change* programme.

I hope you find the above helpful. Do not hesitate to contact our local Executive Director, Mick Parley, who I know you have met, if you would like any more detailed information.

Information and Communication Technology

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information and communication technology courses are available for teachers; and what funding is available for such courses. [28577]

Jacqui Smith: A wide variety of approved courses, both in a formal training environment and distance learning, are available to teachers covering all aspects of the use of ICT in schools. The training is provided by a national network of over 800 ICT training providers, managed by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), and listed within the ICT Support Network Directory (http://www.becta.org.uk/ictsn/).

£120 million funding has been provided to schools through the Standards Fund Grant 31a across 2004–05 and 2005–06 for the Hands on Support (HOS) programme. This funding may be used to buy-in expertise from private training or to provide teachers with an opportunity to share and spread good practice in using ICT with fellow practitioners. Schools have the discretion to decide exactly how much of their HOS allocation is spent on ICT training. Funding will continue in 2006–07 as part of Grant 101-Schools Development Grant.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children per 10,000 children are looked after by local authorities in the *(a)* Inner London local authorities, *(b)* Outer London local authorities, *(c)* English metropolitan authorities outside London, *(d)* Wigan metropolitan borough council area, *(e)* Salford city council area, *(f)* Knowsley metropolitan borough council area, *(g)* South Tyneside council area, *(h)* Leeds city council area and (i) Wolverhampton city council area. [29475]

Beverley Hughes: The information requested may be found in Table 1 of "Children looked after by local authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2004, Volume 2: Local Authority Tables". This is available from the Department's website at:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000569/vweb01-2005_2.pdf

Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to publish the results of the consultation on the draft School Admissions Code of Practice. [28235]

Jacqui Smith: We expect to be able to publish the results of the exercise on the Department's consultation website within three months of the end of consultation as recommended by the Cabinet Office.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools have been closed due to falling rolls in (i) England and (ii) the Tees Valley in each year since 1997. [31608]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on the number of primary and secondary schools in England that have closed because of falling rolls. Nor do we hold information for the Tees Valley as data is gathered by local authority area.

A total of 2,200 schools have closed in the last eight years due to amalgamation, change in religious character, authority ceasing to maintain, fresh start, the opening of an academy and to allow for a new establishment. The numbers of school closures in England, broken down by *(a)* local education authority and *(b)* type of school during the calendar years 1997 to 2005 are shown in the table which was placed in the House Library as part of the written answer to question 19695 on 19 October 2005. The figures shown in the table include mainstream schools maintained by local authorities but exclude special schools and independent schools.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools have applied to expand since the guidance to the decision-makers that there should be a presumption in favour of expansion was promulgated. [29495]

Jacqui Smith: Since the guidance to decision makers was issued in June 2003, the governing bodies of 22 primary and 26 secondary schools have published statutory proposals to expand their schools. In addition to this, local authorities published proposals to expand 50 primary and 26 secondary schools.

These figures include all proposed school expansions including those to meet population growth, as part of a local reorganisation to meet pupils by the closing of a neighbouring school and to meet parental demand. The presumption to approve expansion proposals, included in guidance issued to decision makers, applies to proposals in respect of successful and popular schools.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the money previously delivered to secondary schools via the Leadership Incentive Grant will be made available to secondary

schools via other budgetary mechanisms; and whether it is included in the Government's guarantee of a 4 per cent. annual funding increase. [31061]

Jacqui Smith: The Leadership Incentive Grant, introduced in April 2003, is a three-year programme aimed at giving extra help to those secondary schools in the most challenging circumstances to ensure that they have the leadership and the quality of teaching and earning they need to raise the achievement of all their pupils, particularly through developing collaboration with other schools and sharing good practice. All schools and authorities were informed at the outset that the grant would end in March 2006. However, schools with the highest level of relative deprivation and/or lowest attainment will continue to receive additional support in the future. This support will be in addition to the minimum funding guarantee for schools. The details of the additional support that will be provided in the next financial year, and the level of the minimum funding guarantee, will be announced in due course.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much additional funding has been given to *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in South Swindon constituency in addition to their standard spending assessment, in each year since 1997. [31660]

Jacqui Smith: The following table sets out funding for Swindon local education authority for each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. Total funding includes funding via education formula spending/standard spending assessment and revenue and capital grants allocated at an LEA level. It includes the pensions transfer to EFS and the Learning and Skills Council from 2003–04, and is in cash terms.

It is not possible to break down the funding for primary schools and secondary schools in South Swindon constituency.

SSA/EFS, grants and total funding (£ million) in Swindon (cash terms)

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
SSA/EFS	62.8	67.8	73.3	77.3	80	82.1	92.8	97.3	103.2
Revenue Grants	2.8	2.0	3.1	6.9	9.8	12.5	12.3	13.5	15.6
Capital Grants	1.5	3.0	5.2	6.1	4.3	15.2	80.2	11.5	9.2
Total funding	67.1	72.8	81.6	90.3	94.1	109.8	185.3	122.3	128

Notes:
1. Price Base: Cash
Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements. Figures from 2003–04 include the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC, the figures prior to 2003–04 have not been adjusted.
Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude education maintenance allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
Where responsibility for funding a school has transferred from an LEA, related funding no longer appears in the series.
2. Capital Grants: 2002–03 includes £7.5 million for basic need additional provision; 2003–04 includes £9.8 million for basic need additional provision and a PFI allocation of £62.8 million; 2004–05 includes £1.6 million targeted capital fund; 2005–06 includes £2.4 million targeted capital fund.
3. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million.
4. Status: 2003–04 to 2005–06 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been allocated for *(a)* capital repairs and *(b)* new buildings in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in the South Swindon area in each year since 1997. [31643]

Jacqui Smith: Capital allocations are recorded on a local authority basis, and the following table lists the allocations to Swindon borough council and schools in its area. Local authorities determine which proportion of their formulaic capital allocations shall be spent on capital repairs or new buildings, also on primary or secondary schools. Accordingly, no record is held centrally of these four categories.

	£000
1997–98	1,450
1998–99	3,049
1999–2000	5,208
2000–01	6,056
2001–02	4,289
2002–03	15,164
2003–04	80,240
2004–05	11,594
2005–06	9,182

Notes:
1. The large increase is due to a rise in Basic Need funding.
2. The large amount of funding this year is due to a £62.3 million Private Finance Initiative, and a high Basic Need allocation.

Further information on funding can be found on the website: www.teachernet.gov.uk under the heading, "Introduction to Capital Funding for School Buildings".

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many surplus places there were in *(a)* primary, *(b)* middle and *(c)* secondary schools in each local authority area in (i) 2000 and (ii) 2005; how many there are forecast to be in each year from 2006 to 2010; and on what (A) basis and (B) assumptions these forecasts were made. [30839]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the Government will encourage primary and secondary schools to become self-governing and to acquire trust status as set out in the White Paper. [24532]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper makes clear that it will be for the governing bodies of individual schools to decide whether to become self-governing foundation schools and to acquire trusts, taking account of the views of parents and other stakeholders. The Government have already introduced a fast-track route for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools to acquire self-governing foundation status and have consulted on extending this to primary schools. Schools wishing to acquire trusts will follow similar procedures, with added safeguards where parents have concerns about the acquisition of a particular trust. In particular, the local authority will be able to refer a school's proposals to acquire a trust to the Schools adjudicator for determination, if it is clear that the school has failed to take proper account of the views of a majority of parents or if there are serious concerns about the impact of the proposals on school standards. The White Paper envisages the appointment of a Schools commissioner who will support the development of trust schools and work with potential trusts.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how her Department plans to hold trust school governing bodies to financial account under her Education White Paper proposals. [31096]

Jacqui Smith: Trust schools will be funded on exactly the same basis as other maintained schools.

They will be subject to the same financial controls, including audit arrangements, as apply currently to maintained schools through each local authority's statutory Scheme for Financing Schools.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she intends to take to prevent a trust school which has been set up as a charity from changing its charitable objects once it is established. [31479]

Jacqui Smith: The Government intend to prescribe by regulations certain charitable objects for all trusts. Trusts will be unable to change these objects. Furthermore, trusts may have additional charitable objects to those prescribed. Trusts will only be able to change such additional objects with the consent of the Charity Commission.

Sure Start Plus

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teenage pregnancies occurred in each of the Sure Start Plus scheme pilot areas in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2005. [30438]

Beverley Hughes: Details of under-18 conception numbers and rates for 1997 and 2003 (the latest year for which data are available), for each local authority involved in the Sure Start Plus pilots, are provided in the following table.

Local authorities within Sure Start Plus areas	*Number*		*Rate*		*Percentage change in rate*
	1997	*2003*	*1997*	*2003*	
Bradford MCD	469	527	51.8	45.2	−12.6
Hackney LB and City of London	276	279	79.6	70.0	−12.1
Kingston upon Hull UA	363	323	72.2	69.2	−4.1
Leeds MCD	566	709	56.9	41.1	−27.8
Leicester UA	335	304	54.3	56.4	3.8
Liverpool MCD	390	468	55.3	42.9	−22.5
Manchester MCD	565	510	57.7	65.9	14.3
Nottingham UA	375	347	70.7	73.5	4.0
Plymouth UA	204	232	51.4	43.1	−16.2
Rochdale MCD	235	231	54.2	52.4	−3.2
Sandwell MCD	376	383	70.5	65.6	−7.0
Sheffield MCD	472	451	52.9	53.2	0.6
Lambeth LB	429	352	85.7	101.5	18.4
Barnsley MCD	243	243	64.6	58.0	−10.3
Stoke-on-Trent UA	284	285	65.3	61.5	−5.8
Middlesbrough UA	190	217	72.7	57.9	−20.4
Newcastle upon Tyne MCD	268	313	64.3	55.3	−14.0
Wakefield MCD	306	333	58.5	48.1	−17.8
Walsall MCD	311	327	67.0	59.6	−11.1
Wolverhampton MCD	271	274	58.7	56.4	−3.9
North Tyneside MCD	189	210	58.1	52.0	−10.4
South Tyneside MCD	175	193	65.9	55.0	−16.5
Gateshead MCD	175	202	56.4	48.6	−13.9
Sunderland MCD	362	369	65.1	62.8	−3.6
Southwark LB	351	284	78.6	88.0	11.9
Lewisham LB	333	302	79.0	74.0	−6.3
Rotherham MCD	255	266	54.4	51.5	−5.3
Doncaster MCD	411	375	68.3	68.4	0.1
Salford MCD	238	258	64.1	58.2	−9.2
Tower Hamlets LB	174	185	49.3	43.2	−12.4
Newham LB	305	295	62.2	53.4	−14.2
Redcar and Cleveland DA	143	162	55.7	48.1	−13.8
Stockton-on-Tees UA	197	191	51.1	51.3	0.4
Hartlepool UA	133	134	74.8	68.7	−8.1
St. Helens MCD	189	181	53.9	53.0	−1.6

Note:
Rates are per 1,000 female population aged 15–17.
Source:
Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teenagers under the age of 18 years have been involved with the Sure Start Plus scheme since 2001; and how many of these live in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency. [30441]

Beverley Hughes: The data requested are not available at a national level. However, based on a survey carried out during a six month period in 2001, a team at the Institute of Education estimated that around 53 per cent. of young women conceiving during that period were supported by the pilot programmes (based on monitoring returns from 27 out of 35 programmes). Take-up of the programme is likely to have increased since 2001, which was the first year of the pilot.

Management information from Wakefield Sure Start Plus programme shows that just under half of young women whose conceptions resulted in a birth were supported by the programme in 2003. No information is available for the numbers of young women resident in Normanton constituency who were supported through the programme.

Teachers

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research underlies the required ratio of *(a)* 1:8 teachers to children in local

community play groups and *(b)* 1:13 teachers to children in local school nursery classes; and if she will make a statement. [31462]

Beverley Hughes: The ratio of one adult to eight children for three to five-year-olds in playgroups was included in guidance issued by the Department of Health in 1991, and subsequently set in the national standards for under eights day care and childminding in 2001 following consultation. The ratio of one qualified teacher to 13 children was first published in a Department for Education and Science circular in 1973 but superseded in 1991 by the 1991 Department of Health guidance which allowed for one1 qualified teacher and one qualified nursery assistant to 26 children for nursery classes.

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) research has found that a key factor contributing to better intellectual and social behavioural outcomes is having a good proportion of trained qualified teacher status teachers working directly with children alongside other staff. The research shows quality was higher overall in integrated early education and child care settings, nursery schools and nursery classes.

Teenage Pregnancy

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding the Government have spent on schemes to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency in each year since 1997; and what expenditure is planned for future financial years. [30436]

Beverley Hughes: Details of the grant paid to Wakefield are provided in the table below. Teenage pregnancy funding was available from 1999/2000 onwards. No payments were made prior to this. Funding for the Sure Start Plus pilot is separately identified. We cannot separately identify the proportion of the grant spent in Normanton constituency.

£000

	Local implementation	*Sure Start Plus*
1999/2000[1]	50	—
2000/01[1]	30	—
2001/02[1]	180	125
2002/03[2]	180	125
2003/04[2]	239	125
2004/05[2]	273	125
2005/06[2]	273	125
Total	1,225	625

1 Paid to Wakefield Health Authority
2 Paid to Wakefield local authority

Decisions on allocations to individual local authorities for 2006/07 to 2007/08 have not yet been made. However, the overall total grant allocation for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy will be the same in 2006/07 to 2007/08 as it was in 2004/05 and 2005/06 (with the exception of Sure Start Plus funding, which will cease on 1 April 2006).

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much will be invested by the Government in response to the Third Report of the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Wakefield district. [30437]

Beverley Hughes: The level of funding for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy is agreed in the context of the Government's Spending Review, which allocates funding for a three-year period. However, recommendations by IAG are taken into account when spending review bids are being developed.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many under-18 pregnancies occurred in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency (i) in each of the two years before the launch of the Sure Start Plus scheme and (ii) each subsequent year. [30440]

Beverley Hughes: Funding for the Sure Start Plus pilot began in financial year 2001/02. The first table provides under-18 conception numbers and rates for Wakefield for each year from 1997 to 2003 (the latest year for which data are available). The rate reduction in Wakefield during this period is 17.8 per cent.. This is higher than the national rate reduction of 9.8 per cent. and the regional rate reduction of 11.9 per cent.

Under 18 conception statistics for Wakefield, 1997–2003

	Number	*Rate*
1997	333	58.5
1998	319	56.5
1999	326	56.9
2000	288	48.7
2001	290	47.1
2002	283	45.0
2003	306	48.1

The second table shows ward data aggregated over three years, for the period 2000 to 2002. Ward data is not available for each of the individual years referred to in the question.

Under 18 conception numbers and rates for wards in Normanton constituency, 2000–02

Ward	*Number*	*Rate*
Normanton and Sharlston	57	60.5
Ossett	31	37.4
Stanley and Altofts	27	30.5
Horbury	23	24.7
Stanley and Wrenthorpe	22	21.8

Note:
Rates are per 1,000 females aged 15–17
Sources:
Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards reducing the disproportionate rate of exclusion of boys from *(a)* white working class backgrounds, *(b)* Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and *(c)* minority ethnic groups. [26050]

Jacqui Smith: Departmental data (2003/04) show that Black boys are permanently excluded at over twice the rate of White boys. These data also show disproportionately high rates of both fixed period and permanent exclusion of pupils from some minority ethnic groups including Travellers of Irish Heritage and Black Caribbean; although encouragingly, it shows that the rate of permanent exclusion of Black pupils has

decreased from 58 pupils in 10,000 in 1997/98 to 29 in 10,000 in 2003/04. We do not collect data on the socio-economic groups of excluded pupils.

We are committed to reducing the disproportionate rate of exclusion experienced by some minority ethnic groups. In September we wrote to local authorities to highlight this, and to urge them to analyse their data more rigorously and take appropriate action. We expect all secondary schools to be working in partnerships by September 2007 to provide early intervention and support for pupils at risk of exclusion and those that are excluded; in particular for pupils from Black and other minority ethnic groups.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A-level Examiners

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of A-level examiners in Northern Ireland are drawn from the university sector. [30220]

Angela E. Smith: For the summer 2005 GCE AS/A-level examinations, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) engaged 979 examiners of which 16 (1.63 per cent.) indicated they were employed in the university sector.

Births

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many babies have been born in each constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [30135]

Angela E. Smith: The number of births registered to mothers resident in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland for the years 2002 to 2004 is given in the following table:

Parliamentary constituency	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*[1]
Belfast East	771	872	870
Belfast North	1,030	1,077	1,087
Belfast South	978	1,029	1,009
Belfast West	1,184	1,189	1,288
East Antrim	1,023	1,008	1,007
East Londonderry	1,093	1,094	1,097
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,219	1,128	1,215
Foyle	1,568	1,498	1,482
Lagan Valley	1,328	1,316	1,377
Mid Ulster	1,275	1,203	1,349
Newry and Armagh	1,461	1,506	1,507
North Antrim	1,278	1,283	1,378
North Down	829	960	935
South Antrim	1,303	1,308	1,400
South Down	1,433	1,476	1,509
Strangford	1,136	1,153	1,194
Upper Bann	1,333	1,388	1,469
West Tyrone	1,136	1,151	1,131
Parliamentary constituency unknown	7	9	14
Northern Ireland	21,385	21,648	22,318

[1] Provisional data

School Meals

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action the Government have taken to promote healthy eating in primary schools in South Antrim. [31053]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education, in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards and other school authorities, is introducing new nutritional standards for school meals. The Department has provided additional funding to support the initiative and this will mostly be used to raise the food and nutritional content value of school meals to 50p in primary schools, and 60p in post-primary schools, in line with developments in England. There are 50 schools in the North-Eastern Education and Library Board area presently involved in the roll-out of the new standards and a further 78 will follow in January 2006. 17 of the 44 primary schools in South Antrim will be meeting the standards by that date. All schools will eventually be included in the scheme.

Domestic Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what use is being made of computer-assisted mass appraisal in the Northern Ireland domestic rates revaluation. [29717]

Angela E. Smith: The Valuation and Lands Agency (VLA), which is carrying out the domestic revaluation in Northern Ireland is at the forefront of CAMA application in the UK. It is currently being used by VLA to produce first pass capital values for the vast majority of the 715,000 domestic properties being revalued as at 1 January 2005 for publication in April 2006.

Although some property types, notably apartments and the domestic element of mixed residential/commercial properties are being valued by the traditional "manual" method, approximately 90 per cent. of the entire housing stock in Northern Ireland will be assessed on a capital value basis using Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal techniques. These "first pass" values generated will be subject to a review and verification process.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to introduce legislation to allow for the domestic rates revaluation in Northern Ireland; and whether this will require primary legislation. [29718]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 427W. Subject to parliamentary approval, it is intended that the draft Rates (Capital Values, etc.) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 will be made by April 2006 and the proposed second order in council by April 2007.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the gross revenue to be raised in local domestic rates *(a)* in Northern Ireland and *(b)* in each council in Northern Ireland in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what revenue was raised in 2004–05 in each case. [26934]

Angela E. Smith: Domestic rates consists of two elements, the regional rate, set by the Secretary of State on a uniform basis across Northern Ireland, and the district rate, set separately by each district council relevant to the location of the property.

The total revenue raised in 2004–05 and estimated revenue to be raised in 2005–06 through domestic rates in Northern Ireland are contained in the Table 1:

Table 1

£ million

District rate	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Antrim	4.6	4.9
Ards	7.9	8.4
Armagh	5.5	5.8
Ballymena	5.4	5.7
Ballymoney	2.5	2.5
Banbridge	4.6	4.8
Belfast	26.6	28.2
Carrickfergus	4.2	4.4
Castlereagh	5.7	6.0
Coleraine	6.2	6.5
Cookstown	2.5	2.7
Craigavon	8.3	8.7
Derry	10.2	7.0
Down	6.6	3.7
Dungannon	3.5	4.1
Fermanagh	3.8	3.5
Larne	3.3	3.0
Limavady	2.8	10.6
Lisburn	10.3	10.8
Magherafelt	2.7	2.9
Moyle	2.1	2.2
Newry	8.3	8.7
Newtownabbey	8.4	8.8
North Down	9.1	9.6
Omagh	4.4	4.6
Strabane	2.9	3.0
Total district rate	162.3	171.4
Total regional rate	184.5	194.9
Total domestic rate	346.8	366.3

[1] Estimate

It is estimated that the proposed domestic regional rate for 2006–07 will raise £251.6 million in revenue. This estimate may change as a consequence of future updates to collection and valuation information.

There is no estimate of revenue for the domestic district rate for 2006–07 as the level of district rates is determined by each of the 26 district councils, based on the relevant underlying cost forecasts for each council. This rate will be set in February 2006.

Employment

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in the numbers of those in full-time employment in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland has been between 2001 and 2005. [31484]

Angela E. Smith: Estimates of the number of employee jobs below Northern Ireland level are only available from the Census of Employment on a biennial basis and the most up to date figures relate to September 2003. Estimates of the number of full-time employee jobs in September 2001 and September 2003 and the change over this period for each parliamentary constituency area within Northern Ireland can be found in the following table.

Number of full-time employee jobs at September 2001 and September 2003 and change over the two-year period for each parliamentary constituency area

Parliamentary constituency area	*September 2001*	*September 2003*	*Change 2001–03*
Belfast East	30,024	29,325	−699
Belfast North	31,326	31,074	−252
Belfast South	64,662	67,994	3,332
Belfast West	20,229	20,494	265
East Antrim	14,884	13,267	−1,617
East Londonderry	19,693	20,243	550
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	21,009	22,085	1,076
Foyle	26,751	26,901	150
Lagan Valley	24,932	25,187	255
Mid-Ulster	16,822	17,865	1,043
Newry and Armagh	22,278	23,170	892
North Antrim	23,681	25,065	1,384
North Down	12,874	13,388	514
South Antrim	27,002	26,527	−475
South Down	15,805	15,833	28
Strangford	17,907	17,912	5
Upper Bann	27,445	27,536	91
West Tyrone	16,627	16,931	304
Northern Ireland	433,951	440,797	6,846

Source:
Census of Employment, DETI

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of persons released from Northern Ireland prisons have entered employment after being released in each year since 2001. [30132]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested by the hon. Gentleman is not available.

Empty Industrial Properties

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of empty industrial properties in each constituency in Northern Ireland. [30222]

Angela E. Smith: The Rate Collection Agency's records currently show a total of 399 "empty" properties as having been used for industrial purposes immediately prior to becoming vacant.

Unfortunately the Agency is unable to provide numbers on a constituency basis, but has provided them within district council area in the following table:

District name	*Total*
Antrim	12
Ards	36
Armagh	11
Ballymena	4
Ballymoney	4
Banbridge	6
Belfast	76
Carrickfergus	11
Castlereagh	4
Coleraine	5
Cookstown	18
Craigavon	41
Down	9
Dungannon and S. Tyrone	17
Fermanagh	15
Larne	11

District name	Total
Limavady	2
Lisburn	20
Deny	11
Magherafelt	15
Moyle	0
Newry and Mourne	24
Newtownabbey	10
North Down	7
Omagh	21
Strabane	9
Total	399

Homosexual Civil Partnerships

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* employment protection and *(b)* other provisions there are for (i) council staff and (ii) Registrar's Office staff with conscientious objections to homosexual civil partnerships. [31287]

Angela E. Smith: All council staff are protected by employment law. Registrars and other council staff appointed to register civil partnerships and carry out other related functions are provided with specific training which includes input from the Coalition of Sexual Orientation. It is the responsibility of the local registration authority to address any concerns individual staff might have, relating to same sex civil partnerships. The authority, however, must ensure that it fulfils its statutory responsibility of providing this service to the public.

House Prices

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average house price in *(a)* Antrim Town, *(b)* Dunadry, *(c)* Templepatrick, *(d)* Mallusk and *(e)* Ballyclare was on *(a)* the latest date for which figures are available and *(b)* 1 October 2000. [30210]

Angela E. Smith: The average price of houses in each of the localities specified is shown in the following table:

Study areas	Average selling price[1] 2000	Count of sales	Average selling price[1] 2005	Count of sales
Antrim Town	62,864	128	76,046	78
Dunadry	110,333	6	182,333	3
Templepatrick	113,574	27	230,750	4
Mallusk	102,274	61	118,952	25
Ballyclare	71,822	81	104,937	78

[1] The average selling price provided for 2000 is based on all of the sales in that year—not just the October sales. The 2005 figure is based on the sales recorded from 1 January 2005 to the present.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made by Invest Northern Ireland in increasing the percentage of the work force in Northern Ireland that is in the private sector. [31485]

Angela E. Smith: During the past three years to June 2005 there has been an increase of over 22,000 jobs within the private sector. However, when expressed as a percentage of the total, there was a slight decline, from 73.4 per cent. in June 2002 to 72.8 per cent. in June 2005. This was due to an increase of almost 15,000 jobs within the public sector, which falls outside the remit of Invest NI.

During the same time period, Invest NI provided over 17,000 offers of assistance towards the formation and development of private sector businesses across Northern Ireland. This assistance, totalling £400 million, contributed towards a total planned investment of over £1.5 billion.

These investments are focused on that element of the private sector, which has the greatest potential for creating wealth i.e. those businesses which can demonstrate the potential for growth through the development of markets outside Northern Ireland.

During the last three financial years Invest NI made 106 offers in support of inward investment projects within Northern Ireland. These projects are anticipated to create over 6,500 new jobs, mostly within knowledge-based industries.

Within the total number of offers made, almost 8,500 offers of assistance were made to new businesses through the Start a Business Programme, which is jointly administered by Invest Northern Ireland and Enterprise Northern Ireland. These businesses are expected to create over 15,000 jobs.

The full benefits that arise from this Invest NI assistance will continue to accrue for a number of years to come.

Meat Exports

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken since becoming Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to promote the export of Ulster *(a)* pork, *(b)* lamb and *(c)* beef. [31073]

Angela E. Smith: EU state aid rules limit the extent to which public funds may be used to support export campaigns that promote domestically produced meat. Nevertheless, where possible, DARD is working actively to assist exporters, for example by the development of international marketing strategies under the Food Strategy "Fit for Market" initiative, facilitating state aid approvals for promotional activity carried out by the Livestock and Meat Commission. This includes a promotional campaign currently under way in the Netherlands to promote Northern Ireland lamb and a Beef Market Restoration Campaign which will commence in 2006, intended to address key issues relating to the restoration of beef obtained from cattle over-30-months (OTM) old at slaughter into the food chain, minimise the impact of OTM beef on the market and achieve early integration of this beef into the supply chain and export markets as soon as they reopen. Every effort is also being made to have the beef export ban lifted as soon as possible as this will provide a great stimulus for the industry. In addition the future sustainability of these sectors will depend on increased

focus on customer requirements and the development of differentiated products that will enhance their ability to compete in global markets.

Property Valuations

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 428W, on property valuations, if he will place in the Library *(a)* the final Integrated Impact Assessment for the Draft Rates (Capital Values, etc) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and *(b)* the responses to the consultation which has taken place. [30664]

Angela E. Smith: Copies of the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), New TSN analysis and Rural Proofing analysis have been placed in the Library.

Responses to the consultation have been placed on www.nics.gov.uk/ratingpolicy

Railways

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many passenger train journeys in Northern Ireland arrived on time in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* 2004. [31482]

Mr. Woodward: Northern Ireland Railways does not record the number of train journeys arriving exactly on time except for the Bangor, Portadown and Larne lines where performance in 2004 was 19 per cent. The information was not collected in 1999.

However, there are additional Passenger Charter Standards against which Northern Ireland Railways measures train punctuality. For the Bangor, Portadown and Lame lines the standard is arrival within five minutes of planned destination arrival time. In 2004 88 per cent. of train journeys met this standard. In 1999 the figure was 86 per cent.

For the Dublin, Londonderry and Portrush lines the standard is arrival within 10 minutes of the planned destination arrival time. In 2004 94 per cent. of train journeys met this standard and in 1999 this figure was 95 per cent.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been spent to date by the South Eastern Education and Library Board on the public private partnership project for Comber high school and Bangor Academy. [29269]

Angela E. Smith: I understand from the chief executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board that to date £513,902 has been spent by the board on the public private partnership project for Comber high school and Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College, whose capital value is currently estimated to be some £34 million. This includes £67,100 in respect of a traffic impact assessment and ground investigation surveys.

Sustainable Development

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to deliver sustainable development in *(a)* South Antrim and *(b)* Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [30806]

Angela E. Smith: The recent announcement on the Draft Priorities and Budget indicated significant increased funding for Northern Ireland in the health and education sectors along with three new ring-fenced investment priority funding packages: children and young people, investment in training and skills and in protecting the environment by the research and development of new sources of renewable and clean energy. This will help to ensure that Northern Ireland is better equipped for a more sustainable future.

The Department of the Environment (DOE) is taking the lead in producing the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (NISDS) which is due to be published along with an implementation plan in summer 2006.

The emerging strategy has identified six priority areas for action and flagged up that some of the key sustainable development issues for NI relate to energy, waste and transport and their associated impacts on society.

In tackling the key issue of waste, the Department of the Environment is working with all local authorities on the implementation of the Waste Management Strategy and provides funding which supports recycling of waste. Together with the recent inclusion of Antrim borough council in the kerbside collection scheme operated by Bryson House Recycling, this has contributed to the area having one of the highest recycling rates in NI (38.4 per cent.).

Energy and CO_2 emissions from fossil fuels are another key issue for NI. The erection of a 600 kWh wind turbine on the Antrim Hospital site generates the hospital's base electrical loading using renewable energy and giving an estimated reduction of 1,376 tonnes in CO_2 annually.

In terms of transport, a series of improvements to the A8 Belfast to Larne road over recent years will help to increase safety and improve travel times on what is a key route within the Antrim council area. Furthermore, DRD have announced that almost £700,000 will be invested in local transport and safety schemes in the Antrim council area this year.

Last month, the Department for Social Development awarded Antrim town centre £75,000 as part of a town marketing programme which includes support for a programme of events and a shop local initiative. This will help support the local economy and assist in branding Antrim as an interesting place to visit.

Tourism

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made in promoting Northern Ireland as a tourist destination. [30484]

Angela E. Smith: There has been excellent progress in promoting Northern Ireland as a tourist destination. In the last 10 years tourism numbers in Northern Ireland have grown by 60 per cent. At the same time tourism spend has grown by 80 per cent.

In 2004 Northern Ireland passed a milestone by welcoming over 2.1 million visitors and the opportunity to capitalise on this success is ever stronger with tourism currently contributing £439 million to the economy.

Ulster Scots

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he plans to include questions on knowledge of Ulster Scots cultural issues in the next census in Northern Ireland. [27016]

Angela E. Smith: No decisions on question topics and content for the next Census in Northern Ireland are being taken at this stage. Following consultation with users, testing of options and the balancing of different requirements, it is planned that proposals will be brought forward in a White Paper, currently planned for 2008. The final content of the Census will ultimately be determined through the legislative process in the form of a Census Order and Census Regulations, probably around 2010.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces (Smoking)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what services are offered to service personnel to assist them in giving up smoking. [29302]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence offers a range of advice and assistance to service personnel wishing to give up smoking. These are outlined in a Surgeon General's Policy Letter and incorporate the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommendations and guidelines. The levels of support for smoking cessation are:

Brief Intervention

This is tailored to individual needs and is designed to motivate smoking cessation. This can be provided by all health care professionals (i.e. medical and dental) and is carried out opportunistically.

Intermediate Support

This is provided within a local health care setting and is delivered by specially trained personnel.

Specialist Smoking Cessation Clinics

This level of support is for resistant but motivated smokers who have failed using other methods. This level of support is currently available through the NHS.

A number of smoking cessation aids are currently available to personnel. These are:

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), available on prescription.

Buproprion, available on prescription.

Recommended aids are supported, such as health promotion leaflets,

websites, help lines and national initiatives such as National No Smoking Day.

Army Prosecuting Authority

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether instances of requests by the Army Prosecuting Authority for military police to conduct further investigations into cases of alleged abuse in Iraq not being carried out have been drawn to his attention. [21100]

Mr. Ingram: The Secretary of State is aware that a difficult operational environment can sometimes preclude the full and/or timely completion of further investigations.

In March 2005, the Attorney-General drew the Secretary of State's attention to a case in which there had been a delay in carrying out further investigations. Those investigations have, however, now been completed.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British soldiers in Iraq are under investigation following allegations of misconduct, where no charges have yet been brought; and if he will make a statement. [29402]

Mr. Ingram: As at 21 November cases involving 10 soldiers were under consideration by prosecuting authorities in relation to incidents where Iraqi nationals have allegedly been killed or injured. To date these soldiers have not been charged with any offence.

Courts Martial

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions armed forces commanding officers have *(a)* overruled courts martial verdicts and *(b)* reduced sentences imposed by courts martial in each of the last five years. [29564]

Mr. Ingram: Commanding officers have no authority to overrule court martial findings or to reduce sentences imposed by courts martial.

Defence Industry Inflation

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the difference was between defence industry inflation and inflation in each year since 1997. [30912]

Mr. Ingram: The UK rate of inflation is published by HM Treasury on their website in the form of the GDP deflator. The deflator is usually expressed in terms of an index, i.e. a time series of index numbers. The following table provides data on the GDP deflator at market prices from 1996–97 to 2004–05:

Financial year	*GDP deflator at market prices 2004–05 = 100*	*Percentage change on previous year*
1996–97	82.687	3.53
1997–98	85.132	2.96
1998–99	87.341	2.59
1999–2000	89.059	1.97
2000–01	90.225	1.31
2001–02	92.454	2.47
2002–03	95.391	3.18
2003–04	97.920	2.65
2004–05	100.000	2.12

Source:
HM Treasury

Specific data relating to inflation in the UK defence industry is not compiled. However, output price indices relating to industrial products are published by the Office for National Statistics in "Producer Price Indices

MM22", tables 2 and 4. Input price indices for aircraft and spacecraft, weapons and ammunition, instruments and appliances and electronic valve products are published by the Office for National Statistics in "Aerospace and Electronics MM19". Both publications cover products within the defence and civil sectors.

Defence Training

Mr. McFadden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the consortia bidding for the future defence training contracts. [30648]

Mr. Touhig: No Defence Ministers have had discussions with the consortia bidding for the future defence training contracts.

The DTR programme leader and his team have, however, held a very open and consultative dialogue with bidders while they have prepared responses to the Department's invitations to negotiate. 2nd PUS, VCDS and Training Agency chief executives have also all met and held discussions with the bidders' senior CEOs and senior board members. In addition, the wider Ministry of Defence customer community have discussed the MOD's requirement with bidders and trade unions have also met with them.

Mr. McFadden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision regarding the future consolidation of defence training services. [30649]

Mr. Touhig: I anticipate making an announcement on the preferred solution for the Defence Training Rationalisation programme in late 2006.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many freedom of information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31209]

Mr. Touhig: The Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1 January 2005. By the end of the second quarter of 2005, that is by 30 June, the Ministry of Defence had received a total of 2,882 requests to disclose information under the Act. During the second quarter, 80 per cent. of requests for information were answered within the 20-day deadline and 83 per cent. within the 20-day deadline or with a permitted extension. 10 complaints concerning the lateness of the original response from the Ministry of Defence had been received by 30 June.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Library of the House. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Future Army Structure

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the timetable is for the implementation of the future Army structure. [31422]

John Reid: Following my predecessor's announcement on 16 December, *Official Report*, columns 1795–1800, the Army has been working to implement the changes under the future Army structure. This includes the re-rolling of 19 Mechanised Brigade into a Light Brigade. The majority of changes to the Army, including changes to the infantry, will be completed by 2008.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many insurgents have been *(a)* injured and *(b)* killed by UK forces in each month since March 2003. [28805]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The best record of insurgents killed and injured by the United Kingdom forces are the Significant Actions Reports filed by UK forces following incidents involving hostile forces. The table details the information drawn from this reporting for the period between June 2003 and September 2005. Due to the tempo of operations information on insurgent casualties was not collected centrally before June 2005.

The figures drawn from these reports are not an accurate estimate of Iraqi casualties caused by UK forces, and should not be taken as such. It is not always possible to make an accurate count of Iraqi casualties following hostile contacts. The figures reported are the subjective impression of troops involved in the incidents. There is no way of checking these impressions since UK forces do not risk their own lives to ascertain how many casualties they have caused hostile forces and Iraqi casualties are frequently withdrawn from the area. It is also not always possible to determine who caused the casualties. Sometimes insurgents are killed or injured by the fire of other insurgents, although this number is likely to be small.

Month	*Enemy KIA*	*Enemy WIA*
2003		
June[1]	0	0
July	0	0
August	5	6
September	0	5
October	1	2
November	8	6
December	4	7
2004		
January	3	4
February	2	8
March	8	13
April	40	17
May	95	16
June	1	4
July	1	0
August	74	26
September	2	0
October	1	3
November	1	1
December	1	0

Month	Enemy KIA	Enemy WIA
2005		
January	10	7
February	0	0
March	1	1
April	1	13
May	1	2
June	0	0
July	0	0
August	1	0
September[1]	0	0
Total	261	141

[1] Incomplete data available.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his predecessor has had with his US counterpart on operations in Iraq since January 2004; whether ammunition used has been discussed; and if he will make a statement. [30718]

John Reid *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Since January 2004, my predecessor and I have had a number of discussions with our United States counterpart about operations in Iraq. There have been no specific discussions about ammunition used.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether personnel employed by private *(a)* military and *(b)* security companies contracted to his Department in Iraq are required to record incidents involving the injury or death of Iraqis; [28817]

(2) what legal immunities apply to individuals employed by private *(a)* military and *(b)* security companies contracted to his Department in Iraq; [28816]

(3) how many personnel are working for private *(a)* military and *(b)* security companies contracted to his Department in (i) Iraq and (ii) Multi-National Division South East in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [28815]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence does not contract any private military companies or private security companies in Iraq, and we hold neither employment records nor company policy documents for those which do operate there. Contractors working for Coalition nations are immune from Iraqi legal process only with respect to acts performed by them pursuant to the terms and conditions of a contract or sub-contract. Otherwise, they must respect all relevant Iraqi laws, including Coalition Provisional Authority order regulations, orders, memoranda and public notices.

Members' Visits

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, to the hon. Member for Chorley (Mr. Hoyle), *Official Report*, column 101W, on Members' visits, if he will list the sites where requests to visit were refused. [29868]

Mr. Touhig: Members of Parliament were refused visits to the following sites:

RAF Culdrose, Cornwall

RAF Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire (four refusals)

1 Kings Own Scottish Borderers, Lisenelly Barracks, Northern Ireland

Military Prosecuting Authorities

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has for independent oversight of Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force prosecuting authorities once they merge; and if he will make a statement. [29567]

Mr. Touhig: The Army, Navy and Air Force prosecuting authorities are subject to the general superintendence of the Attorney-General. The Armed Forces Bill, to be introduced to Parliament shortly, will provide for the establishment of a single prosecuting authority for all three services, but the superintendence arrangements for the new authority will not change.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many calls were made from call centres in her Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment she has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28178]

Ms Harman: Two call centres are currently operated by the Department for Constitutional Affairs or its agencies:

The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal Call Centre, Leicester.

The Magistrates Court Fines Collection Call Centre, Gwent.

Neither of these call centres currently makes use of predictive diallers and there are no future plans for their use.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total amount of financial subsidies and grants received by BT has been since 1997 for the purpose of extending broadband availability in the UK. [29872]

Alun Michael: Since 1997 BT has received the following financial sums to enable exchanges to extend broadband availability in the UK:

East of England Development Agency paid BT approximately £500,000, to enable most of their remaining exchanges in BED A areas. This was awarded through the Broadband Aggregation programme.

Following a competitive tender South West Regional Development Agency awarded BT approximately £3900,000 to enable some exchanges in the Cornwall area.

Following a competitive tender, BT in Wales was awarded £3.6 million of European Structural Funding to upgrade over 40 BT telephone exchanges from UXD5, making ISDB2 services available to 99 per cent. of BT lines. The investment was also used to enable Digital Subscriber Lines, ahead of the commercial roll-out programme for the UK, in BT exchanges in market towns across Wales. It is estimated that the total project value was around £6 million.

Following a full EU Procurement Process to extend broadband availability in the North East region, BT was paid £1,830,345. This sum is subject to a downward adjustment, in accordance with a reverse contribution scheme, which operates to repay money to the Agency if broadband take up in the region exceeds a prescribed level.

£364k was awarded to Vale Royal Local Authority acting on behalf of the Cheshire Digital Development Agency who, following a competitive tender through the North West Regional Aggregation Body, awarded BT a contract to enable of a series of remote rural exchanges in Cheshire.

In Cumbria, Your Communications was awarded a large infrastructure project (Project Access) contract for approximately £17 million following a negotiated, state aid approved OJEU competitive tender. Your Communications sub contracted part of the contract with a value of around £1 million to BT for the early enablement of all the exchanges in Cumbria and specifically for the enablement of 14 exchanges in the remotest areas of the sub region.

In Scotland £16.5 million was awarded to BT following competitive tender. The roll-out has not yet been completed so not all the money has been paid as yet. The European Commission was notified under State Aid rules.

East Midlands Development Agency has worked with BT on a number of sub- regional strategic partnerships, to extend broadband availability. As part of the contractual arrangements confidentiality agreements were signed by the sub- regional partnerships to protect information as commercial in confidence. Accordingly, this information is not be available for disclosure.

Rail Freight (Scottish Coal)

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the £9.7 million allocated to Scottish Coal (Opencast) to develop rail freight facilities for the transport of coal by rail has been spent. [30895]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a devolved matter for the Scottish Executive and my hon. Friend may wish to write to them about the issue.

Coal Imports

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much coal was imported into the UK in each of the past five years. [30904]

Malcolm Wicks: The total amount of coal imported into the UK in each of the five years from 2000 to 2004 is shown in the following table:

	Thousand tonnes
2000	23,446
2001	35,542
2002	28,687
2003	31,891
2004	36,153

Source:
Table 2.7, Digest of UK Energy Statistics, 2005

Coal Miners' Compensation

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his initial findings were in the June review of the work of *(a)* the Union of Democratic Miners, *(b)* claims handling firms and *(c)* other solicitors in relation to fraudulent handling of health compensation claims for ex-coal miners; and if he will make a statement. [31537]

Malcolm Wicks: I hope to make a statement shortly.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what conclusions he has reached following the review of his Department's administration of the health compensation scheme for claims by ex-coal miners; and if he will make a statement. [30654]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: I hope to make a statement shortly.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate his Department has made of the costs incurred as a result of the fraudulent handling of claims under the health compensation scheme for ex-miners; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure adequate safeguards are in place in the future administration of the scheme. [30655]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: I asked Stephen Boys Smith to look at this aspect as part of his review of the coal health compensation schemes and I hope to make a statement shortly.

Coal Production

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the levels of coal produced were in the UK in each of the past five years. [30903]

Malcolm Wicks: The total amount of coal produced in the UK in each of the five years from 2000 to 2004 is shown in the following table:

Thousand tonnes

	Deep-mined	*Opencast*	*Total*
2000	17,187	13,412	30,600
2001	17,347	14,166	31,513
2002	16,391	13,148	29,539
2003	15,633	12,126	27,759
2004	12,543	11,993	24,536

Source:
Table 2.7, *Digest of UK Energy Statistics, 2005*

Departmental Sickness Absence

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff in his Department have been absent on sick leave during the last two years for more than *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months, *(c)* 12 months and *(d)* two years. [28726]

Alan Johnson: The DTI HQ's statistics show that, in the last two-year period, 128 staff have been continuously sick for over 3 months, 8 have been continuously sick for over 6 months, 1 for over a year and none for over 2 years.

Departmental Staff

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements are in place to monitor attendance by staff in his Department at seminars and conferences; and how much was spent in each of the last five years on attendance at conference and seminars by members of staff in his Department, broken down into *(a)* travel and accommodation expenses and *(b)* fees for attendance. [28733]

Alan Johnson: Attendance at seminars and conferences requires the approval of a senior officer with the necessary delegated authority to commit to expenditure from an appropriate budget and is arranged

at Management Unit level. No central monitoring takes place. Details of the amount spent on travel and accommodation by officials and fees paid to attend seminars and conferences over the last five years could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Electricity Generation

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research has been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated by his Department on ways to store bulk generated electricity. [23085]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 10 November 2005]*: Since 1999, the Department has commissioned a number of studies to examine the future role of bulk electricity storage in the UK, its economics and the potential of various storage technologies. These studies are summarised below.

Project Title	*Contractor*	*Summary*
Utility Scale Energy Storage (Regenesys)	Innogy (RWE)	Development of Regenesys and an analysis of using storage to mitigate the impacts of variability
Utility Scale Energy Storage Assessment	Campbell Carr	Assessment of the economic value of utility scale electricity storage particularly in the context of the new electricity trading arrangements
Status of electricity storage developments	Swanbarton	Assessment of the status of electrical energy storage technologies and systems with particular reference to opportunities for research, development and commercial implementation
Intermittency and Electrical Storage	UNIST	Review of the economic case for additional bulk electricity storage against a background of increasing wind and gas fired generation
Review of Storage Technologies	EATL	Review of storage technology options and their potential for application in the UK
Redox Energy Storage Technology	E-Fuel Technology Ltd	Support for a redox flow battery technology for use in transport and domestic/industrial energy management applications
Development of Redox Flow Batteries for Utility Energy Storage	ESD Ltd	To develop, build and test a 250 kW redox flow battery for utility energy storage.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the total capacity of electricity generating plant that will need to be constructed by 2015; what projections his Department has made of the type of plant that will be constructed; and what estimate he has made of the average time required to construct a *(a)* coal-fired and *(b)* gas-fired power station. [30600]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: According to the DTI's most recently published projections, dating from November 2004, around 14 Gigawatts of new capacity is expected to be constructed by the end of 2015. Nearly all of the new capacity built is expected to be either CCGT or renewable.

The generic assumption in energy projections work is that construction of new CCGT plant can be achieved in around 3 years and for new coal plant, around 4 to 5 years. These assumptions do not include the time taken in the approval process.

Energy Review

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will ensure that Parliament is the first to be informed, in an oral statement, of the terms of reference of the forthcoming Energy Review. [31578]

Malcolm Wicks: The Energy Review terms of reference will be placed in the House as soon as they are available.

England-Scotland Interconnector

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the extent to which Ofgem consulted *(a)* the Scottish Executive, *(b)* Scottish local authorities and *(c)* Scottish consumer bodies about transmission investment for renewable generation, with particular reference to the proposals for the England-Scotland interconnector. [29290]

Malcolm Wicks: Ofgem issued public consultation documents regarding its proposals for Transmission Investment in Renewable Generation which provided the opportunity for all stakeholders to comment.

EU Directives

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the *(a)* administrative introductory cost, *(b)* annual recurring cost and *(c)* total cost to date to UK business of *(i)* Directive 97/75/EC amending and extending Directive 96/34/EC on parental leave, *(ii)* Directive 97/74/EC amending and extending Directive 94/45/EC on works councils, *(iii)* Directive 98/23/EC on the extension of Directive 97/81/EC on part-time work, *(iv)* Directive 98/52/EC on the extension of Directive 97/80/EC, on the burden of proof in sex discrimination cases, *(v)* Directive 1999/70/EC on fixed-term work and *(vi)* Directive 2002/14/EC on the information and consultation of workers; and if he will make a statement. [31569]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Regulatory Impact Assessment on the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 2001 extending the 1999 Regulations implementing Directive 97/75/EC estimates no significant one-off implementation costs. Additional recurring annual costs to employers are estimated to be between £6 million and £39 million.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment on the extension of the Council Directive on European Work Councils to include the UK estimates one off non-recurring costs of £8.4 million, affecting 111 UK based undertakings. Estimated annual recurring costs are estimated to be £14.5 million, assuming all affected undertakings set up a European Works Council.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment on the Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations implementing Directive 98/23/EC estimates costs of £27.4 million. These are annual and recurring costs to businesses.

The sole purpose of Directive 98/52/EC on the extension of Directive 97/98/EC on the burden of proof in sex discrimination cases was to amend the implementation date of Directive 97/80/EC in the UK from the 1 January 2001 to 22 July 2001. Consequently no Impact Assessment was prepared.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment on the implementation of Directive 1999/70/EC on fixed term work estimates a one off administrative implementation cost to businesses of £2 million. Annual recurring costs are also estimated and include increased access to training for fixed term employees (£39 million to £73 million) and additional costs from paying all fixed term employees Statutory Sick Pay after day one of their employment (up to £7 million).

The Regulatory Impact Assessment on the implementation of the Information and Consultation Regulations 2004 estimates one off costs of between £24 million and £53 million spread between 2005 and 2012. Additional recurring costs are estimated to be between £20 million and £46 million each year to 2012.

Each Regulatory Impact Assessment described above also identified significant monetary and non-monetary benefits associated with the relevant legislation. Regulatory Impact Assessments are an integrated policy tool designed to ensure that new regulations are proportionate and impose the minimum regulatory burden in a way such that the benefits justify the costs.

EU Satellite System

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which British companies are expected to participate in the construction of the EU Global Monitoring for Environment and Security satellite system; what representations the Government is making on their behalf at an EU level; what funds the Government expects to contribute for the system's construction; and if he will make a statement. [30612]

Barry Gardiner: A number of UK companies are already working on this project. The UK Government has regular interaction with the Commission on GMES although the majority of industrial contracts over the foreseeable future are likely to be let by the European Space Agency (ESA).

My noble Friend the Minister for Science and Innovation and I are in discussion with Ministerial colleagues about the UK's position on funding the GMES Space Component Programme at the ESA Ministerial on 5–6 December.

Freedom of Information

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to his Department passed to the FOI clearing house for evaluation, broken down by *(a)* subject and *(b)* date of request. [28945]

Alan Johnson: Information about the handling of Freedom of Information requests is published in "Freedom of Information Statistics on Implementation in Central Government". The most recently published report was 30 September 2005, copies were placed in the Libraries of the House. Additional information about the role of the Clearing House can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm#2. Departments do not release information about the internal handling of requests, such as details of which requests were referred to the Clearing House for guidance.

Gas Supplies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the gas-fired power stations in the UK with interruptible contracts for gas supplies this winter. [30710]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: This is a contractual matter between the power stations and their gas suppliers.

Langage Power Station, Plymouth

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations he undertook with *(a)* local councils, *(b)* community groups and *(c)* honourable Members before deciding to extend the time period to permit construction of the Langage Power Station in Plymouth beyond five years. [30500]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: A formal request to extend the time period in the section 36 consent has been received. The Department has been in touch with South Hams District Council over the handling of reserved matters in the planning permission and has agreed an interim extension to give the Council time to consider the reserved matters. A decision on the request for a fuller extension of the time period in the section 36 consent will be made in due course.

Mr. Malcolm Hanney

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who is responsible for the costs incurred in his Department's sex discrimination case involving Mr Malcolm Hanney. [27049]

Alan Johnson: The Department met the costs.

Nuclear Fusion

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the Government have spent on nuclear fusion research and development over the last 10 years; and how much it plans to spend over the next 10 years. [30851]

Barry Gardiner: UK Government expenditure on fusion research and development over the last 10 years is given below. The UK's indirect contribution to the European fusion programme via EU funding for the EURATOM Framework Programme is excluded from these statistics.

In 2004, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) awarded £48 million over the four years to 2007–08 to the UK Atomic Energy

Authority (UKAEA) for fusion research. Funding for subsequent years will depend on the outcome of Spending Reviews and the quality of the science case proposals.

	£ million
1995–96	15.7
1996–97	12.1
1997–98	16.6
1998–99	12.6
1999–00	14.3
2000–01	17.0
2001–02	14.4
2002–03	14.6
2003–04	15.6
2004–05	19.5

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list sites that have passed into the control of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [28028]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 11 November 2005]*: The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) was set up on 1 April 2005, under the Energy Act 2004, to oversee strategic arrangements for managing the UK's civil public sector nuclear liabilities and clean up. The NDA are owners of the plant and facilities of BNFL (the Magnox stations, Sellafield, THORP/SMP, and Springfields); and took responsibility for managing clean up at the UKAEA sites (including Dounreay). The NDA has set out its plans for the decommissioning and clean up of its sites (including the proposed closure dates of its fleet of Magnox power stations) in its draft Strategy available at www.nda.gov.uk.

The NDA's sites are:

Berkeley power station
Bradwell power station
Calder Hall power station
Capenhurst
Chapelcross power station
Culham
Dounreay
Drigg (Low Level Waste Repository)
Dungeness A power station
Harwell
Hinkley Point A power station
Hunterston A power station
Oldbury power station
Sellafield
Springfields
Sizewell A power station
Trawsfynydd power station
Windscale
Winfrith
Wylfa power station.

Power Stations (Carbon Emissions)

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the level of carbon dioxide emissions in *(a)* a nuclear power station and *(b)* a similar capacity gas fired power station. [30773]

Malcolm Wicks: A new 1 Gigawatt combined cycle gas turbine power station, operating at a load factor of 80 per cent., would produce the equivalent of approximately 0.7 million tonnes of carbon per annum. Nuclear power stations produce negligible CO2 emissions.

Smoking

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his Department's policy concerning the health and safety of employees exposed to secondhand smoke. [28068]

Alan Johnson: The Department takes the health and safety of staff and visitors to its buildings very seriously. As from 1 January 2006, all DTI buildings will become completely smoke free.

Statutory Holiday Entitlements

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to implement the exclusion of bank holidays from minimum statutory holiday entitlements for employees. [31486]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has taken a power in the recently introduced Work and Families Bill to enable us to put the Government's manifesto commitment to introduce "for the first time, an entitlement for every employee to four weeks' paid holiday, and we propose to extend this by making it additional to bank holiday entitlement" into effect. A full and extensive consultation with stakeholders, in line with better regulation principles, will be undertaken before any detailed changes are proposed in order to take full account of all the issues involved including the wide variety of flexible and non-standard working patterns that exist.

Wind Farms

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the minimum average wind speed necessary for a site to be considered suitable for a wind farm. [29212]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 November 2005]*: The Department has made no assessment of the minimum average wind speed necessary for a wind farm. The decision as to whether a potential wind farm would be viable in a specific location is a matter for the developer and in making that decision wind speeds would no doubt come into the equation.

Working Time Directive

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what instructions he has given to the Health and Safety Executive regarding the advice it provides to employers on the Working Time Directive; and if he will make a statement. [31365]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was given powers by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under the Working Time Regulations 1998 to enforce working time limits and health assessment requirements (for night workers). The HSE enforces the Working Time Regulations in accordance with the principles set out in the Health and Safety Commission's Enforcement Policy Statement which, in turn, reflects the Cabinet Office's Enforcement Concordat. HSE's Infoline contact centre gives advice to employers and employees on a wide variety of health and safety issues including working time.

PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Office, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is *(i)* a civil servant and *(ii)* a contractor in each case. [27427]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy) on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 963–64W.

TREASURY

Betting Duty

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department received from gross betting duty from off-course bookmakers in Northern Ireland in the most recent year for which figures are available. [31489]

John Healey: For the year ending 31 March 2005 off-course bookmakers based in Northern Ireland paid £10.5 million in general betting duty.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of *(i)* integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and *(ii)* the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31117]

John Healey: It is estimated that no additional costs will be incurred in integrating the proposed identity card scheme into HM Treasury's IT systems or to the on-going operation of the scheme within HM Treasury.

Self-invested Personal Pensions

Tim Farron: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made on the likely impact on demand for second homes of the new self-invested personal pension scheme. [31579]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Danny Alexander) on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 456.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases where a tax credit has been processed there was a delay in the computer system generating an award of child or working tax credit in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and how many such cases there have been in 2005–06. [31543]

Mr. Des Browne: The information requested is not available.

TRANSPORT

Airport Security

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* dismissals of staff there have been in the last two years as a result of incidents related to security breaches airside at *(i)* Heathrow, *(ii)* Gatwick and *(iii)* other airports serving London. [26759]

Ms Buck: The Department is not involved in action against individual members of staff which is a matter for their employers or the police. Any reported breaches of security are thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken with the Directed party concerned.

Buses

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent of compliance with public service requirements of buses planned to serve Olympic and Paralympic venues outside London in 2012. [30986]

Ms Buck: There has been no specific estimate of the extent of compliance with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility (PSVA) Regulations for buses serving the Olympic and Paralympic venues in 2012.

However, all full-size single-deck and double-deck buses must be compliant with the PSVA Regulations by 2016–17. This allows operators to achieve the full economic life from the fleet which existed before the regulations come into effect. To ensure the industry is well placed to meet these end dates, we have negotiated a voluntary agreement with the industry that 50 per cent. of the full-size bus fleet should be low-floor and accessible by 2010.

EU Co-financing

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which transport schemes in England have been promoted to EU co-financing since 2000. [31583]

Ms Buck: Under the current round of Objective 1 and Objective 2 structural funds programmes within England and which run from 2000–2006, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has to date contributed approximately 118m towards transport related initiatives in England.

The following transport schemes in England have been co-financed by the Trans-European Network fund since 2000:

Channel Tunnel Rail Link (sections 1 & 2)

West Coast Mainline

Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail upgrade study and works

Kings Cross/St. Pancreas rail Interchange (study)

Trans-Pennine rail freight upgrade study

Study into improved rail links to Stansted Airport

Cross London Routes—rail study

Southampton to West Coast Mainline rail project

Reading Station—study into design of an additional crossing of the Great Western mainline railway at Reading and development of design work for the main Reading Station concourse

Manchester Airport Ground Transport Interchange

A120 Stansted to Braintree road upgrade.

Gatwick Express

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce conclusions on the future of the Gatwick Express. [30697]

Derek Twigg: Proposals for future services on the Brighton Main Line, including Gatwick Express, were published in the draft Route Utilisation Strategy produced by the SRA. The options for this line are being considered and an announcement will be made in due course once a decision has been reached.

Merseytram

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when and where Ministers of his Department held meetings on Merseytram Line 1 with *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* local authorities; and what was discussed at such meetings. [25646]

Derek Twigg: Ministers in this Department have had a number of meetings with hon. members and local authorities where aspects of Merseytram Line 1 were discussed. Most recently I met a delegation of hon. Members, local authority representatives and members of the Merseyside PTA on 14 November 2005, at the Department for Transport.

At that meeting I underlined that the Government position on Merseytram has not changed: The Department's contribution to Merseytram was capped at £170 million. All costs above this level would have to be met from local sources, and that appropriate assurances would be needed from the authorities contributing to the costs of the scheme.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice Ministers have received on whether it would be ultra vires or imprudent for Knowsley council and Liverpool city council to underwrite contingencies on the Mersey Tram Line; and what the sources of the *(a)* formal and *(b)* informal advice were. [26206]

Derek Twigg: It would not be in the public interest to divulge the Department's legal advice. It is important that the Department can receive confidential legal advice as and when necessary to inform its decisions.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last discussed the future of Merseytram Line 1 with *(a)* Liverpool city council and *(b)* Merseytravel; and what issues were discussed. [26246]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 8 November 2005]*: I met a delegation of hon. Members, local authority representatives and members of the Merseyside PTA on Monday 14 November 2005. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I have given today to the hon. Member for Knowsley, North and Sefton, East (Mr. Howarth).

Motorways

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which environmental specialists he has consulted in relation to proposed limit values for environmental noise produced by motorways. [30640]

Dr. Ladyman: No environmental specialists have been consulted on the environmental noise limit values specifically related to motorway noise as work has not yet commenced.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what limit values for environmental noise produced by motorways have *(a)* been proposed and *(b)* are under consideration. [30641]

Dr. Ladyman: No environmental noise limit values specifically related to motorway noise have been considered or are currently proposed. Consultations on legislation to implement the Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) are being undertaken by DEFRA. National guidance on intervention levels to be applied within the UK, for the purposes of prioritising actions under future noise action plans, as required by the Directive, is expected in July 2007.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of noise reduction on sections of motorways when *(a)* all lanes are resurfaced and *(b)* some lanes are resurfaced; and if he will make a statement. [30647]

Dr. Ladyman: Studies carried out on various parts of the strategic road network, including one motorway site, identified noise reductions in the range of 2–4dB(A) at properties in close proximity to the adjacent highway following the resurfacing of all carriageway lanes with quieter surfacing materials. No studies or assessments have been carried out at locations where only part of the carriageway has been resurfaced with such materials.

Network Rail

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much Network Rail spent in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005; and how much it will spend in 2006 on testing new and existing trains in a test track setting. [30094]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: In 2004 and 2005 Network Rail has not been involved in testing trains on a test track in any of the years in question. Trains are tested by the manufacturer (in the case of new trains) or by the train owner or operating company (in the case of modifications to existing trains).

Network Rail is now actively investigating test track sites that will fulfil the needs of the railway in the coming years.

Project Funding

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding his Department has provided for transport projects in each constituency in England in each year since 2000. [31584]

Ms Buck: A breakdown of Department for Transport funding support for projects is not available at constituency level. The Department provides support for transport outside London to local authorities largely through block grants, and it is for the authorities to determine their priorities for spend. The Department's funding support for rail services through Network Rail and franchise agreements is also not available at constituency level.

Rail Franchises

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what costs have been incurred in respect of the tendering process of the *(a)* Integrated Kent Franchise and *(b)* Greater Western Franchise; and what the estimated final costs are. [24577]

Derek Twigg: Costs for the two year tendering process are shown in the table below. The replacement of these will deliver significant benefits including a fleet of high speed trains operating on CTRL for the Integrated Kent Franchise.

£000

	To date	*Estimated final cost*
Greater Western	2,000	2,668
Integrated Kent	3,990	4,290

Gwyn Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost to his Department has been of *(a)* the tendering process of the Integrated Kent Franchises and *(b)* franchise tendering since May 1997; and what the expected final costs are. [30613]

Derek Twigg: The cost to the Department for Transport (DfT) to date (and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) prior to DfT taking over direct responsibility) for the Integrated Kent Franchises franchise replacement is £3,990,000. The final costs are estimated to be £4,290,000.

The letting of franchises since 1997 has been successively undertaken by the Office of Rail Franchising, the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority, SRA and since July 2005, DfT.

Franchise tendering costs were part of the general business costs of these organisations and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made by Network Rail of the impact on passenger safety of the proposal to reduce staff hours on stations covered by the Integrated Kent Franchise. [29443]

Derek Twigg: Under the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement, there is no obligation for Network Rail to assess the impact of such proposals on passenger safety.

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what costs have been incurred by the review of Northern Rail services; and what the expected final costs are. [25017]

Derek Twigg: Costs incurred for the review of the Northern rail franchise up to 21 October 2005 amount to £301,538. The expected final cost is £500,000.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has discussed increasing the number of passengers with the rail franchisees. [28054]

Derek Twigg: Ministers and officials at the Department have regular meetings with rail franchisees. Ways of improving performances and encouraging greater use of the network are among the subjects discussed.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many invitations to events have been received by his Department from each rail franchisee during the past *(a)* 12 months, *(b)* two years and *(c)* five years; how many were accepted; and where the events were held. [28059]

Derek Twigg: Ministers and departmental officials receive a great many invitations to events organised by or involving rail franchise holders. No central record is maintained of the number of invitations nor of how many are accepted.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what costs have been incurred in respect of the tendering process of the Greater Western Franchise; and what the expected final costs are. [28423]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 21 November 2005]*: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I have given him today (UIN 24577).

Railways

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much in subsidy was paid to London and Continental Railways Limited by the Government in each year between 1994 and 2004. [31176]

Derek Twigg: London and Continental Railways Limited (LCR) has not received any subsidies. LCR has a concession contract to design and build a new railway and to operate Eurostar services. Government has agreed to contribute to the construction cost of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link by way of grants in accordance with the 1996 Development Agreement. Between 1994 and 2004, these grants totalled £895 million—(£109 million in 2001, £444 million in 2002 and £342 million in 2003).

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Department has spent on Crossrail in the past 12 months; and what percentage has been spent on *(a)* staff recruitment, *(b)* technical consultants and *(c)* other external services. [26540]

Derek Twigg: Between 1 November 2004 and 31 October 2005, Cross London Rail Links Limited (CLRLL) was provided with funding of £38,387,000. 50 per cent. of this was provided by the Department and 50 per cent. by Transport for London. I understand from CLRLL that, of this, £281,402 was spent on staff recruitment; £21,811,558 on technical consultants; and £10,986,190 on a range of other external services. The remaining costs of £5,307,580 include staff salaries and day-to-day running costs.

In addition, between 1 November 2004 and 31 October 2005, the internal Department for Transport unit that deals with Crossrail sponsorship, which includes the Crossrail hybrid Bill team, had costs of £3,499,672. Of this, £2,504,679 was spent on consultants; and £25,657 on other external services, primarily publishing responses to the Environmental Statement. Spending on staff recruitment is not recorded separately. All relevant staff were already employees of the Department for Transport. The remaining costs, £969,336, include staff salaries and day-to-day running costs.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many incidents of theft have been reported to the British Transport Police on the rail network in the past *(a)* 12 months, *(b)* two years and *(c)* three years, broken down by rail franchisee. [28060]

Derek Twigg: The following table shows the number of thefts of passenger property offences recorded by the British Transport Police on the rail network (excluding London Underground), recorded by rail franchisees and Network Rail over the last three years.

Number of thefts of passenger property offences

Train operating company/ Network Rail	*1 November 2002 to 31 October 2003*	*1 November 2003 to 31 October 2004*	*1 November 2004 to 31 October 2005*
Arriva Train Wales	388	444	439
c2c	180	214	160
Central Trains	563	586	505
Chiltern Railways	141	183	151
Croydon Tramlink	70	44	34
Eurostar	307	330	301
First Great Western	1,143	1,103	1,024
First Great Western Link	390	352	312
Gatwick Express Ltd.	164	202	160
Great North Eastern Railways	1,162	1,155	1,092
Heathrow Express	48	61	52
Hull Trains Company Ltd	8	9	8
Island Line Ltd.	1	1	3
London and Continental	31	33	28
Merseyrail	162	167	141
Midland Main Line	361	368	317
Midlands Metro	20	17	13
Network Rail Major Stations	4,565	4,426	3,691
Northern	1,445	1,398	1,330
ONE	628	581	632
ScotRail Railways	541	634	378
Silverlink Train Services	490	450	384
South Eastern	1,602	1,432	1,315
Southern	1,352	1,319	1,104
South West Trains	1,807	1,718	1,547
Thameslink	447	372	294
Tyne and Wear Metro	23	18	16
Virgin Trains	1,931	1,782	1,443
Wessex Trains	182	189	145
West Anglia/Great Northern	851	864	804
Total	21,003	20,452	17,823

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what targets the Department has set for implementing litter management strategies on the railways. [27938]

Derek Twigg: Responsibility for dealing with litter on the railways is shared between Network Rail and Train Operating Companies (TOCs).

In general, Network Rail is responsible for litter management on the network, for example tracks and embankments. NR has its own operational arrangements and policies relating to litter clearance, consistent with current legislation. TOCs are responsible for litter management on the trains they run and at the stations that they manage.

Franchise agreements require that TOCs keep their stations in a clean condition. Recently-let franchises include benchmarks relating to cleanliness and repair of trains and stations. TOCs are independently monitored and those that fail to meet benchmarks can be required to take remedial action and may be deemed to be in breach of their franchise agreement.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will break down planned investment into the railways during the period of the current spending review period by *(a)* region and *(b)* franchisee. [27939]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on Government spending and investment at a regional level. This is primarily because franchise areas often encompass two or more regions and Network Rail is structured on a route by route basis which also serves more than one region.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made a statement to Parliament on 10 February 2005 setting out Government spending plans for rail as a whole to 2008–09. The latest figures on Government payments to individual Train Operators (TOCs) are set out in appendix 5 of the SRA's annual report and accounts. Payments to individual TOCs in future years will depend on a number of factors including the outcome of negotiations in the franchise replacement process and the operational performance of Network Rail and the TOC in question.

Road Improvements/Maintenance

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the current road improvement work in Coventry, South with particular reference to new road construction. [29512]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has recently completed an improvement to the A45/A445 Leamington Road junction by providing a new roundabout at Ryton on Dunsmore, near Coventry.

The agency is now preparing a scheme to create a two level junction at the A45/A46 Tollbar End roundabout and to widen the existing road between Tollbar End and the A45/A46 junction at Stivichall.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding was allocated to maintenance of *(a)* motorways, *(b)* trunk roads and *(c)* other roads in receipt of central funding in the most recent three years for which figures are available. [29273]

Dr. Ladyman: Funds provided for maintaining the strategic road network do not differentiate between motorways and trunk roads. The Highways Agency accounts for the strategic road network on a renewals accounting basis, whereby all work to maintain the existing level of service is classified as resource while maintenance that improves the level of service is considered as capital investment. The figures for the three years to 2005–06 are:

£ million

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Capital	4	24	39
Resource	744	706	826
Total	748	730	865

Note:
The resource figure for 2003–04 included £29 million for technology maintenance which in subsequent years is scored as capital.

For other roads maintained by local highway authorities the Government provides funding in three ways. Funding for routine maintenance (grass cutting, gully clearing, sign cleaning, minor repairs, winter maintenance, street lighting, etc.) forms part of the Revenue Support Grant settlement. Capital funding is provided through the Local Transport Plan settlement for structural renewal work (resurfacing, overlay, bridge strengthening, etc.) PFI credits are provided for individual street lighting and highway maintenance schemes. With the exception of PFI credits and major capital maintenance schemes greater than £5 million, a local authority may spend maintenance funding, capital and revenue, as it wishes, on any service it provides. The figures for the three years to 2005–06 are:

£ million

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Capital	610	659	661
Major scheme	12	10	—
PFI credits	790	—	—
Revenue	2,005	2,055	2,055
Total	3,417	2,724	2,716

The information does not include capital funding for the maintenance of roads in London, which is a matter for the Mayor of London and the Greater London Assembly.

Road Tolls

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government have to introduce a road toll system. [26458]

Dr. Ladyman: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 5 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 171–74, that we would be taking forward a programme of work which would enable us to take decisions on road pricing in the future, as part of a broader solution to the problem of congestion.

Road Traffic Legislation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the operation of section 40A of the Road Traffic Act 1988. [29852]

Dr. Ladyman: Section 40 A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 is a road safety measure that makes it an offence to use a motor vehicle on a road when the vehicle is in such a condition as to be a danger to any person. The enforcement of this measure is primarily a matter for the police and the Vehicle & Operator Services Agency [VOSA] who carry out regular roadside enforcement checks to ascertain whether a vehicle is being used on a public road in a dangerous condition.

School Crossing Patrols

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the relationship between the current threshold of earnings before income support is affected and school crossing patrols recruitment. [29542]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

All aspects of benefit payment, including earnings disregards, are kept under constant review in order to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefit and the best use of public funds.

Any decision to give special disregards to a particular group of claimants is a complex matter with wider implications. We currently have no plans to provide school crossing patrols with any special disregard of earnings within the various income related benefit schemes.

Recruitment of school crossing patrol is a matter for local authorities. We are not aware of any direct relationship between benefit disregards and recruitment of school crossing patrols.

Surveillance Technology

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what discussions he has had with the Home Office on the application of intelligent surveillance technology; [26760]

(2) what discussions he has had with Ispotek regarding the application of intelligent pedestrian video surveillance systems; [26762]

(3) what plans he has for expanded application of intelligent surveillance technology related to the transport network; and if he will make a statement. [26764]

Ms Buck: We keep the transport security measures we require under constant review. We are supporting the Home Office's initiative to evaluate "intelligent surveillance systems' for a range of applications including use on the transport network.

Screening technologies are currently judged to offer greater potential. I refer the Hon Member to the statement of 3rd November on planned trials of screening equipment on the London Underground and National Rail network.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much his Department has spent in each of the last five financial years on intelligent surveillance technology; and what the *(a)* value and *(b)* nature is of contracts awarded by his Department; [26761]

(2) if he will list trials which have taken place to date on the use of intelligent surveillance technology related to the transport network. [26763]

Ms Buck: DfT has not funded or carried out trials of intelligent surveillance systems on the transport network. To achieve best use of resources, the Department for Transport works in close partnership with other government bodies on counter terrorism science and technology. The Home Office in conjunction with the Security Service coordinate work on the development and evaluation of intelligent surveillance technologies for a wide range of applications. For example the Home Office's "Imagery Library of Intelligent Detection Systems' (i-LIDS) project is supporting developers by providing realistic training imagery and evaluating systems to assess their suitability for specific scenarios including transport security applications.

Speeding (Prosecutions)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many prosecutions for speeding were made in West Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [27838]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Within the police force area of Lancashire in 2003 (latest available) there were 7,400 prosecutions for speed limit offences. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify the total for West Lancashire. 2004 data will be available early in 2006.

Train Journeys (Environmental Impact)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the environmental impact of a journey between London and Birmingham by *(a)* an electric train, *(b)* a diesel train and *(c)* a car. [29306]

Derek Twigg: The following table compares total emissions of CO_2, the main greenhouse gas, and NO_x and PM_{10} the two pollutants of most concern to local air quality, for representative electric and diesel trains and a car travelling between London and Birmingham. Two sets of figures are provided, one detailing the total emissions for the journey, the other detailing emissions per passenger journey assuming average vehicle loadings.

	CO_2 (kg)	NO_x (g)	PM_{10} (g)
Total journey emissions			
Electric train	2,020	4,320	129
Diesel train	1,270	10,800	202
Car	34.2	61.5	2.6
Emissions per passenger			
Electric train	5.9	12.5	0.4
Diesel train	9.7	82.9	1.5
Car	21.7	38.9	1.6

Train Operating Companies (Compensation)

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was paid to each train operating company through the Strategic Rail Authority in compensation for loss of revenue during industrial disputes in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; what the cause was of each dispute; and how each was resolved. [R] [29208]

Derek Twigg: The Strategic Rail Authority made payments of £15.65 million in 2003 and £7,630,567 in 2004 under its discretionary power to reimburse Train Operating Companies for loss of revenue due to industrial disputes. Details of the payments made to individual operators are commercially confidential.

Trains (Security Measures)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the additional security measures announced on 2 November will affect passengers on trains travelling from *(a)* Bexhill, *(b)* Battle, *(c)* Etchingham and *(d)* Robertsbridge stations. [29309]

Derek Twigg: Passenger screening equipment trials are scheduled for the Heathrow Express platforms at Paddington station. These equipment trials will not affect passengers on other routes. Further work is being undertaken regarding additional security equipment trials on the national rail and London Underground networks.

Transport Improvement (London)

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to improve transport in South East London. [30990]

Ms Buck: Following the creation of the Greater London Authority, Transport for London (TfL), under the London Mayor, is now responsible for the provision of transport services (except national rail) and related issues in London. In July 2004, the Secretary of State for Transport announced a long-term settlement for TfL, which provides a block grant of an average of £2,453 million per year up to 2009–10. This includes support for TfL's plans for prudential borrowing of up to £2.9 billion over this period.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who will be permitted to use the Olympic Route Network at the London 2012 Olympics. [31416]

Mr. Caborn: The London Olympic Bill allows for the establishment of an Olympic Route Network. This network would be on roads between Olympic venues and accommodation and would allow the Olympic Delivery Authority to implement special traffic management measures. There will be no general restrictions on use of the Olympic Route Network.

However, based on the experience of previous games and their successful use in Sydney and Athens, it is proposed that on part of the Olympic Route Network, where road space permits, there will be Olympic lanes operating in a similar way to bus lanes. At certain times of the day use of these lanes will be restricted, largely to accredited members of the Olympic family. The Olympic family includes athletes, Olympic officials, accredited media and technical personnel.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many and what percentage of tickets at the London 2012 Olympics will be reserved for *(a)* UK residents, *(b)* corporate sponsors and *(c)* corporate entertainment; [31417]

(2) how many and what percentage of tickets for the London 2012 Olympics will be *(a)* available for public sale and *(b)* reserved; and for whom tickets will be reserved. [31418]

Mr. Caborn: The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) estimates that a total of 9.6 million tickets will be available for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Out of this total, a certain number of tickets have to be made available for sale to Olympic Family members such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Federations, National Olympic Committees as well as IOC and local sponsors. The precise number of tickets to be made available to these groups will be decided after discussions with the IOC and other relevant parties. It is LOCOG's intention that tickets will be both affordable and distributed on an equitable basis.

BBC Trust

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether Scotland will be represented on the proposed BBC trust. [30589]

James Purnell: As set out in the BBC Charter Review Green Paper, the trust will need to be able to reflect the interests of a wide range of different UK communities, and include members with the knowledge and expertise to understand and articulate the interests of individual devolved nations. More details will be given in the forthcoming White Paper.

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department took to celebrate and promote the events of *(a)* Ramadan, *(b)* Diwali and *(c)* Chinese new year in 2005. [31167]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS is a diverse organisation that values its staff as individuals. Although the Department doesn't specifically celebrate religious events such as Ramadan, Diwali and the Chinese new year it does promote them by including in its diversity training the need for staff to be sensitive to colleagues observing different periods of religious observance. We also provide a religious and cultural observance guide and an interfaith calendar which is available to all staff on our intranet site. The Department also has a policy of flexible working. As part of the refurbishment of the Cockspur Street Site there are plans for a dedicated multi-faith prayer room.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Freedom of Information applications her Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31210]

Mr. Lammy: The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 came fully into effect from 1 January 2005, not 2000. In the period 1 January to 30 June 2005 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport received 268 requests for information handled under FOI. Of these *(a)* in 177 cases a full response was provided within 20 days; *(b)* in 54 cases a permitted extension to the 20-day deadline was applied to allow for consideration of the balance of public interest; and *(c)* in 37 cases the 20-day deadline was missed. In the same period, the Department received three complaints requesting an internal review on the timeliness of the Department's handling of a FOI request.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcome of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Licensing Act

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is on requirements for *(a)* elected representatives and *(b)* members of the public most affected by applications for an extension of licensing hours under the Licensing Act 2003 to be notified of such applications. [30776]

James Purnell: Under the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005 (No. 42), applicants are required to display a notice prominently at or on the premises and to advertise their application in a local newspaper or newsletter. The 2003 Act also requires that licensing authorities must place details of applications on its licensing register which must be available to the public.

Nothing in the 2003 Act prevents licensing authorities from taking supplementary action to bring applications to the attention of elected representatives and members of the public who may be affected by applications for an extension of licensing hours but that is a matter for them to decide.

My Department is committed to monitoring closely how the new regime operates and where the evidence suggests that the system could be more effective, it will consider revising the guidance.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make it her policy to place all community amateur sports clubs in band A for the purposes of setting licensing application fees. [31241]

James Purnell: The Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel, chaired by Sir Les Elton, is considering whether the licensing fees have been set at a fair level for fee payers, including community amateur sports clubs, while ensuring that licensing authorities can recover their legitimate administration, inspection and enforcement costs.

The panel will deliver an interim report to Ministers shortly, followed by a Final Report in autumn 2006. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will, in the light of this ongoing work, keep under review the need for any changes to the fees regime.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make it her policy to reduce the band A alcohol licence application fee from £100 to £50. [31243]

James Purnell: The level of fees under the Licensing Act 2003 are currently being considered by the Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel, chaired by Sir Les Elton. The panel will want to ensure that fee levels are fair to business, non commercial organisations and to other individuals seeking licences, while allowing licensing authorities to recover their legitimate administration, inspection and enforcement costs.

The panel has received evidence from around 70 stakeholder organisations affected by the new fees regime and will deliver an Interim Report to Ministers shortly. This will be followed by a final report in autumn 2006. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will, in the light of this ongoing work, keep under review the need for any changes to the fees regime.

Sir Christopher Meyer

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the statements of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary on Sir Christopher Meyer's diaries and his Chairmanship of the Press Complaints Commission represent her policy. [31538]

Tessa Jowell: As set out in the Cabinet Secretary's letter to Sir Christopher Meyer's publishers on 4 November, the Government's view is that it is disappointing that a former diplomat should disclose confidences gained as a result of his employment.

The Press Complaints Commission is an entirely independent body and the appointment of its chairman is not a matter for the Government.

Television Licences

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people have been prosecuted for non-payment of the television licence fee in each constituency of Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [31277]

James Purnell: The information requested is not held centrally.

SCOTLAND

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps his Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses. [29070]

David Cairns: When engaging consultancies, the Office would include, as part of its contract, terms and conditions which would provide for reasonable expenses to be reimbursed against receipts. That, in conjunction with appropriately robust contract management arrangements, ensures that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27736]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has made no payments of damages in the last year.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27676]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has not signed any contracts for direct mail in 2004–05, or in 2005–06 to date.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31223]

David Cairns: Departmental performance on Freedom of Information applications, including statistics on both the volume and outcomes of requests, is published quarterly on the Department for Constitutional Affairs website at www.foi.gov.uk. The bulletins for January to March and April to June are available in the Libraries of both Houses and at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsjan-mar05.htm. The next bulletin will appear before Christmas, and an annual report will be published in early 2006. We are not aware of any complaints about the time taken to respond to requests.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many payments for maladministration have been made in each of the last five years by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [32157]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has made no payments for maladministration in the last five years.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Best Value

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister why the Government has not collated information on Best Value performance indicators *(a)* 127a, *(b)* 127b and *(c)* 127c in 2005–06. [30439]

Mr. Woolas: Following a review and consultation, the Home Office decided to delete the sub-measures related to this Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) for the police with effect from 1 April 2004 because the data was judged to be unreliable. This is because it required both the person reporting the offence and the police officer recording it to make a series of subjective judgments. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister carried out a fundamental review of all the BVPIs last year and it was decided to delete the sub-measures for local authorities with effect from 1 April 2005 for the same reason. The headline indicator (number of violent crimes per 1,000 population) continues to be collected.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* outturn and *(b)* targets set for each local authority were for Best Value Performance Indicators *(i)* 126, *(ii)* 127a-d, *(iii)* 128, *(iv)* 174, *(v)* 175 and *(vi)* 176 in 2004–05. [30442]

Mr. Woolas: The data for these Best Value Performance Indicators is currently being audited. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish it on 15 December on a dedicated website: www.bvpi.gov.uk. Local authorities set their own targets for each of these indicators in 2004–05. Information on local targets is not collated centrally.

Contracts

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the title and value of consultancy contracts commissioned *(a)* by and *(b)* in respect of Castle Point Borough Council in each of the last five years, broken down by consultancy. [31240]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) does not hold information on contracts that Castle Point may have let directly. ODPM has let the following contracts:

Title	*Consultancy Firm*	*Value £*	*Financial Year*
Castle Point Recovery Plan—local government engagement	Price Waterhouse Coopers	101,000	2004–05

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to public authorities on using contract terms to ensure that contractors comply with human rights legislation. [31233]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published on 4 November a Guidance Note titled "Guidance on Contracting for Services in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998. This is accessible from the ODPM's website at http://odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161370.

Recent conflicting legal decisions have left public authorities and contractors unsure whether or not the users of services contracted-out to non-public sector organisations are covered by the Human Rights Act 1998. The Guidance suggests that protection equivalent to that which would be offered by the Human Rights Act can be obtained by the procuring public authority specifying in the service contract the levels of performance required.

The intended audience is local authorities, housing associations, organisations for older people and those with disabilities, and other government departments, but the guidance will be of relevance to all public contracting authorities. However, when acting on the Note, public authorities should take their own professional legal and procurement advice to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act and public procurement law.

Council Spending

Colin Challen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce guidelines for town parish councils on spending; and if he will assess the merits of capping the expenditure of such councils if they exceed the limits he imposes on major authorities. [30850]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects town and parish councils to budget prudently and consult their residents about spending plans before setting their precept. Under current legislation there is no provision for capping parishes or issuing statutory guidance to them on their budgets. There are no plans to amend the legislation, but we will keep the situation under review.

e-Enablement

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which services local government has e-enabled; and what level of take-up has been achieved for each service, broken down by local authority. [31559]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) target is for 100 per cent. of local government services to be e-enabled by 31 December 2005. Local authorities are currently on course to deliver this target. The average local authority deals with over 750 individual services which may be accessed over a number of channels by citizens, including face-to-face, telephone and web. No data is kept on levels of take-up for individual services. As part of the ODPM's strategy

to support councils increase citizens' use of e-government, on 11 November, the Minister for Local e-Government announced details of a National Take-Up Campaign for local e-services which is due to be launched in January 2006.

Fire Services

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* genuine and *(b)* malicious false alarm fire emergency calls have been received in Leeds North West in each year since 1997. [29434]

Jim Fitzpatrick: No data are available on false fire alarms for the Leeds North West constituency. The information tabled below relates to the area covered by Leeds City Council and has been provided by the West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue service.

The information on genuine false alarms includes those due to apparatus failure as well as calls made in good faith by members of the public.

Leeds City Council

	Genuine false fire alarms		*Malicious fire false alarms*
	Apparatus	*Good intent*	
1997	3,758	1,828	2,370
1998	3,680	1,708	1,387
1999	3,726	1,825	851
2000	3,907	1,685	851
2001	4,100	1,825	877
2002	4,307	1,780	816
2003	4,503	1,983	655
2004	4,551	1,615	723

Source:
West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when defibrillators will be available *(a)* an all fire appliances and *(b)* in all fire stations; and when all personnel will be trained to use them. [31621]

Jim Fitzpatrick: These are matters for each Fire & Rescue Authority to consider working in partnership with their local Ambulance Service NHS Trust where appropriate.

The latest draft Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006–2008 makes clear the Government's wish to see Fire and Rescue Authorities working with other providers to improve life safety through the use of defibrillation equipment and by implementing co-responder schemes. Furthermore, as part of the Coronary Heart Disease National Service Framework, the Department of Health continues to roll out a National Defibrillator Programme. There are already over 700 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in public places. An additional 221 AEDs have been allocated to fire & rescue services.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the daily cost of *(a)* the West Midlands firefighters strike and *(b)* using Army personnel to provide services. [31622]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Funding the strike by firefighters in the West Midlands is the responsibility of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority. It is for that body to make appropriate estimates of costs and arrangements for payment. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will reimburse the Ministry of Defence's additional costs and will seek their own reimbursement from the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority. Given the unforeseen and open-ended nature of the task, the Ministry of Defence has been unable to provide estimates of the likely costs of Armed Forces personnel at this stage. The information will be given to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority as soon as it is available. In the meantime, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working closely with the Ministry of Defence and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority to keep costs as low as possible.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when funding will be made available to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority to cover the additional costs of resilience following the bombings in London on 7th July. [31623]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In addition to its core funding, which it receives from the Greater London Authority, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) has received £606,000 for the 2005–06 financial year as a direct grant, for the co-ordination of emergency planning on behalf of all London local authorities. This represents an increase of 299 per cent. on the funding level of the previous year. In light of this, no specific extra funding has been available to LFEPA to cover the cost of responding to the 7 July attacks. Government has of course made a significant contribution to these costs in other areas.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated cost is of the installation of Firelink in the regional fire control centres. [30631]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Cost information relating to the Firelink and the FiReControl infrastructure procurements is commercially sensitive until contracts have been signed.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31227]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In the period from 1 January 2005 to 30 June 2005, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 575 Freedom of Information applications of which 173 took longer than 20 days to process. Of the latter number 27 were legitimately extended to allow for consideration of the public interest test, as allowed for in the Act. These figures can be calculated from table 2 of the Department for Constitutional Affairs' publications, "Freedom of Information Act 2000, Statistics on Implementation in Central Government, Q1 January—March 2005 and Q2 April—June 2005".

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on

the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, whilst an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Only three of the requests for information the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received have given rise to complaints about delays in processing.

Government Office for London

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the *(a)* neighbourhood management pathfinders, *(b)* neighbourhood wardens and *(c)* Community Learning Chest funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London Borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [30536]

Mr. Woolas: There are five neighbourhood management pathfinders in London in the Boroughs of Camden, Westminster, Southwark, Greenwich and Waltham Forest. There is no neighbourhood management pathfinder in Croydon.

The neighbourhood wardens scheme ended in 2003–04. However, total funding in London for street crime warden schemes in 2004/05 was £4,403,993 of which Croydon received £238,918.

In 2004–05 the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) in Croydon received funding of £243,139 under the Single Community Programme. Of that the CEN allocated £19,850 to Learning Activities (formerly the Community Learning Chest), and spent £6,465. Total Single Community Programme funding available in Londonin 2004/05 was £9,343,811.

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what representations his Department has received from *(a)* the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and *(b)* the Environment Agency on whether home information packs should include contaminated land reports; [24672]

(2) whether home information packs will be required to include contaminated land reports. [24673]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on draft regulations that will specify the contents of the home information pack. The draft regulations authorise, but do not require, the inclusion of a contaminated land search in the home information pack. The consultation ends on 30 December 2005.

Housing

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much housing revenue account subsidy was provided to each local authority in England in 2004–05. [31582]

Yvette Cooper: A table with the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy entitlement for each local authority in 2004–05 has been made available in the library of the House. These figures are subject to audit.

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* local authority stock and *(b)* private sector empty homes there were in Luton in each of the last five years. [30635]

Yvette Cooper: The total number of vacant dwellings by tenure in Luton for each of the last five years is tabled below:

Number of empty homes in Luton

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Local authority (LA)	108	84	106	95	165
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	46	44	44	58	54
Other public	0	0	0	0	10
Private sector (non-RSL)	2,302	2,063	1,942	1,994	1,800
Total	2,456	2,191	2,092	2,147	2,019

Source:

For years 2001 and 2002 all tenure figures above come from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix except for the RSL tenure type which comes from the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return.

For the years 2003 to 2005 the figures above are based on three sources: Total from ODPM's Council Tax Base 1 return; LA and "Other" public sector tenures from ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical return; RSL tenure from Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return; and the private sector (non-RSL) is obtained by subtracting all these three separate tenure figures from the total.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to provide affordable housing in Kettering constituency. [27295]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, through our sponsorship, works closely with the Housing Corporation to provide affordable housing.

The Housing Corporation announced their biggest ever investment programme of £3.3 billion for 2004–06 to boost the number of key worker homes. As part of the programme £400 million was made for key worker homes in the growth areas funding 9,700 homes. Of this £86,274,652 will be allocated to the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area creating 2575 homes.

In Kettering a programme to provide 334 new affordable homes, including 177 rented units and 157 shared ownership/low-cost home ownership units, from 2004–06 has been agreed and £7,140,000 is being invested in this.

In addition, the Housing Corporation is negotiating a bidding round with housing authorities for further provision of affordable housing in 2006–07.

In addition future growth will have affordable homes incorporated into the developments and we are working with developers to increase rates of affordable housing provision through other vehicles such as funding through section 106 programmes.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes were sold under the right-to-buy scheme in Worcester in each year since 1980. [30591]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of council properties sold under the right-to-buy scheme by Worcester Borough Council in each financial year since 1979–80 as reported by Worcester are tabled below.

Financial year	*RTB Sales*	*Financial year*	*RTB Sales*
1979–80	0	1992–93	44
1980–81	0	1993–94	46
1981–82	118	1994–95	70
1982–83	136	1995–96	40
1983–84	197	1996–97	47
1984–85	112	1997–98	71
1985–86	137	1998–99	82
1986–87	108	1999–00	99
1987–88	161	2000–01	95
1988–89	140	2001–02	122
1989–90	170	2002–03	116
1990–91	62	2003–04	109
1991–92	44	2004–05	0

Source:
Quarterly returns (P1B) to ODPM from local authorities.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the results of the next English House Condition Survey will be available. [30741]

Yvette Cooper: The headline results for 2003 from the survey were published in March 2005 (English House Condition Survey: Key Findings for 2003) and are available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website (www.odpm.gov.uk/ehcs). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish the 2004 results to a similar timetable during 2006.

Local Authority Funding

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what proportion of social services departments in local authorities in England he expects will overspend their budgets in the financial year 2005–06; and whether the revenue support grant for 2006–07 will take such overspends into account; [30176]

(2) whether projected deficits in local authority social services departments in 2005–06 will be taken into account in the forthcoming revenue support grant for local authorities with responsibility for social services departments. [30177]

Mr. Woolas: Information on deficits or surpluses in local authority service budgets for the current financial year are not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Projected overspends or deficits are not taken into account in distributing formula grant.

London Governance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Government expects to publish a consultation paper on reform of London governance; and whether the Government expects to make an announcement on possible reforms before the 2006 London borough elections. [29720]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government will publish a consultation paper on proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly in the next few weeks, and will announce a final package of proposals as soon as possible following the end of the consultation period.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the Neighbourhood Renewal Capacity Building Fund funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London Borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [29955]

Mr. Woolas: There is no such fund as the Neighbourhood Renewal Capacity Building Fund.

Social Services Funding

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the social services formula share is in 2005–06 per *(a)* younger adult, *(b)* child, *(c)* elderly person and *(d)* person in (i) Inner London local authorities, (ii) Outer London local authorities, (iii) English metropolitan authorities outside London, (iv) Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council area, (v) Salford City Council area, (vi) Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council area, (vii) South Tyneside Council area, (viii) Leeds City Council area and (ix) Wolverhampton City Council area. [29472]

Mr. Woolas: The table below shows the data requested.

	Personal Social Services for younger adults FSS per person aged 18 to 64 (£ per person aged 18 to 64)	*Personal Social Services for Children FSS per person aged 0 to 17 (£ per person aged 0 to 17)*	*Personal Social Services for Older People FSS per person aged 65 and over (£ per person aged 65 and over)*	*Total Personal Social Services FSS per person (£ per person)*
Inner London Boroughs including the City of London	212.04	1,141.53	1,385.83	519.66
Outer London Boroughs	134.21	498.33	858.63	312.52
Metropolitan Districts	126.04	406.49	860.18	305.85
Wigan	109.30	295.17	880.77	263.99
Salford	142.48	471.94	1,021.78	355.86
Knowsley	145.43	595.74	1,062.50	397.77
South Tyneside	134.12	467.19	902.12	347.39
Leeds	121.32	358.01	762.24	271.72
Wolverhampton	134.11	453.09	934.74	342.46

Spatial Address Infrastructure

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the suspension of negotiations between the Improvement and Development Agency and Ordnance Survey on the production of a National Spatial Address Infrastructure. [30113]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published proposals for a National Spatial Address Infrastructure (NSAI) involving a partnership between Improvement and Development Agency and Ordnance Survey on 26 May 2005.

As announced on 11 August, the Improvement and Development Agency and Ordnance Survey were not able to reach agreement over the terms of the establishment of the NSAI.

Officials from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are continuing to work with interested parties to investigate possible ways forward.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* total expenditure to date has been and *(b)* projected future expenditure is on the production of a National Spatial Address Infrastructure. [30114]

Jim Fitzpatrick: *(a)* Total cost of external consultants working on a National Spatial Address Infrastructure (NSAI) in 2004–05 was £23,750. A total of £22,500 has been or is expected to be spent in 2005–06.

(b) In terms of forecast expenditure, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has only specifically allocated budget to the NSAI in the financial year 2005–06; this was £2.3m as notified in the public prospectus launched in May 2005. Because Ordnance Survey and the Improvement and Development Agency could not reach agreement over the way forward, it is not certain that this funding will be required.

Standards Board

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what Standards Board cases have been considered by the High Court in the last five years in which all proceedings are complete; and what the judgement was in each case. [26914]

Mr. Woolas: The Standards Board was established in March 2001.

Details of High Court cases, and the judgement in each case are as follows:

R (on the application of Hathaway) v Ethical Standards Officer

Appeal date 13 May 2004

The appeal was dismissed.

Murphy v ESO of the Standards Board for England

Appeal date 19, 28 October 2004

The appeal against the decision was dismissed; the appeal against the sanction was allowed, and reduced to a 4 month suspension.

Sloam v Standards Board for England

Appeal date 25 Jan 2005

The appeal was dismissed.

Scrivens v Ethical Standards Officer

Appeal date 14 March 2005

The appeal was dismissed.

Sanders v Kingston

Appeal date 19 and 20 May 2005

The High Court adjudged the Adjudication Panel's decision was correct, but judged the sanction of 2 years disqualification to be excessive, and quashed it, due to the period of disqualification already served by the councillor prior to the appeal being heard.

Adami v Ethical Standards Officer

Appeal date 28 June 2005

The High Court found that the reasons given for Adjudication Panel's decision were deficient, overturned the decision and quashed the sanction (it did not deal with the substance of the decision). The Standards Board is currently appealing the High Court decision to the Court of Appeal.

Gill v Ethical Standards Officer

Appeal date 26 July 2005

The High Court quashed the sanction of the Adjudication Panel, and reduced Cllr Gill's 1 year disqualification to 3 months suspension, on the grounds that the Panel had not correctly applied its sanctions guidance.

Sanders v Ethical Standards Officer

Appeal date 1 Sep 2005

The High Court adjudged the Adjudication Panel's decision was correct, but judged the sanction of 18 months disqualification to be excessive, and quashed it, due to the period of disqualification already served by the councillor prior to the appeal being heard.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 777W, on the Valuation Office Agency, what powers the Agency and its agents have to fine residents who refuse entry. [30665]

Mr. Woolas: None.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Angola

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Angola. [30725]

Ian Pearson: After three decades of civil war leading to a severe humanitarian crisis, Angola is currently in the process of formulating a new constitution and creating the structures and environment for the holding of democratic elections in 2006. The Government supports Angola in its transition to democracy. The Government is providing a £8.5 million development assistance programme to Angola which includes funding for a project to strengthen the capacity of electoral stakeholders, such as civil society and the media, and another to look at conflict management.

BBC (Foreign Language Broadcasts)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the BBC with regard to the ending of Central and Eastern European language radio broadcasts. [30670]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was consulted about the BBC World Service (BBCWS) proposals, including at the Annual Ministerial meeting which my noble Friend the

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) chaired. I consented to the closures.

Closing some radio services is one part of a major reprioritisation. The resources released will be reinvested in line with BBCWS' overall future strategy, which includes new online services and Arabic TV. BBCWS believes these changes will lead to an increase in its global audience and impact.

China

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on allegations of mistreatment of Christians in Xinjiang Province, China; and if he will make a statement. [30602]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of recent allegations of mistreatment of Christians in Xinjiang. Freedom of religious belief was a theme of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue on 24 October. The EU raised concerns about restrictions on freedom of religion and made clear its view that China's regulations are not compatible with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China has signed and is working towards ratifying.

Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of Turkish Cypriot proposals to protect the environment and provide sustainability by directives controlling building in North Cyprus, with particular reference to protecting Greek Cypriot-owned land from development; and if he will make a statement. [31080]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Neither my right. hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary nor I have seen detailed proposals by the Turkish Cypriots to control building in north Cyprus, but we welcome any measures that will help to tackle the problem of environmental degradation. Effective protection of the environment in north Cyprus is in the interests of both communities and we strongly support action in this area.

However, the complex issues surrounding the question of property ownership in Cyprus remain an integral part of a comprehensive settlement and can only be fully addressed in this context. This government remains committed to pursuing such a settlement with both communities.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31042]

Mr. Straw: The real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is shown below:

Real terms percentage increase[1]
(a) 1997–98 to 2004–05

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Allocated Resource (£ million)[2]	1,144.4	1,131.0	1,209.2	1,274.6	1,439.6	1,657.7	1,708.4	1,797..3
(i) Year on Year increase	—	—	4.8	4.1	10.2	11.6	0.4	3.0
(ii) Increase for period 1997–98 to 2004–05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	33.7

(b) 2005–06 to 2007–08

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Allocated Resource (£ million)[3]	1,794.8	1,702.4	1,739.4
(i) Year on year increase	0	0	0
(ii) Increase for period 2005–06 to 2007–08	—	—	0

[1] The figures have been deflated using the GDP deflators produced by HM Treasury on 28 September 2005, to calculate the real terms increases.

[2] The "Allocated Resource" shown here is the final budget for the year approved by Parliament through the supply process, available in the House of Commons Library. Figures from 1997–98 to 2004–05 are not directly comparable because the basis of government accounting was changed in 2001–02 with the switch from cash accounting to resource accounting and budgeting. This overstates total resources in 2004–05 compared with 1997–98.

[3] The "Allocated Resource" shown for 2005–06 is the Winter Supplementary Estimate which is currently being considered by Parliament. Figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are estimates based on the 2004 Spending Review outcome. 2006–07 and 2007–08 figures underestimate total FCO resources because they do not include the conflict prevention expenditure that is transferred between conflict prevention pool partners (FCO, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development) annually. £247.9m of conflict prevention expenditure is included in 2005–06 compared to only £74m in 2006–07 and in 2007–08.

Ethiopia

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to persuade the Ethiopian Government to implement the demarcation agreement on the border with Eritrea. [30657]

Ian Pearson: We have consistently urged the Ethiopian Government to accept the Boundary Commission's ruling and appoint Field Liaison Officers to work with the Commission on the demarcation of the border. Prime Minister Meles' initiative in November 2004 to accept the Boundary Commission's ruling in principle was a helpful step forward. We will continue to support international efforts aimed at securing full implementation of the ruling.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the number of British UN peacekeepers on duty on the Ethiopia/Eritrea border. [30298]

Ian Pearson: There are currently no British troops in the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. We continue to work closely with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and with other Security Council members to support and improve peacekeeping capacity, including

through training and capacity building initiatives within the UN organisation itself and with member states and regional organisations.

EU Energy Policy

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the common EU energy policy proposed by the Prime Minister at the Hampton Court informal summit. [31571]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out at the European Parliament on 26 October 2005, a common EU energy policy should focus not on new regulatory barriers but on obtaining a genuinely open energy market, on dialogue at a European level with key suppliers and on clean technologies, energy efficiency, and source diversification to meet the challenges of global warming. Work in several of these areas is already under way and will be discussed at the Energy council on 1 December 2005. The Commission will provide an interim report on follow-up to Hampton Court at the December European council with further discussion on the basis of full reports in 2006.

EU Finance

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the objectives are of *(a)* the EU Growth Adjustment Fund and *(b)* the EU Global Adjustment Fund; from which part of the EU budget each fund is financed; how much of the financing of each fund will be made by the UK; what proportion of each fund will be spent in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [31570]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The objectives of the Growth Adjustment Fund, which the Commission proposed in February last year, are set out in the Government's explanatory memorandum on COM(2004)101, available in the Library of the House. It is no longer under active discussion.

The objectives of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, which the Commission proposed in October this year, are set out in the Commission's MEMO/05/386, which has also been made available in the Library of the House. The details of how any such fund would operate or be financed are being discussed with all EU partners, and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will update Parliament on progress in due course.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the proposal for a growth adjustment fund proposed in COM(2004) 101; on what occasions the proposal came before *(a)* the Committee of Permanent Representatives, *(b)* the Council of the European Union and *(c)* the European Council; whether the Government (i) supported and (ii) opposed the proposal at each occasion it came before these institutions; and if he will make a statement. [31572]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government's position on the Commission's proposals of February last year, including the Growth Adjustment Fund, remains that set out in its explanatory memorandum on COM(2004)101 and COM(2004)487, available in the Library of the House, The Government have taken this position in all fora in which the EU budget for 2007–2013 has been discussed. My right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, will update Parliament in due course on progress in the negotiations.

Foreign Decorations

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the criteria are for allowing *(a)* current and *(b)* former service personnel to (i) accept and (ii) wear medals offered by foreign governments in respect of past campaigns. [30618]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The criteria for considering whether foreign awards and decorations may be accepted and worn are contained in the Rules Governing the Accepting and Wearing of Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals by Citizens of the United Kingdom and Her Overseas Territories. I set out as follows the Rules and will place copies in the Library of the House. In addition, the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals is currently considering a paper from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office relating to a review of the rules.

Rules governing the acceptance and wearing of Foreign Orders, Decorations and Medals by citizens of the United Kingdom and her overseas territories

These rules set out the circumstances under which a citizen of the United Kingdom or her overseas territories ("UK citizen") may be granted The Sovereign's permission to accept and wear an Order, Decoration or Medal ("foreign award") conferred by a Head of State or Government of a foreign country. Head of Government of a Commonwealth country of which The Sovereign is not Head of State and certain international organisations (collectively referred to as "foreign state").

Principles

1. No UK citizen[1] may accept and wear a foreign award without the Sovereign's permission. Such permission must be sought as soon as there is an indication that an award may be offered.

2. The granting of permission for a UK citizen to accept an award offered by a foreign state will only be considered if the award recognises specified services rendered to the interests of that foreign state.

3. Permission will not be given for UK citizens to accept a foreign award if they have received, or are expected to receive, a UK award for the same services.

4. Acceptance of a foreign award does not mean that the UK will make a reciprocal offer directly or indirectly associated with the UK recipient

Permission

5. Permission to wear a foreign award, if granted, will be either:

unrestricted—allowing the award to be worn on any occasion, or

restricted—allowing the award to be worn only on particular occasions associated with the foreign state that conferred it.

6. The grant of permission, whether unrestricted or restricted, will be conveyed by letter to the UK citizen concerned from the Sovereign's Private Secretary.

Application

7. A foreign state wishing to confer an award on a UK citizen is expected to ascertain—through its Diplomatic Representative at The Court of St. James's—whether

permission to accept an award would be likely to be given. Such requests for clearance will only be entertained in respect of awards given by Heads of State or Governments recognised as such by the Sovereign.

8. Requests made by certain international organisations (e.g. the United Nations and NATO) in respect of service in operations under their auspices should be made to the Defence Services Secretary in the Ministry of Defence.

9. Requests made in respect of services rendered more than five years previously, or in connection with events in the distant past (e.g. commemorative awards), will not be entertained.

10. Requests for clearance meeting the requirement of these regulations will be submitted to The Sovereign for consideration by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—who will be under no obligation to make such a submission if the application has not been made as indicated in paragraphs 7 and 8 above.

11. Requests for clearance in the case of foreign awards conferred by private societies or institutions will not be granted.

Guidelines

12. Each request will be treated on a case by case basis. The fact that a similar application has been approved in the past should not be taken as implying that permission will be granted.

13. The grant of unrestricted permission will be considered in the case of foreign awards conferred for services:

related to the saving or attempting to save life[2];

by any member of the UK Armed Forces or other UK official on exchange, attachment or loan to a foreign state who is involved in a military operation or an emergency[3] on behalf of that country, state or organisation;

by any member of the UK Armed Forces serving in a UK Unit within a bi-lateral force under the command of the other country who renders especial service to the country's forces in a military operation or emergency; or

in military operations under the auspices of an international organisation (e.g. the United Nations).

14. The grant of restricted permission will be considered in the case of foreign awards conferred:

on the occasion of and in connection with a State or official visit by a Head of State or Government of a foreign or Commonwealth country;

in connection with a State visit by the Sovereign; or

to members of Special Missions when The Sovereign is represented at a coronation, wedding or funeral or other similar occasion: or on any Diplomatic Representative when specially accredited to represent The Sovereign on such occasions.

15. Other than in circumstances described in paragraphs 13 and 14 above, permission, unrestricted or restricted, will not be granted to[5]:

Crown servants generally,

in particular, to Heads or other members of HM Diplomatic or Consular establishments abroad when leaving their posts—whether on transfer or on final retirement; and

senior officials, military and civilian, visiting foreign states.

16. No permission is needed for the acceptance of any foreign award if it is designed not to be worn.

[1] This includes British subjects and British-protected persons (BPPs). BPPs may accept awards conferred by their Rulers.

[2] Including medals issued by life saving societies and institutions (but these must be worn on the right breast).

[3] It will be for the UK to decide if the operations or emergency is of the standard to fall within this criterion.

[4] This does not apply to his or her staff.

[5] This guidance normally applies equally to the spouses or partners of Crown servants.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on ex-service personnel *(a)* receiving and *(b)* wearing the campaign medal being offered by the Government of Malaysia. [30619]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The offer by the Government of Malaysia to present the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal, a commemorative rather than a campaign medal, is being considered by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals under the Government's rules governing the accepting and wearing of Foreign Awards, Decorations and Medals by British citizens. The Committee is also reviewing these rules.

Gibraltar

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit Gibraltar. [31070]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary currently has no plans to visit Gibraltar, but hopes to meet Peter Caruana, Gibraltar's Chief Minister, in London shortly.

Royal Visit (USA)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1488W, what contact Hank Dittmar and Katherine Horley of the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment had with his Department's staff during their Royal Highnesses' recent official visit to the United States; which events organised by the Government they attended; whether they accompanied their Royal Highnesses on the journey between Washington DC and New York; and if he will make a statement. [31661]

Dr. Howells: The senior visits officer at our embassy in Washington was in e-mail contact with Mr. Dittmar, and met Mr. Dittmar briefly at the National Building Museum event in Washington on 3 November. Mr. Dittmar was one of the guests at the Reception held that evening at our ambassador's residence. There is no record of equivalent contact with Ms Horley.

Neither Mr. Dittmar nor Ms Horley accompanied their Royal Highnesses on the journey from New York to Washington DC or on any other journeys.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005 to question 26865, what presents whose costs were taken from public funds, other than those given to President and Mrs. Bush, were presented by their Royal Highnesses during their recent visit to the United States; to whom they were given; and who purchased them. [31663]

Dr. Howells: A number of gifts were presented by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall during the recent visit to the USA whose cost will be met from public funds. These include gifts to dignitaries and people from the host country who played a major part in the organisation of the visit, or were personally attached to their Royal Highnesses during the visit. Small gifts were also presented to Foreign and

Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff who were closely connected with the visit. It is current practice for FCO staff to be presented with such a memento, normally a signed photograph or other small object, in recognition of their efforts and hard work during such Royal visits overseas The gifts are purchased on behalf of the household of the Prince of Wales, with the cost reimbursed by the FCO. No gifts were presented to representatives of the Prince of Wales' charities.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1488W, what the present purchased for President Bush from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was; who purchased it; where the present was purchased; and whether the cost was charged to *(a)* the Royal Household and *(b)* the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. [31664]

Dr. Howells: The present was a first edition of a book written by Sir Winston Churchill and was purchased on behalf of the Household of the Prince of Wales from a London book dealer. In line with normal practice the cost will be reimbursed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as sponsoring department.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005 to question 26865, who purchased the present for Mrs. Bush given by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall; where the present was purchased; from whom it was purchased; and whether its cost was charged to *(a)* the Royal Household and *(b)* his Department. [31665]

Dr. Howells: The present was a Highgrove planter pot, purchased on behalf of the household of the Prince of Wales from the Highgrove shop. It was paid for by the Prince of Wales personally.

Tibet

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Chinese government on human rights in Tibet. [30826]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise human rights issues, including Tibet, with the Chinese Government. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and the Chinese Foreign Minister discussed Tibet-related issues at their meetings in New York in September 2005 and in London on 8 November 2005. Tibet was discussed at the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in October.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the exemption of Islam Karimov and his family from the list of Uzbek officials banned from travelling to the European Union. [30702]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have not ruled out adding further names to the list of those subject to the EU's visa ban. When adopting the measures on 3 October, the EU recognised the need to maintain contacts with Uzbekistan. Inclusion of the President on the list would reduce prospects of continued dialogue. The measures introduced by the EU will be reviewed in the light of developments in Uzbekistan.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the EU travel ban on Uzbek officials; and what assessment he has made of the implications for the ban of Uzbek Interior Minister Almatov's presence in Germany. [30869]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The measures announced by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 3 October in relation to Uzbekistan came into force on 14 November. They clearly demonstrate the profound concern of the European Union (EU) about the situation in Uzbekistan and the EU's strong condemnation of the refusal of the Uzbek authorities to allow an independent international inquiry into the events in Andizhan in May.

The EU travel ban stands. Almatov's visa was issued before the travel ban came into effect. The travel ban allows for exemptions in cases of urgent humanitarian need. The German authorities checked that the medical case for the visa was urgent before deciding to issue.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the numbers of disappeared Sahawis following continuing Moroccan illegal occupation of the Western Sahara. [30605]

Dr. Howells: The Government have not carried out their own assessment of the number of individuals who have disappeared as a result of the Western Sahara conflict. The Government's position is to encourage the parties to co-operate fully with the International Committee of the Red Cross to account for the missing. We continue to encourage the parties to take concrete measures, within their areas of responsibility, to resolve the outstanding humanitarian issues.

The Government believe it is necessary to distinguish between the humanitarian and political aspects of this dispute and that resolution of humanitarian questions should not await the conclusion of a political settlement. The Government consider that progress on humanitarian issues would help improve the atmosphere for the political process.

Zimbabwe

Lynne Feather[illegible]: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and [illegible]onwealth Affairs which diplomats from Zimb[illegible] been declared persona non grata in each of [illegible] years. [30547]

Mr. Stra[illegible]

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what occasions in the last five years he has raised with the Zimbabwe Government the activities of the Zimbabwe Central Intelligence Organisation in the United Kingdom; and what the result was in each case. [30548]

Mr. Straw: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* diplomats and *(b)* other staff have been located at the Zimbabwe High Commission in London in each of the last five years. [30550]

Mr. Straw: From 1 January until 17 November 2005 the embassy of Zimbabwe numbered 14 diplomats. There were 14 diplomats in 2004, 13 in 2003 and 15 in both 2002 and 2001. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not require diplomatic missions to inform them about numbers of locally employed staff. However, the embassy of Zimbabwe has informed the FCO that locally employed staff generally number 14 in any year.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had on the political situation in Zimbabwe. [30726]

Ian Pearson: We take every opportunity to discuss the crisis in Zimbabwe with our international partners. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary most recently discussed the political situation in Zimbabwe with the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, on 30 October, and also with the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Zuma, at the EU South Africa Co-operation Council on 7 November.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support Agency

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families received child maintenance payments in the Lanark and Hamilton, East constituency in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [10067]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. Jimmy Hood, dated 24 November 2005:

In July you asked a Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. I am extremely sorry for the delay in providing this reply.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families benefited from child maintenance payments in the Lanark and Hamilton East constituency in 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05.

I regret that the information requested cannot be reliably broken down to the level of your constituency.

My apologies again for the delay in writing to you.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the policy is of the Child Support Agency in relation to the conditions which must be satisfied before a deduction of earnings order is initiated; and if he will make a statement. [28384]

Mr. Plaskitt: When an employed non-resident parent fails to comply and make regular payments, the Child Support Agency may send a deduction from earnings order (DEO) to their employer.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the use of deduction of earnings orders by the Child Support Agency on employers. [30003]

Margaret Hodge: Deduction from earnings orders (DEOs) are an effective method of obtaining maintenance. In September 2005, 19 per cent. of cases had a DEO in place.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many telephone calls to the Child Support Agency from people in Scotland *(a)* were received, *(b)* received an engaged tone and *(c)* were disconnected during the interactive voice response process for the period April 2002 to September 2005 for (i) all calls and (ii) calls relating to cases being progressed on the new computer system; [31093]

(2) how many calls to the Child Support Agency from people in Scotland were abandoned by *(a)* agency staff and *(b)* clients in each month since 2003. [31694]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consideration he has given to outsourcing the functions of the Child Support Agency. [31413]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress by the Child Support Agency in dealing with its case load backlog. [19954]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 24 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make a statement on progress by the Child Support Agency in dealing with its caseload backlog.

Between January and September 2005, the volume of uncleared applications not cleared across both schemes fell from 362,000 to 333,000, a reduction of 8%.

Uncleared potential new scheme applications rose from 259,000 in January 2005 to 266,000 in April 2005 before falling to 261,000 in September 2005. Of all potential new scheme applications received, 35% were still awaiting clearance in September 2005, down from 46% in January.

Work will continue within the Agency to explore ways to reduce the amount of outstanding work in progress.

I hope you find this response useful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Child Support Agency's caseload has been for each quarter of each year from 1997 to the third quarter of 2005; and if he will make a statement. [21583]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Lawrs, dated 24 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Child Support Agency's caseload has been for each quarter of each year from 1997 to the third quarter of 2005.

The Child Support Agency caseload figures are detailed in the table below (Quarterly April 1997 to date):

	Old scheme	*New scheme*	*Total*
June 1997	799,000	—	799,000
September 1997	821,000	—	821,000
December 1997	834,000	—	834,000
March 1998	893,000	—	893,000
June 1998	878,000	—	878,000
September 1998	923,000	—	923,000
December 1998	917,000	—	917,000
March 1999	947,000	—	947,000
June 1999	1,290,000	—	1,290,000
September 1999	1,319,000	—	1,319,000
December 1999	1,320,000	—	1,320,000
March 2000	1,323,000	—	1,323,000
June 2000	1,339,000	—	1,339,000
September 2000	1,338,000	—	1,338,000
December 2000	1,339,000	—	1,339,000
March 2001	1,345,000	—	1,345,000
June 2001	1,350,000	—	1,350,000
September 2001	1,367,000	—	1,367,000
December 2001	1,361,000	—	1,361,000
March 2002	1,353,000	—	1,353,000
June 2002	1,354,000	—	1,354,000
September 2002	1,349,000	—	1,349,000
December 2002	1,349,000	—	1,349,000
March 2003	1,230,000	—	1,230,000
June 2003	—	—	—
September 2003	—	—	—
December 2003	—	—	—
March 2004	—	—	—
June 2004	—	—	—
September 2004	—	—	—
December 2004	—	—	—
March 2005	965,000	452,000	1,417,000
June 2005	951,000	481,000	1,432,000
September 2005	938,000	511,000	1,449,000

Notes:

1. Caseload is defined as the number of cases that are "open" and at any stage in the process.
2. There is currently no robust management information relating to new scheme cases and old scheme cases operating on the new computer system for the years 2003 and 2004.
3. There are currently 15,000 cases being administered clerically (September 2005). It is not possible to say if these cases are included in the above figures.
4. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 1,000.

I hope you find this helpful.

Disability Living Allowance

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many recipients there are of *(a)* the higher rate of the mobility component, *(b)* the medium rate of the care component and *(c)* the higher rate of the care component of disability living allowance, broken down by region; [31091]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of people who qualify for but do not receive *(a)* the higher rate of the mobility component, *(b)* the medium rate of the care component and *(c)* the higher rate of the care component of disability living allowance, broken down by region. [31092]

Mrs. McGuire: The requested information about the numbers of people receiving the higher rate of the mobility component the middle rate of the care component and the highest rate of the care component of disability living allowance is in the following table. Currently it is not possible to estimate take-up rates for the allowance. Following a recommendation in "Meeting DWP's long-term information needs on disability: a feasibility report", (DWP Research report number 267, a copy of which is available in the Library) the Department is commissioning research to test two possible approaches to establish whether it is possible to estimate take-up rates. The results of this research will be available in 2007.

Disability living allowance: numbers of recipients of (a) the higher rate mobility component; (b) the highest rate care component; and (c) the middle rate care component in Great Britain at 31 May 2005 by Government office region

Government office region	*Higher rate mobility component*	*Highest rate care component*	*Middle rate care component*
North East	102.2	34.1	44.8
North West	273.0	95.4	135.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	168.0	57.9	77.6
East Midlands	118.1	44.2	60.9
West Midlands	158.2	59.8	80.9
East of England	106.6	46.6	69.9
London	391.1	67.9	98.1
South East	132.3	59.8	91.7
South West	108.5	41.1	70.2
Wales	150.3	53.2	58.5
Scotland	183.9	72.1	100.2
Unknown	1.6	0.5	0.8
Total	1,641.9	632.7	889.2

Notes:

1. Figures are in thousands, rounded to the nearest hundred, and exclude cases where payment of the allowance is suspended; for example, because the recipient has been a NHS hospital in-patient for more than four weeks. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Postcodes are used to allocate recipients to the relevant Government office region. The figures shown against "Unknown" are those for cases where the postcode is incomplete.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Discretionary Housing Payments

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the discretionary housing payment scheme since it was introduced. [28433]

Mr. Plaskitt: Assessments of the effectiveness of the discretionary housing payment arrangements have been made in Waves 5 and 6 of the Local Authority Omnibus Surveys. These were published in 2002 as part of DWP's in-house series of reports, numbered 97 and 105 respectively.

We also commissioned research from the University of Birmingham ("Review of Discretionary Housing Payments") to review how these arrangements were working in practice and the formula for distributing the

Government's contribution to local authorities. This was published in 2003, as in-house report no. 127. All reports are available in the Library.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many discretionary housing payment awards were made in each Government office region in each year since 2001–02; and what the average award was in each region in each year. [28434]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information, broken down by local authority, has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding each local authority made available in support of discretionary housing payments in 2004–05. [28435]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. Details of the funding made available to local authorities by way of Government contribution has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding was made available by his Department for discretionary housing payments in each Government office region in each year since 2001–02; how much was made available by his Department in each local authority in 2004–05; and how much was returned unused in each case. [28436]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. The local authority data for 2001–02 to 2003–04 has been placed in the Library.

Firework Displays

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the Health and Safety Executive guidelines on public firework displays in relation to incidents during bonfire night celebrations in 2005. [28089]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published guidance on putting on firework displays safely. The guidance is kept under review and has been amended when incident investigations or research findings indicate that it is necessary to do so.

HSE is currently actively assisting Kettering borough council's investigation into the incident at Wicksteed Park. Once the results of the investigation are known HSE will consider what further action is needed—including whether the guidance requires further amendment.

HSE will be undertaking an analysis of accident reports for the firework season when these become available, and will consider whether these reveal a need to amend the guidance.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate the Health and Safety Executive has made of the number of public firework displays held in England in October and November in each of the last 10 years. [30495]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Health and Safety Executive does not collect information about the number of firework displays held. However, the British Pyrotechnists Association estimate that there are around 5,000 professionally organised displays each year in Great Britain.

Housing Allowances/Benefits

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what impact the introduction of local housing allowances has had on fraud in the pathfinder areas. [31587]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available as estimates for fraud are not available at local authority level.

Local housing allowance evaluation reports published so far suggest that so far there has been very little impact either positive or negative on fraud in the pathfinder areas. These reports are available in the Library.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of claimants in the local housing allowance pathfinder areas are in arrears; and what the average percentage of arrears is in non-pathfinder areas. [31588]

Mr. Plaskitt: The first survey of local housing allowance claimants in the pathfinder areas after six months of live running found that 13 per cent. of claimants have been at least two weeks behind in paying their rent in the past 12 months. The same survey also found that in the control areas still operating the current housing benefit regime, which is used for the evaluation of the local housing allowance, 15 per cent. of housing benefit claimants in the deregulated private rented sector who receive their benefit directly have been at least two weeks behind in paying their rent in the past 12 months. This difference is not statistically significant.

Data are not collected centrally for other parts of Great Britain, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the lessons learned from those areas piloting the local housing allowance for the private rented sector. [30050]

Mr. Plaskitt: The effects of the local housing allowance in the original nine pathfinders remain subject to a rigorous and independent evaluation. The emerging findings from the first six to 15 months operation are encouraging and these have been published and copies are available in the Library. We will continue to assess lessons learned throughout the full evaluation period, which is due to run until the autumn of next year.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will publish a consultation paper on his Department's proposals for piloting the local housing allowance in the social rented sector; and if he will make a statement; [28792]

(2) with which *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* registered social landlords his Department has had discussions on piloting the local housing allowance in the social rented sector; [28793]

(3) what funding has been allocated by his Department to piloting the local housing allowance in the social rented sector. [28794]

Mr. Plaskitt: While we have been considering the benefits of testing a modified form of the local housing allowance in the social sector, there are at present no firm plans for doing so.

Discussions take place on a regular basis between departmental officials and representatives of local authorities and registered social landlords on policy development in this area.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the local reference rent restrictions on housing benefit were for each property in each locality in flat rate local housing allowance pathfinder areas in 2002–03. [28795]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information has been placed in the Library.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young housing benefit recipients have been subject to the single room rent restriction in each year since its introduction. [28797]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the following table.

Housing benefit recipients subject to single room rent (SRR) restriction in Great Britain

May	*Number*
1997	31,600
1998	33,200
1999	24,800
2000	17,900
2001	14,400
2002	11,000
2003	10,700
2004	11,000
2005	12,000

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
3. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
4. The SRR was introduced in October 1996.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in May 1997 to May 2005.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the standard rate of housing benefit earnings disregard in promoting work incentives. [29991]

Mr. Plaskitt: The earnings disregards and income tapers which apply in the calculation of housing benefit act as an incentive for people to take up or stay in work. The disregards are designed to achieve a balance between providing an encouragement to part-time work without creating disincentives to full-time work and independence.

The income tapers ensure that any increase in earnings is not totally lost by an equal reduction in benefits. Generally speaking, although any increase in net earnings reduces the amount of benefit payable, the claimant should see some improvement in their overall financial position.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what information is taken into account when making decisions about the levels of housing benefit. [30832]

Mr. Plaskitt: Local authorities are required to consider a variety of information when determining the amount of housing benefit a claimant is entitled to. This includes details of the claimant's household, rent, income and capital, together with any information provided by the rent officer. Authorities also need information on any non-dependents living with the claimant, as this can affect the final level of benefit due.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he proposes to review the rates of jobseeker's allowance. [29857]

Mr. Plaskitt: The rate of jobseeker's allowance is increased, along with all other social security benefits, in April each year. The amount of the increase is calculated on the basis of the Rossi index of inflation for the preceding September, with figures rounded to the nearest 5p.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to answer questions references *(a)* 18634, *(b)* 18784, *(c)* 18786 to 18789, *(d)* 19631, *(e)* 19954, *(f)* 20162, *(g)* 21432 to 21434, *(h)* 21436 to 21450, *(i)* 21452, *(j)* 21454, *(k)* 21581 to 21586, *(l)* 21590, *(m)* 21853 to 21857, *(n)* 21957 and *(o)* 21960 to 21962 tabled by the hon. Member for Yeovil. [31022]

Mr. Plaskitt: My ministerial colleagues and I have replied to 56 (of the 140) questions tabled by the hon. Member since the House returned in October. We will continue to respond to questions as quickly as is practically possible.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the exit figures were from *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability allowance for each quarter in each Pathways to Work pilot area since their commencement. [27221]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The available information is in the table.

IB/SDA terminations by Pathways to work area

	November 2003	*February 2004*	*May 2004*	*August 2004*	*November 2004*	*February 2005*	*May 2005*
Bridgend	2.0	2.0	2.7	2.2	2.3	2.3	1.3
Derbyshire	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.5

IB/SDA terminations by Pathways to work area

	November 2003	February 2004	May 2004	August 2004	November 2004	February 2005	May 2005
East Lancashire	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.1	1.6
Essex	3.3	3.6	3.9	4.4	3.7	4.1	2.5
Gateshead and South Tyneside	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.8	2.1	2.2	1.7
Renfrewshire	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.3	2.0
Somerset	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.8

Notes:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Numbers are based on a 5 per cent. sample, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
4. Local authorities and Pathways areas are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
5. Pathways to Work pilot areas were introduced from October 2003 (Bridgend, Renfrewshire and Derbyshire) and extended in April 2004 (Gateshead and South Tyneside, Somerset, Essex and East Lancashire). The termination figures cover quarters ending each February, May, August and November, even where Pathways areas were introduced part way through these quarters.
6. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters.
7. Earlier quarters have been updated to include late notified terminations, including terminations for state pension.

Source:
Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample.

Pensioners

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the number of pensioners who are entitled to pension credit but who are not claiming it. [27977]

Mr. Timms: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the written answer I gave him on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 548–49W.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his most recent estimate is of the number of single women pensioners living in poverty. [25038]

Mr. Timms: The seventh annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators.

The following table shows the number and percentage of single women over state pension age living in households in relative and absolute low income. They show that in 2003–04 there were 700,000 single women pensioners living in households in relative low income, measured after housing costs—the number in relative low income has fallen by almost a half since 1996–97.

Relative low income, i.e. based on contemporary income thresholds

	1996–97	2003–04
After housing costs		
Number (million)	1.2	0.7
Percentage	37	21
Before housing costs		
Number (million)	0.9	0.8
Percentage	26	24

Absolute low income, i.e. based on 1996–97 income thresholds held constant in real terms

	1996–97	2003–04
After housing costs		
Number (million)	1.2	0.3
Percentage	37	11
Before housing costs		
Number (million)	0.9	0.4
Percentage	26	13

Notes:
1. Figures are for Great Britain.
2. Data are from the Family Resources Survey based on HBAI methodology.

Pensions

Ms Gisela Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Parliamentary Ombudsmen on the timing of her report on pensions. [31471]

Mr. Timms: None.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's office has informed officials of the timetable for her report into the security of final salary occupational pension schemes and alleged delays in scheme wind ups. However, we have neither sought, nor had, any influence over the timing of that report. That is a matter entirely for the Ombudsman.

I understand that the Ombudsman wrote to all hon. Members on 18 November saying that she intends to publish her report before the parliamentary recess on 30 March 2006, and her reasons for that publication date.

School Crossing Patrols

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will extend the higher disregards of earnings for the calculation of income support and minimum income guarantee to include school crossing patrols. [29541]

Mr. Plaskitt: All aspects of benefit payment, including earnings disregards, are kept under constant review in order to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of benefit and the best use of public funds.

Any decision to give special disregards to a particular group of claimants is a complex matter with wider implications. We currently have no plans to provide school crossing patrols with any special disregard of earnings within the various income related benefit schemes.

Recruitment of school crossing patrol is a matter for local authorities. We are not aware of any direct relationship between benefit disregards and recruitment of school crossing patrols.

Winter Fuel Payments

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to extend winter fuel payments to people under 60 years who qualify for *(a)* middle and *(b)* higher rate of disability living allowance care component and *(c)* the higher rate of the mobility component; and if he will make a statement. [31090]

Mr. Timms: There are no plans to extend the winter fuel payment scheme to disabled people under age 60.

Help is already available through disability benefits and the disability premium in income-related benefits in recognition of the extra costs, including heating, which disabled people may face.

HEALTH

Advisory Non-departmental Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list those of her Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish their response to advice from; [20188]

(2) which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department have a statutory base; which *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each instance; [20189]

(3) which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20190]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested on the Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies, which the Government are required to consult prior to legislative and to publish their response to advice from is shown in the table.

The Government are required to:

Name of ANDPB	*(a) consult these advisory non-departmental public bodies (ANDPBs) prior to legislative proposals*	*(b) publish their response to advice from these ANDPBs*
Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee (HMAC)	Not specifically[1]	No
Nursing and Other Health Professions Review Body	No	Yes
Patient Information Advisory Group	Yes[2]	No
Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration	No	Yes

[1] There are certain legislative requirements to consult the appropriate committee, and in some circumstances this is likely to be the HMAC. However, there is no explicit requirement to consult HMAC.
[2] This is the case only in respect of section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001.

The information requested on which advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by the Department that have a statutory base; which publish their advice to Government, publish an annual report and lay an annual report before Parliament is shown in the table.

The advisory non-departmental public bodies (ANDPBs) all have a statutory base and publish their advice to Government, publish an annual report and lay an annual report before Parliament as shown in the following table:

Name of ANDPB	*(a) Publish their advice to Government*	*If so whether under a statutory requirement*	*(b) Publish an annual report*	*If so whether under a statutory requirement*	*(c) Lay an annual report before Parliament*	*If so whether under a statutory requirement*
Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee	No	No	No	No	No	No
British Pharmacopoeia Commission (BPC)	No	No[1]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gene Therapy Advisory Committee	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee	No[2]	No	Yes[3]	Yes	Yes[3]	Yes
Independent Review Panel for Borderline Substances	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation	No	No[1]	Yes	No	No	No
Medicines Commission (will be abolished on 30 October 2005)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
National Joint Registry Steering Committee	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Patient Information Advisory Group	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
The Advisory Board on the Registration of Homeopathic Products	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UK Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority	No	No	No	No	No	No
Unrelated Live Transplant Regulatory Authority	No	No	No	No	No	No

[1] The statutory role of the BPC is to cause to be published the British Pharmacopoeia. This is not published for Government but for sale to the public and industry.
[2] This has not specifically been decided yet, and the answer provided is based on precedent with other advisory committees.
[3] The Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee Order establishing HMAC came into force on 30 October 2005. The answer provided refers to planned future activity.

Note:
ANDPBs may have a statutory base either by provision being made for their existence in law, or by the law putting an obligation on the Secretary of State which is then partly undertaken by an ANDPB set up by the Secretary of State for the purpose.

The information requested on advisory non-departmental public bodies that hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercise, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, publish a register of members' interests, publish agendas for meetings and publish the minutes of meetings is shown in the table.

The following advisory non-departmental public bodies (ANDPBs):

Name of ANDPB	(a) Hold public meetings	Whether under a statutory requirement	(b) Conduct public consultation exercises	Whether under a statutory requirement	(c) Publish a register of members' interests	Whether under a statutory requirement
Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Group on Hepatitis	No	No	No	No	No	No
Committee for Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment	No	No	No	No	No	No
Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Committee on Safety of Devices	No	No	No	No	No	No
Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Expert Advisory Group on Aids	No	No	No	No	No	No
Gene Therapy Advisory Committee	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Genetics and Insurance Committee	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee	[2]	No	[2]	No	[2]	No
Human Genetics Commission	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP)	No	No	No	No	No	No
Independent Review Panel for Advertising	No	No	No	No	No	No
Independent Review Panel for Borderline Substances	No	No	No	No	No	No
Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation	No	No	No	No	No	No
Medicines Commission (will be abolished on 30 October 2005)	No	No	No	No	No	No
National Joint Registry Steering Committee	No	No[3]	No	No	No	No
Nursing and Other Health Professions Review Body	No	No	No	No	No	No
Patient Information Advisory Group	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration	No	No	No	No	No	No
Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sexual Health Independent Advisory Group	No	No	No	No	No	No
Specialist Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance	No	No	No	No	No	No
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Standing Dental Advisory Committee	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Steering Committee on Pharmacy Postgraduate Education[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Advisory Board on the Registration of Homeopathic Products	No	No	No	No	No	No
UK Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority	No	No	No	No	No	No
Unrelated Live Transplant Regulatory Authority	No	No	No	No	No	No

Name of ANDPB	(d) Publish a register of members' interests	Whether under a statutory requirement	(e) Publish agendas for meetings	Whether under a statutory requirement
Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee	Yes	No	No	No
Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances	No	No	No	No
Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards	No	No	No	No
Advisory Group on Hepatitis	Yes	No	Yes	No
Committee for Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment	Yes	No	No	No
Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment	Yes	No	Yes	No
Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment	Yes	No	Yes	No
Committee on Safety of Devices	Yes	No	Yes	No
Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants	Yes	No	Yes	No
Expert Advisory Group on Aids	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gene Therapy Advisory Committee	Yes	No	Yes	No
Genetics and Insurance Committee	Yes	No	Yes	No
Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee	Yes[3]	No	No[4]	No
Human Genetics Commission	Yes	No	Yes	No
Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP)	Yes	No	No	No[5]
Independent Review Panel for Advertising	Yes	No	No	No
Independent Review Panel for Borderline Substances	Yes	No	No	No
Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation	Yes	No	Yes	No
Medicines Commission (will be abolished on 30 October 2005)	Yes	No	No	No
National Joint Registry Steering Committee	No	No[6]	Yes	No
Nursing and Other Health Professions Review Body	Yes	No	No	No
Patient Information Advisory Group	Yes	No	Yes	No
Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration	Yes	No	No	No

Name of ANDPB	(d) Publish a register of members' interests	Whether under a statutory requirement	(e) Publish agendas for meetings	Whether under a statutory requirement
Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition	Yes	No	Yes	No
Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sexual Health Independent Advisory Group	Yes	No	No	No
Specialist Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance	No	No	Yes	No
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee	Yes	No	Yes	No
Standing Dental Advisory Committee	No	No	No	No
Steering Committee on Pharmacy Postgraduate Education[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Advisory Board on the Registration of Homeopathic Products	Yes	No	No	No
UK Xenotransplantation Interim Regulatory Authority[2]	Yes	No	Yes	No
Unrelated Live Transplant Regulatory Authority	Yes	No	Yes	No

n/a = Not available.
[1] These bodies are under review and not active. They have no memberships.
[2] This has not yet been decided.
[3] The Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee Order establishing the HMAC came into force on 30 October 2005. The answer provided refers to planned future activity.
[4] This has not specifically been decided yet, and the answer provided is based on precedent with other advisory committees.
[5] The NJRSC will hold such meetings in future.
[6] The NJRSC will publish such a register in future.
[7] The IRP intends to introduce these measures next year.

Agenda for Change

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many NHS staff due back pay under the Agenda for Change programme had been paid their full entitlement to such pay at 31 October; and how many claims are outstanding; [27690]

(2) how many hospital trusts have paid their staff all the back pay due to them under the Agenda for Change; and if she will instruct hospital trusts to pay interest on monies due in October 2004 which have not been paid. [27691]

Mr. Byrne: Information on payment of back pay due to the implementation of Agenda for Change is not held centrally.

Ambulance Service

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many assaults there have been on ambulance service staff in the course of their duties in the County of Durham in the last five years. [25698]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held by specific location. The NHS Security Management Service is currently in the process of compiling and validating the first ever accurate figures for the levels of physical assault on national health service staff across England.

Estimated violent or abusive incidents in NHS ambulance trusts for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 is shown in the table. Information relating to the number of physical assaults for NHS ambulance trusts in England for 2004–05 will be published shortly.

Ambulance trust name	Violent incidents 2002–03	2001–02	2000–01
Avon Ambulance Service NHS Trust	163	31	17
Bedfordshire and Herts Ambulance and Paramedic Service NHS Trust	75	48	45
Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance NHS Trust	39	37	14
Cumbria Ambulance Service NHS Trust	54	34	13
Dorset Ambulance NHS Trust	72	39	55
East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust	119	89	103
East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	290	233	161
Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	66	28	18
Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust	60	30	7
Greater Manchester Ambulance Service NHS Trust	277	304	119
Hampshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	75	81	168
Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service NHS Trust	101	18	8
Kent Ambulance NHS Trust	55	n/a	59
Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	104	161	112
Lincolnshire Ambulance and Health Transport Services NHS Trust	86	67	46
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	2,211	2,158	n/a
Mersey Regional Ambulance Service NHS Trust	67	60	75
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust	167	229	544
Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust	72	35	39
Royal Berkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	33	39	46
South Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	52	173	96
Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	78	26	30
Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust	131	122	120
Sussex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	301	221	7
Tees East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	129	105	87
Two Shires Ambulance NHS Trust	88	81	134
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	186	154	171
West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service NHS Trust	183	65	68
Westcountry Ambulance Services NHS Trust	70	110	94
Wiltshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	8	n/a	1
	5,412	4,778	2,457

Source:
Department of Health

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many assaults were recorded on ambulance staff in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* Staffordshire while on duty in each of the last five years; and how many prosecutions resulted in each case. [27484]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held by specific location. The NHS Security Management Service is currently in the process of compiling and auditing the first ever accurate figures for the levels of physical assault on national health service staff across England. Last month figures for physical assaults in mental health and learning disability settings

were released. These amounted to 43,309 for 2004–05. Figures for the acute, primary care and ambulance services nationally will be released shortly.

Information about the number of prosecutions resulting from reports of assaults on ambulance staff was not collected centrally for the period 2001–03. The number of prosecutions identified involving assaults on ambulance staff in England for 2004–05 totalled 100.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulances there were in the NHS in each year since 1995. [26469]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally.

Each ambulance service should plan to provide appropriate resources to meet local demand. This may include resources in addition to traditional ambulance provision, for example in using rapid response vehicles and motorbikes, as well as utilising staff such as community paramedics or emergency care practitioners. Patients who need a traditional ambulance response will continue to receive one. The fleet mix will vary across the country depending on operational and geographical requirements.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many assaults were recorded on ambulance service staff *(a)* in Blackpool and *(b)* in each ambulance service area while on duty in each of the last five years; and how many prosecutions resulted in each case. [25239]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held by specific location. The NHS Security Management Service is currently in the process of compiling and validating the first ever accurate figures for the levels of physical assault on NHS staff across England. Figures for the acute, primary care and ambulance services nationally will be released in the near future.

Estimated violent or abusive incidents in NHS ambulance trusts for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 is shown in the table. Information relating to the number of physical assaults for NHS ambulance trusts in England for 2004–05 will be published shortly.

Information about the number of prosecutions resulting from reports of assaults on ambulance staff was not collected centrally for the period 2001–03. The number of prosecutions identified involving assaults on ambulance staff in England for 2004–05 totalled 100.

Ambulance trust name	*Violent incidents* 2002–03	2001–02	2000–01
Avon Ambulance Service NHS Trust	163	31	17
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Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance NHS Trust	39	37	14
Cumbria Ambulance Service NHS Trust	54	34	13
Dorset Ambulance NHS Trust	72	39	55
East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust	119	89	103
East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	290	233	161
Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	66	28	18
Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust	60	30	7
Greater Manchester Ambulance Service NHS Trust	277	304	119
Hampshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	75	81	168
Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service NHS Trust	101	18	8
Kent Ambulance NHS Trust	55	n/a	59
Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	104	161	112
Lincolnshire Ambulance and Health Transport Services NHS Trust	86	67	46
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	2,211	2,158	n/a
Mersey Regional Ambulance Service NHS Trust	67	60	75
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust	167	229	544
Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust	72	35	39
Royal Berkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	33	39	46
South Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	52	173	96
Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	78	26	30
Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust	131	122	120
Sussex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	301	221	7
Tees East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	129	105	87
Two Shires Ambulance NHS Trust	88	81	134
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	186	154	171
West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service NHS Trust	183	65	68
Westcountry Ambulance Services NHS Trust	70	110	94
Wiltshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	8	n/a	1
Total	5,412	4,778	2,457

Source:
Department of Health

Ashford and St. Peter's NHS Trust

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the financial performance of Ashford St Peters' NHS trust over the last five years for which figures are available, with particular reference to the requirement for NHS trusts to break even over a five year period. [28616]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Final audited position for Ashford St. Peters' national health service trust for the period 2000–01 to 2004–05.

£000

	Surplus/(deficit)
2000–01	-4,846
2001–02	-1,409
2002–03	-1,328
2003–04	5
2004–05	61

Authority Boundaries

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cross-county hospital trusts there are; and how many she expects there to be in 20 years time. [17775]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not centrally available.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will arrange to meet the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs weekly to co-ordinate the Government's efforts to assess and tackle the threat of avian influenza coming to the UK and its potential mutation into a human influenza virus. [23708]

Ms Rosie Winterton [*holding answer 1 November 2005*]: There are already well established networks of cross government working on dealing with the threat from avian influenza and its possible mutation into a human influenza virus which may be capable of causing a pandemic. Officials in all of the relevant government Departments, including the Department for

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, are co-operating closely and meeting on a regular basis. Cross government action is co-ordinated through the Civil Contingencies Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, and a Cabinet committee. These arrangements are kept under constant review.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the risks of avian influenza spreading to humans through the *(a)* burial and *(b)* burning in the open air of poultry carcases. [24643]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is not proposed to dispose of poultry carcases either by burial or burning in the open air. Under the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs exotic animal disease generic contingency plan, the hierarchy for disposal is incineration, rendering and licensed commercial landfill.

As the virus is destroyed by the high temperatures of incineration and rendering and would not survive for long in the environment of a commercial landfill site, these methods of dispersal are appropriate for the protection of human health. The Department has not therefore made any specific assessment of the health risks to people of these dispersal methods.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to make antiviral therapies available to those who handle poultry. [24695]

Ms Rosie Winterton: When an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is confirmed, poultry workers on the infected farm, together with vets, contractors and others who might be at risk due to direct close contact with diseased birds will be offered the antiviral therapy, oseltamivir, as soon as possible after disease confirmation.

The stockpile of antivirals is currently being held centrally, while it is being built up. Arrangements have been put in place to make them available to those who need it within 48 hours. Antiviral drugs will be made available and administered through the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) local health protection units in collaboration with the National health service in England. Similar arrangements will apply in Wales and Scotland.

From March 2006, the antivirals will be stored regionally. These arrangements for their storage and distribution in England will be the subject of a tendering exercise conducted by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency. It will be open to pharmaceutical wholesalers to respond to that tender. Any non-pharmaceutical items stockpiled are covered by standard NHS storage and distribution arrangements. Devolved administrations are responsible for their own storage and distribution arrangements.

Further information is available on the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and HPA websites.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much *(a)* influenza vaccine and *(b)* H5N1 vaccine has been allocated to the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area; and if she will make a statement. [27845]

Mr. Byrne: Information on influenza vaccine allocations is not held centrally or by the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority or the individual primary care trust. Each general practice orders the amount of influenza vaccine they require based on their practice list and the number of people they have in vulnerable risk groups.

A tender has been issued for H5N1 vaccine, which could be offered to health care workers in the event of a pandemic. This vaccine is not currently available but the plan is to hold stocks centrally when it is delivered.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her statement at the Breakthrough Breast Cancer event of 25 October, how she plans to communicate to primary care trusts her desire to see Herceptin offered to women suffering early stage breast cancer before it is granted a product licence by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; and whether prescribers will be liable for any adverse incidents if they prescribe Herceptin unlicensed. [23973]

Jane Kennedy: The position on the prescribing of Herceptin has been communicated to the national health service via the chief executive's bulletin of 10 November 2005. This bulletin is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk and is aimed at all primary care trusts.

In all cases, we would expect a clinician, before deciding whether to prescribe Herceptin in any particular case, to discuss the potential benefits and harmful effects of Herceptin with each individual patient and to have documented that discussion as they should do when prescribing non-licensed indications. It is not possible to make a blanket statement about the determination of liability in the case of individual adverse events, but we have no reason to believe that a clinician acting in this way would incur any specific additional liability.

Cataract Operations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations have taken place in each of the last five years. [19017]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of cataract operations, 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes
1999–2000	216,741
2000–01	245,239
2001–02	252,979
2002–03	276,350
2003–04	301,664

Note:
A finished consultant episode is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. The figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

CCT Costs

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* total cost to a GP registrar was of obtaining a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) and *(b)* maximum length of time from application to award of a CCT was as at (i) 1 September and (ii) 1 October; what assessment she has made of the impact of this change on the recruitment of general practitioners; and if she will make a statement. [27529]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) total charge to a general practitioner registrar for a certificate of completion of training (CCT) is £250. This is a single, once-and-for-all payment.

Since PMETB assumed the responsibility for award of CCTs on 30 September 2005, the board had obviously not issued any CCTs by Saturday 1 October.

Looking at the number of CCTs in general practice issued by PMETB since that date, the maximum length of time taken to award a CCT, once all the required documentary evidence had been submitted, was 12 working days. The average for this activity is 11 working days.

If PMETB's award is based on a previous joint committee for postgraduate training for general practice (JCPTGP) assessment there is no additional cost. However, I understand that the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has decided to charge an enrolment fee of £350 for doctors now entering GP training so that it can advise and monitor doctors' progress through training and carry out the necessary work to make recommendations to PMETB on the issue of a certificate. This is consistent with the practices of other medical Royal Colleges for this activity.

The CCT was not awarded before 30 September 2005 when PMETB took up its legal functions. The CCT replaced the certificate of prescribed experience previously awarded by the JCPTGP. Although we do not know the maximum length of time the JCPTGP took to award its certificate, we understand that the average length of time was 10 working days from receipt of all the documentary evidence.

The change from the JCPTGP to the PMETB has had absolutely no impact on the recruitment of general practitioners. There were some initial problems when functions were transferred to PMETB at the beginning of October but these are being resolved and at the present time there are no complete applications over 11 days old awaiting the award of a CCT.

Chase Farm NHS Hospital Trust

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date were *(a)* her Department and *(b)* Chase Farm NHS Hospital Trust first notified that Chase Farm NHS Trust would be required to make annual savings of approximately £16 million; and if she will make a statement. [26127]

Jane Kennedy: Barnet and Chase Farm Hospital National Health Service Trust has a requirement to achieve a balanced financial position and it is for the trust to assess the level of savings it needs to make to achieve that end in the context of its overall financial plan.

It is the role of the strategic health authority to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance.

Cheshire and Merseyside SHA

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been spent by the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority on management consultants in each of the last five years; [28430]

(2) what projects in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority *(a)* have required and *(b)* will require the assistance of external management consultants in 2005–06. [28431]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Child Vaccinations

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate is of child vaccinations in West Lancashire. [27706]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested can be found in NHS Immunisation Statistics, England: 2004–05, a copy of which is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assestRoot/04/11/96/50/04119650.pdf.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to review the provisions in the General Medical Services contract relating to the incentives to provide childhood vaccinations. [28666]

Caroline Flint: The new general medical services contract review is being undertaken on behalf of the Government by NHS Employers, which negotiates changes with the general practitioners' committee (GPC) representing GPs. A sub-group has been formed specifically to discuss vaccinations and immunisations. The sub-group includes departmental officials, NHS Employers and members of the GPC. Any changes to the provisions that are agreed through the sub-group will be implemented in 2007.

Chiropractic Treatment

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on funding chiropractic treatment under the NHS. [28363]

Mr. Byrne: Decisions on the provision and funding of chiropractic treatment under the national health service are a matter for local NHS organisations, as they are best placed to decide on the health needs of their local populations.

Communication Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed in communication roles in *(a)* strategic health authorities,

(b) primary care trusts and *(c)* other NHS trusts in England at (i) 31 March and (ii) 30 September; and if she will make a statement. [24662]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Community Hospitals

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral statement by the Minister of State for Health Services on 2nd November, on earmarked funding for community hospitals, which community hospitals have so far benefited from the funding; how the funding is being allocated; and how much of the funding has been allocated so far. [25803]

Mr. Byrne: The Government's commitment to community hospitals will be progressed through developing a clear vision of the community hospital of the 21st century, and £100 million of public capital funding will be invested to support implementation.

Officials are currently undertaking detailed scoping work to consider the range of services that a modern community hospital could offer and the outcomes of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation will feed into this. The future direction of policy on community hospitals is likely to be indicated in the forthcoming White Paper on health and social care.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the last review of community hospital provision took place *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in each county; and if she will make a statement. [26387]

Mr. Byrne: Local health care provision, including services provided by community hospitals, is a matter for primary care trusts and strategic health authorities in consultation with the local population. No national review has taken place.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the contribution of community hospitals in the delivery of health care in each strategic health authority area; and if she will make a statement; [26388]

(2) whether the £100 million investment in community hospitals, announced earlier in the year, will be provided exclusively as capital funding; and if she will make a statement; [26389]

(3) how many community hospitals will be built with the £100 million investment announced earlier in the year; and if she will make a statement. [26390]

Mr. Byrne: The Government have identified an initial public capital investment of £100 million to build, rebuild, or refurbish 50 community hospitals. Officials are currently undertaking detailed scoping work to set out the vision of the modern community hospital and the outcomes of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation will feed into this. Until this work is completed, it is not possible to estimate how many community hospitals will be built. The future direction of policy on community hospitals is likely to be indicated in the forthcoming White Paper on health and social care.

Continuing Care

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether individuals who are deemed eligible for high band nursing care are automatically eligible for NHS continuing care. [28642]

Mr. Byrne: No. An assessment of needs will establish eligibility for nursing care, and at what level. If that assessment establishes that the individual meets the criteria for continuing care, then that will be put in place instead.

Dacorum Primary Care Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether representations from members of the public to her Department concerning proposals to alter healthcare provision by *(a)* West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust and *(b)* Dacorum Primary Care Trust will be considered as part of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise. [25751]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Representations from members of the public concerning proposals to alter healthcare provision were not considered as part of the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation as the reconfiguration of services at the West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust and Dacorum Primary Care Trust were included in a local consultation known as "Investing in Your Health" which ran from March to June 2003.

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Primary Care Trust

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what treatments recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Primary Care Trust does not *(a)* fund and *(b)* offer to patients. [28629]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by her Department. [27381]

Mr. Byrne: The following is the list of the top 10 moveable and top 10 immoveable fixed assets in the books of the Department. The amounts are stated at net current value as at 31 October 2005.

Most valuable moveable and immovable assets owned by Department of Health

Description of asset	£
Immoveable fixed assets	
Land Warneford Hospital	30,900,000
Whittingham Hospital	27,900,000
Leybourne Grange Hospital	25,000,000
Richmond House Building	19,467,914
Cane Hill Hospital	15,000,000
High Royds Hospital	15,000,000
Killingbeck Hospital	15,000,000
Richmond House Land	13,438,082
Male Homes Site (St. Margarets)	11,000,000
Yardley Green Hospital	10,912,913
Moveable fixed assets	
Software Licences from Microsoft	75,583,418

Most valuable moveable and immovable assets owned by Department of Health

Description of asset	£
Local Service Provider North West	57,310,442
Spine Project-the core NHS Care Records Service to ensure highly available and highly resilient live Systems delivered in several phases	44,835,458
Spine Project-the core NHS Care Records Service to ensure highly available and highly resilient live Systems delivered in several phases	21,250,000
Software licences—Oracle—National Programme For Information Technology	21,197,152
Spine Project—the core NHS Care Records Service to ensure highly available and highly resilient live Systems delivered in several phases	20,887,632
Electronic staff records 2004–05	18,200,000
National software licences from Microsoft	17,290,037
Skipton House fit out enhancement carpets, blinds, signage, catering/servery equipment	3,650,258
1,300 personal computers (PCs), monitors installation-periodical refresh of PCs in Quarry House	2,522,930

Notes:
1. Immoveable assets are land and buildings and any plant and machinery that form an integral part of the land and buildings (such as central heating and air conditioning systems, for example).
2. Moveable assets are any asset that is not an immoveable asset.

Source:
Department of Health Fixed Asset Register

Departmental Land (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Tamworth constituency. [26169]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not own any operational property in Tamworth. The Secretary of State for Health owns a strip of land at the former St. Editha's hospital site.

Departmental Spending

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects her Department's spending as a share of national income to equal or exceed the European average; and if she will place in the Library the calculations that form the basis of her answer. [27344]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The latest available data for average European Union health spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) is 8.8 per cent. in 2003–04. The total United Kingdom health spending as a percentage of GDP is forecast to exceed this figure in 2006–07.

Diabetes

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence will consider the findings of the Canadian Expert Drug Advisory Committee prior to issuing guidance in relation to the long-acting insulin analogue Lantus. [28723]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a technology appraisal, "Guidance on the use of long-acting insulin analogues for the treatment of diabetes—insulin glargine" in December 2002. NICE are due to begin reviewing the guidance shortly, and will take account of all available evidence, including international evidence.

Drug Addicts (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many addicts were prescribed diamorphine in West Lancashire in each of the last five years. [27834]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally. However, information on the number of prescriptions issued for diamorphine since 2001 is shown in the table.

Number of prescriptions issued for diamorphine, 2001–04

	Number of prescriptions
2001	338
2002	318
2003	195
2004	263

Notes:
1. It is not known how many of theses prescriptions were for addicts nor how many patients these items correspond to.
2. Records for prescriptions for addicts issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act on Form FP10 (MDA) indicate that only one has been issued in West Lancashire Primary Care Trust, in 2004.

Emergency Services

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average ambulance response time in attending 999 calls in *(a)* East Anglia and *(b)* England has been in each year since 1997. [25072]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not centrally collected in the required format.

The data that the Department collects on ambulance response times for the East Anglian Ambulance Service and for all ambulance services in England is shown in the table. It is only possible to provide this data from the point at which each ambulance trust introduced call prioritisation.

Further relevant information can be found in tables 5a, 5b, 6 and 7 of the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2004–05", which is available in the Library and on Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/36/79/04113679.pdf

Ambulance response times in East Anglia and England 2000–01 to 2004–05

Percentage of category A calls responded within:	*East Anglian*	*England*
8 minutes		
2000–01	53.0	n/a
2001–02	63.8	70.8
2002–03	75.2	74.6
2003–04	76.1	75.7
2004–05	76.5	76.2
14/19 minutes		
2000–01	95.7	n/a
2001–02	95.7	94.1
2002–03	96.9	94.6
2003–04	96.6	93.9
2004–05	96.2	96.0

n/a = Data not available, as call prioritisation technology not introduced.

Eye Health Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been treated with the use of

photodynamic therapy for wet age-related macular degeneration in the last 12 months; and whether photodynamic therapy is uniformly available throughout England. [28213]

Ms Rosie Winterton: *[holding answer 14 November 2005]*: In 2003–04, there were 3,262 finished admission episodes in the National Health Service in England where the primary diagnosis was degeneration of macular and posterior pole and an eye operation was carried out. We do not hold information on the use of photodynamic therapy in these treatments. All primary care trusts have put arrangements in place to fund treatment for patients who have either the wholly classic form of age-related macular degeneration or the predominantly classic form.

Notes:

Finished admission episodes

A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. The figures do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–3) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Diagnosis codes used for wet age-related macular degeneration (Degeneration of macula and posterior pole, ICD-10 code H353) and eye operations (OPCS-4 = C01-C86).

Foreign Travel Vaccinations

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vaccinations for diseases associated with foreign travel have been provided free of charge on the NHS in each year since 1997–98; and at what cost in each year. [28698]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not held centrally.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners per head of population there have been in West Lancashire in each of the last five years. [27660]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population for Cumbria and Lancashire SHA and West Lancashire PCT, 1999–2004

Number (headcount)

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Q13 Cumbria and Lancashire						
All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	1,106	1,105	1,118	1,145	1,169	1,168
Population	1,899,003	1,901,743	1,905,060	1,910,378	1,919,041	1,929,653
All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population	58.2	58.1	58.7	59.9	60.9	60.5
Of which						
5f3 West Lancashire PCT						
All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1]	n/a	n/a	58	61	61	60
Population[2]	n/a	n/a	108,480	108,718	108,994	n/a
All Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars)[1] per 100,000 head of population	n/a	n/a	53.5	56.1	56.0	n/a

n/a = Data not applicable

[1] General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers and registrars) includes Contracted GPs , GMS Others and PMS Others. Prior to September 2004 this group included GMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs, PMS Salaried GPs, Restricted Principals, Assistants, Salaried Doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS Other, Flexible Career Scheme GPs and GP Returners.

[2] Population data for 2004 PCTs will not be available until November 2005.

Note:

Data as at 1 October 1999 and 30 September 2000–04

Sources:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

2001 ONS Population Census

General Practitioners

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time to see a general practitioner was in each year since 1986. [26463]

Mr. Byrne: The requested data are not collected or held centrally. Since 2001, data have been collected each month from primary care trusts and general practitioners on the availability of access to a general practitioner. These data show whether access is or is not available in line with the NHS Plan target that patients should be able to be seen by a primary care doctor within 48 hours but do not provide information on actual waiting times. The data show that since December 2004, over 99 per cent. of patients are seeking a primary care doctor within this time scale.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to increase the number of general practitioners in the NHS. [26464]

Mr. Byrne: There are more general practitioners (GPs), 32,418, in the national health service than ever before. Since 1997 the number of GPs increased by 4,372 (15.6 per cent.) and the number of GP registrars has increased by 1,138 (84.7 per cent.).

As part of the new foundation programme, the first stage of postgraduate medical training, more trainees will have a placement in a primary care setting—55 per cent. in 2006–07, rising to 90 per cent. in later years.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent employee reductions the

Department has made as a result of the Gershon review; what cost savings relating to IT projects were achieved; what value of efficiency savings *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [24329]

Mr. Byrne [*holding answer 3 November 2005*]: The Department's change programme commenced in March 2003, prior to the publication of the Gershon review. Our Gershon commitment however is based on delivery of this programme. We confirmed in our 2005 Departmental report that gross full time equivalent headcount for the core Department had reduced from 3,390 in March 2003 to 2,050 in March 2005. We will update progress against our Gershon commitment in our autumn performance report.

We have not as yet declared any achieved cost savings relating to information technology projects as Connecting for Health applications have only recently commenced rollout phase. Our calculation of efficiency gains recognises that benefits accrue from the integrated delivery of technology, process and people change. Future gains therefore will not wholly differentiate technology-only efficiency benefits Our measurement methodology will be set out in an updated efficiency technical note, due to be published on the Department's website at the end of November.

We have not yet declared efficiency gains for 2004–05. These gains and expected further progress in 2005–06 will be set out in our autumn performance report due to be presented to Parliament in December.

Health Service Reconfiguration

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list each of the requests that she has received for contested health service reconfigurations to be referred to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel since the IRP was created; and whether the request *(a)* was accepted, *(b)* was registered and *(c)* is awaiting decision in each case. [27399]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* As at 10 November 2005, there have been eight referrals to the Secretary of State which is shown in the table. The overview and scrutiny committee right of referral is to the Secretary of State who may choose to seek advice from the independent reconfiguration panel (IRP). Since its establishment, the IRP has provided formal advice to the Secretary of State on one case—in East Kent. Of the seven referrals subsequently received, three were determined by Secretary of State without recourse to the IRP, three are pending a decision, and in one case the proposals were withdrawn by the primary care trust.

Referrals to the Secretary of State seeking advice from the IRP

	Location	*Referred by*	*Date of referral*	*Outcome*
1	East Kent (Margate/Canterbury/Ashford)	South East Kent CHC Canterbury and Thanet CHC	April 2002	Secretary of State's decision to refer to IRP
2	Wiltshire (Kennet and North Wiltshire)	Wiltshire county council HOSC	October 2004	Proposals withdrawn by PCT in favour of wide-ranging review of community services
3	Fareham and Gosport (Hants)	Hampshire county council HOSC	January 2005	Secretary of State's decision to uphold NHS decision without referral to IRP
4	South West London (Sutton/Epsom/ St. Helier)	London borough of Merton HOSC	March 2005	Secretary of State's decision pending
5	Bristol (Southmead/Frenchay)	South Gloucestershire HOSC	July 2005	Secretary of State's decision to uphold NHS decision without referral to IRP
6	Wirral (Wirral and Wallasey)	Wirral Metropolitan borough council HOSC	July 2005	Secretary of State's decision to uphold NHS decision without referral to IRP
7	Lincolnshire (cross county)	HOSC for Lincolnshire	July 2005	Secretary of State's decision pending
8	Surrey (Guildford and Waverley)	Surrey county council HOSC	October 2005	Secretary of State's decision pending

Health Trust Guidance

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has issued to health trusts on the priority they should give to *(a)* reducing financial deficits and *(b)* meeting clinical targets. [17404]

Mr. Byrne: National health service organisations are required to deliver both their statutory financial duties and those national targets that apply to that organisation.

NHS trusts have a statutory duty to break even. This requires them to match income and expenditure over a three-year period, exceptionally this can be extended to a five-year period.

Primary care trusts have a statutory duty to live within the resources allocated to them. They are required to achieve financial balance each and every year.

"National Standards, Local Action", published in July 2004 and available in the Library and on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk, sets out what is expected of national health service and social care organisations for the three financial years 2005–06 to 2007–08 in terms of national priorities and health care standards.

Hearing Aids

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England have received digital hearing aids through the NHS in each year since 1997. [28840]

Mr. Byrne: This information requested is not held centrally. The modernising hearing aid services programme estimates that approximately 500,000 people have now been fitted with digital hearing aids.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to introduce opportunistic screening for hepatitis C at genito-urinary medicine clinics. [26002]

Caroline Flint: The Department published guidance for the national health service on hepatitis C testing in July 2004. Genito-urinary medicine clinics are one of the health care settings in which opportunistic testing for those at increased risk of hepatitis C takes place. The British Association of Sexual Health and HIV published guidance on the management of hepatitis A, B and C in September 2005. This includes advice on hepatitis C testing in genito-urinary medicine clinics, and is available on the Association's website at: www.bashh.org/guidelines/2005/hepatitis_abc__final_0905.pdf

High Blood Pressure

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to educate the public about the dangers of high blood pressure. [28646]

Caroline Flint: It is essential that individuals across the population be made aware of the risks associated with high blood pressure and the importance of knowing their blood pressure numbers. For the last four years the Department has funded the Blood Pressure Association's (BPA) Know Your Numbers campaign. The national blood pressure testing week, which took place between 12 and 18 September this year, is the high point of the BPA's campaign and provides an opportunity for the public to attend a blood pressure testing station located in their local community. Individuals are also offered free information on prevention, management and treatment of the condition to prevent the onset of heart disease and stroke.

The most important factor in putting up blood pressure, alongside diet, physical inactivity and being overweight, is salt intake. In September 2004, the Food Standards Agency launched a high profile consumer awareness campaign on salt. The second phase of the campaign, focusing on highlighting the 6 grams daily intake target and encouraging people to read labels to become aware of where their salt intake is coming from, started in October this year.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the size of the AIDS support grant has been in each year since it was established; and what her policy is on the AIDS support grant. [26010]

Caroline Flint: The size of the AIDS support grant in each year since its introduction is shown in the following table. The AIDS support grant continues to be an effective tool in assisting local authority HIV social care provision to those living with the virus, their partners and families.

Aids support grant 1989–90 to 2005–06

£ million

	AIDS support grant amount
1989–90	7.0
1990–91	9.8
1991–92	10.2
1992–93	15.3
1993–94	12.4
1994–95	12.9
1995–96	13.4
1996–97	13.7
1997–98	13.7
1998–99	13.7
1999–2000	15.5
2000–01	16.0
2001–02	16.5
2002–03	16.5
2003–04	16.5
2004–05	16.5
2005–06	16.5

Hospital Doctors' Pay

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of hospital doctors' pay was in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1998, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2000, *(e)* 2001, *(f)* 2002, *(g)* 2003 and *(h)* 2004; and what estimate she has made for 2005. [24485]

Mr. Byrne: The information from 1997–98 to 2004–05 is shown in the table.

Doctors' salaries 1997–98 to 2004–05, England

	Total (£)
1997–98	2,894,787,597
1998–99	3,170,563,499
1999–2000	3,520,060,863
2000–01	3,975,751,343
2001–02	4,543,044,274
2002–03	5,045,570,671
2003–04	6,044,061,370
2004–05	6,372,000,000

Note:
These are the total England figures for medical staff working for all national health service trusts. The figures include locums.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the projected cost of hospital doctors' pay in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2007, *(c)* 2008, *(d)* 2009 and *(e)* 2010. [24486]

Mr. Byrne: The projected cost of hospital doctors' pay in 2005–06 is £6.923 billion. The cost for 2006–07 and beyond will depend on future pay settlements and the recommendations of the doctors' and dentists' pay review body.

Hospitals

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been granted from *(a)* her Department and *(b)* NHS budgets to procure artworks for hospitals in 2005–06. [23989]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has made grants to two organisations:

to the Kings Fund for its programme, "Enhancing the Healing Environment" where two grants have been made, totalling £940,000:

NHS Estates Agency—£250,000

National Director for Mental Health—£690,000.

There has been Section 64 funding in 2005–06 to the Charity Paintings in Hospital. This funding was made to support the charity's general running costs. A further grant of £2,500 was made to the same charity by the then NHS Estates Agency to fund work on the charity's website. A key part of the charity's work is their loan scheme by which they loan works of art to hospitals, hospices and general practitioner surgeries.

The purpose of these charitable organisations is to improve the environment in which patients are treated. None of these grants were made for the specific purpose of procuring artwork.

National health service trusts provide information annually to the Department on the amount they spend on artwork. This information is provided on a voluntary basis and the figures for that spend in 2005–06 are not yet available.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how charges for telecommunications from NHS hospitals by patients are regulated. [27330]

Jane Kennedy: All charges for telecommunications from National health service hospitals by patients are regulated by the Office of Communications, the independent regulator and competition authority for the United Kingdom communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. Charges for bedside television and telephone services are subject to the terms of national licences granted to the providers of these services and their agreements with NHS trusts.

Household Products (Health Effects)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research she has conducted into the impact upon human health of the use of *(a)* bleach, *(b)* chemicals in sanitary towels and related items, *(c)* home cleaning products, *(d)* detergents and *(e)* spray furniture polish; what advice has been given to the public relating to their use; and if she will make a statement. [27814]

Caroline Flint: The Department has not conducted any research on the impact on human health of bleach, chemicals in sanitary towels and related items, home cleaning products, detergents, and spray furniture polish.

It is the duty of manufacturers and suppliers to adequately test ingredients and products to identify any potential hazards to humans. There is a statutory duty to relay to consumers information on hazards to human health on product labels. Products where a biocidal claim has been made, for example, in respect of certain uses of bleach would be regulated under the Biocides Products Directive (EC/98/8) which require substantial amounts of testing for potential hazards to health to be undertaken and assessed through an European Union wide regulatory system.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* section 11 and *(b)* schedule 3 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990. [28199]

Caroline Flint: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has operated the licensing system, specified in section 11 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, effectively. I am also satisfied that the consent requirements contained in schedule three of the Act have been effective in protecting patients, ensuring they receive the fertility treatments and services to which they have agreed.

As part of our review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, our public consultation document, issued in August 2005, seeks views on a number of issues including the model of regulation and consent. Any comments received on these issues will be taken into account in deciding if any changes are required to current legislation.

Influenza

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 632W, on avian influenza, what definition of healthcare worker she plans to use for these purposes; and which categories of worker will be eligible for priority supplies of antivirals. [21145]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The contingency plans referred to in the question relate to a possible flu pandemic among humans, not avian flu, which is a disease which primarily affects birds.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with pharmaceutical wholesalers with regard to stockpiling and distribution of *(a)* antiviral drugs and *(b)* protective masks and clothing. [21220]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The stockpile of antiviral drugs is currently being held centrally, while it is being built up. Arrangements have been put in place to make them available to those who need it within 48 hours. Antiviral drugs will be made available and administered through the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) local health protection units in collaboration with the national health service in England (similar arrangements will apply in Wales and Scotland).

From March 2006, the antivirals will be stored regionally. These arrangements for their storage and distribution in England will be the subject of a tendering exercise conducted by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency. It will be open to pharmaceutical wholesalers to respond to that tender. Any non-pharmaceutical items stockpiled are covered by standard NHS storage and distribution arrangements. Devolved Administrations are responsible for their own storage and distribution arrangements.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of the guidance given to general practitioners regarding avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [25284]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds. There have been infrequent cases in some people who are closely exposed to infected poultry. To date (1 November 2005) there have been 122 cases of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in people in South East Asia, 62 of whom have died. There is concern that the virus could evolve into a strain which

readily infects people and is easily transmissible between people, resulting in a pandemic virus. This is why we are planning for a possible human flu pandemic.

A copy of the information pack sent to general practitioner's on pandemic flu, which also contains information on avian influenza, is available in the Library.

More information on avian influenza can be found at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/avianinfluenza.htm and at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/flu.htm

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps will be taken to ensure that those infected in an influenza pandemic *(a)* are identified at the earliest possible opportunity and *(b)* receive anti-viral treatment as quickly as possible. [26578]

Ms Rosie Winterton [*holding answer 8 November 2005*]: Clinical guidelines for health professionals regarding the diagnosis and treatment of those infected during an influenza pandemic were published on 19 October.

The United Kingdom operational framework for antiviral medicines, which provides information to enable local National Health Service organisations to develop plans for the storage and distribution of antiviral medicines was published on 21 September. These local plans will need to set out local arrangements to ensure that the antivirals are prescribed to the patients who need them as soon as possible while minimising the risk of spreading the virus through contact with other patients.

Both of these documents can be found on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the at risk population of West Lancashire are expected to be inoculated against existing strains of influenza by the end of 2005; and if she will make a statement. [27704]

Mr. Byrne: Under the new inspection system national targets are no longer set. Targets are now a local decision. In the Chief Medical Officer's letter to health professionals dated 25 July, he said that continued improvement of uptake rates across all groups should be encouraged.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contingency planning has been undertaken in West Lancashire for an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [27844]

Mr. Byrne: As part of their statutory duties, primary care trusts (PCTs) should ensure that arrangements are in place for the provision of primary care services in the event of an influenza pandemic. Local capacity planning should include arrangements with all primary care contractors including general medical services, personal medical services, PCT-led medical services as well as alternative providers of medical services. In order to meet the likely volume of work during a pandemic, PCTs should discuss with their general practitioners the non-essential work which can safely be put on hold. Specific arrangements will also be needed with the out-of-hours providers for individual PCTs.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department plans for information and advice to be distributed to the public in the event of an influenza pandemic via *(a)* leaflets to be posted to households and *(b)* direct advertisements to the public. [22119]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Full details of the communication strategy in the event of an influenza pandemic is included in annex I of "The UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan".

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to support the development of a rapid diagnostic test for use in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak. [23010]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Rapid diagnostic tests are available for influenza, but these do not distinguish between different strains of influenza. The possible use of rapid diagnostic tests in an influenza pandemic has been considered by the influenza pandemic scientific advisory group. They have advised that the currently available tests would be of little use in a pandemic and more work is needed to develop an appropriate test. The group has undertaken to keep this under review.

We are also working with the Health Protection Agency to ensure that diagnostic services are in place across the country to enable accurate identification of influenza strains.

Information Technology

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to fine private companies for cost over-runs on government procured information technology systems. [27241]

Mr. Byrne [*holding answer 10 November 2005*]: Contracts to the value of £6.2 billion over 10 years were let to deliver the national programme for information technology. All the systems being deployed as part of the national programme are proceeding on budget. No additional costs have been incurred.

Junior Doctors

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many junior doctors her Department expects to be displaced from training posts by the transition to modernising medical careers. [28237]

Mr. Byrne: The number of training posts for junior doctors is determined by the needs of patients and the national health service. There is no intention to reduce the number of posts as a result of the proposed modernising medical careers changes to the structure of training programmes.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of her Department. [23410]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not taken specific steps to promote the uptake of national tests. While the Department has not promoted the uptake of these qualifications, policies are in place to support people should they identify a need to do so.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of new recruits to her Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23775]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not collect this type of data. The Department operates a competency based recruitment system. Candidates are required to demonstrate specific skills and competencies for a particular role.

Members' Surgeries (NHS Premises)

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will instruct Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale primary care trust, when deciding whether its premises can be used for an hon. Member's surgery, to take account of the use of the Chai Centre for a ministerial visit in August. [27596]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale primary care trust.

Mental Health

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the quality of mental health services in Plymouth; and if she will make a statement. [27400]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Department has made no direct assessment of the quality of mental health services in Plymouth. In England, the Healthcare Commission is responsible for assessing and reporting on the performance of national health service organisations. The commission published a clinical governance review of Plymouth Teaching Primary Care Trust in October 2004 and the trust is currently implementing an action plan to address the issues identified by the commission in close collaboration with the South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority.

In the 2005 performance ratings, Plymouth Teaching PCT was awarded two stars as a provider of mental health services.

Additionally, in order to help local services benchmark their progress in implementing the national service framework for mental health with the other mental health service providers across the country, the National Institute for Mental Health in England conducts an annual assessment every autumn and shares the findings with trusts and strategic health authorities.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many whole-time equivalent mental health nurses have been recruited in each of the last five years. [28230]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the numbers of qualified full-time equivalent qualified nurses working in psychiatry in each of the last five years is shown in the table. Information on the number of staff recruited each year is not available centrally.

NHS hospital and community health services: qualified nursing midwifery and health visiting staff working in the psychiatry area of work as at 30 September each specified year—England

Psychiatry	*Full-time equivalents*
2000	35,804
2001	36,973
2002	38,176
2003	39,383
2004	41,585

Note:
Full-time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the members are of the code of practice working group set up to implement a workable model of mental health tribunals proposed in the draft Mental Health Bill; when it has met; and whether she plans to publish its report. [28047]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not set up a code of practice working group. We assume the hon. Member is referring to the tribunal project group (TPG) which is an advisory group that is answerable to the mental health legislation implementation group. The TPG's current membership is:

David Lye—Department of Health (Chair)

Professor Jeremy Cooper—Mental Health Review Tribunal, Southern Regional Chairman

Lucy Scott-Moncrieff—The Law Society

Professor Genevra Richardson—Council on Tribunals

Penny Letts—Council on Tribunals

Patrick Reeve—Legal Services Commission

Laura MacMillen—Legal Services Commission

Dr. Pearl Hettiaratchy—Mental Health Review Tribunal Member General Medical Council Royal College of Psychiatrists

Gareth Bartley—National Assembly for Wales

Yens Marsen-Luther—National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE)

Jim Symington—NIMHE, London Development Centre

Keith Nieland—NIMHE, South East Development Centre

Officials from the Department and the Department of Constitutional Affairs also attend meetings of the group. The TPG will meet for the fifth time on 17 November, and it is scheduled to meet monthly. It is not within the remit of the TPG to produce a report. It will advise Ministers, through project managers, on the overall direction and management of the tribunal project.

Midwifery

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 22 March 2005, Official Report, column 762W, to the hon. Member for

Billericay on midwifery what progress is being made in investigating the feasibility of using the Community Midwifery Model in the NHS. [18126]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on Monday 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1720W.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the age breakdown of midwives practising in the NHS in England is. [26479]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the numbers of midwives employed in the national health service in England by age-band is shown in the table. The number of midwives training places is increasing and in 2004–05, 2,374 students entered training to become a midwife, 44 per cent. more than in 1996–97.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services: Registered midwives employed in the NHS as at 30 September 2004 in England by age-band

	Headcount
All staff	24,844
25 and under	671
25 to 29	1,707
30 to 34	2,279
35 to 39	4,255
40 to 44	5,224
45 to 49	3,943
50 to 54	2,594
55 to 59	1,738
60 to 64	473
65 and over	46
Unknown	1,914

Source:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent representations she has received from sufferers of multiple chemical sensitivity; and if she will make a statement; [27604]

(2) what guidance she has issued to general practitioners in the diagnosis of multiple chemical sensitivity; [27605]

(3) what recent discussions she has had with healthcare professionals on the treatment of multiple chemical sensitivity; [27608]

(4) how many people in the West Yorkshire area have been diagnosed with multiple chemical sensitivity since 1990. [27631]

Mr. Byrne: I am not aware of having received any representations from people alleging that they suffer from multiple chemical sensitivity.

The Department has not issued guidance to, or had discussions with, healthcare professionals on this. The national health service provides a range of services for people suffering from allergies based on an individual assessment of need. This includes, for those with complex cases requiring special facilities for the investigation and management of their condition, six specialist centres run by allergists.

The Department does not collect data on people diagnosed with multiple chemical sensitivity.

NHS Commissioning

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the primary care trusts proposed for merger or reconfiguration in plans submitted by strategic health authorities under Commissioning a Patient-led NHS; and how she expects each primary care trust will be affected. [21093]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is available on the NHS Office of the Strategic Health Authorities' website at:

www.osha.nhs.uk/publicpage.aspx?id_Content=618

The process for considering and deciding on these proposals was set out in the written ministerial statement on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 49–50WS.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total wage bill has been in the NHS in each year since 1997 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by staff group in (i) nominal and (ii) real terms; and what proportion of the overall NHS budget this represented in each year. [18336]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Table 1: Absolute and proportion of National Health Service expenditure on staff and pay (nominal)

£ millions

	Data source	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Total NHS DEL[1]	DR2005 3.1	32,997	34,664	36,608	41,241	44,881	52,469	56,083	63,000
Pay bill: Trusts, PCTs and SHAs	DH Accounts: Table 7.9								
General and senior managers		867	912	952	1,055	1,187	1,331	1,571	1,777
Medics		2,654	2,848	3,122	3,464	3,896	4,473	5,038	6,023
Dentists		83	85	85	94	100	115	123	119
Nurses		6,294	6,415	6,710	7,330	7,902	8,825	9,643	10,371
Profession allied to medicine		843	873	928	1,022	1,116	1,246	1,356	1,479
Professional and scientific		567	593	623	687	757	852	932	1,037
Professional and technical		458	482	528	568	631	704	796	893
Other scientific, therapeutic and technical		82	82	93	102	111	116	115	129
Admin and clerical		1,733	1,766	1,865	1,989	2,161	2,444	2,724	3,000
Maintenance		244	228	229	231	235	240	239	237

Table 1: Absolute and proportion of National Health Service expenditure on staff and pay (nominal)

£ millions

	Data source	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Ambulance		325	333	355	364	395	433	478	524
Health care assistants		922	947	962	1,013	1,047	1,113	1,182	1,251
All other staff		33	31	22	27	44	55	130	125
Non-NHS staff		451	480	586	730	912	1,189	1,462	1,446
Chairmen		25	24	22	33	34	72	125	147
Miscellaneous	DH Wall 36, Wall 26								
Department admin (current)		[2]270	[2]270	271	270	291	314	336	329
Centrally held managed services current (excluding EEA medical costs)		[2]120	[2]140	[2]210	314	313	414	313	632
Family health services gross expenditure (cash and resource) England	DR Table 6.10								
Total general medical services and personal medical services		2,873	3,033	3,158	3,420	3,734	3,919	4,084	4,623
General dental services		1,325	1,349	1,439	1,479	1,561	1,638	1,709	1,767
Personal dental services (discretionary)		—	—	4	12	21	36	41	65
General ophthalmic services		237	241	240	281	290	302	304	322
Grand total expenditure on staff and pay		20,405	21,132	22,403	24,484	26,742	29,834	32,699	36,298
Percentage of total expenditure on staff and pay		62%	61%	61%	59%	60%	57%	58%	58%

[1] Effect of HMT technical change (discount rate from 6 per cent. to 3.5 per cent. on provisions) increased the total Department spend by about £2 billion in 2001–02. This did not affect the purchasing power of the Department. However, leads to a 2 per cent. reduction in the percentage of total expenditure on staff and pay.
[2] Estimated.

Table 2: Absolute and proportion of NHS expenditure on staff and pay (real in 2003–04 prices)

£ million

	Data source	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
GDP deflator		84.46	86.95	89.21	90.97	92.16	94.43	97.43	100.00
Total NHS DEL	DR2005 3.1	39,069	39,865	41,036	45,337	48,701	55,563	57,560	63,000
Pay bill: Trusts, PCTs and SHAs	DH Accounts: Table 7.9								
General and senior managers		1,027	1,048	1,068	1,159	1,288	1,410	1,612	1,777
Medics		3,142	3,275	3,499	3,808	4,228	4,737	5,171	6,023
Dentists		98	98	95	103	109	122	126	119
Nurses		7,453	7,378	7,521	8,058	8,575	9,346	9,897	10,371
Profession allied to medicine		999	1,004	1,040	1,124	1,211	1,320	1,392	1,479
Professional and scientific		671	682	699	756	822	903	957	1,037
Professional and technical		542	554	592	624	685	746	816	893
Other scientific, therapeutic and technical		97	94	104	112	121	123	118	129
Admin and clerical		2,052	2,031	2,090	2,186	2,345	2,588	2,795	3,000
Maintenance		289	263	257	254	255	255	245	237
Ambulance		385	383	398	400	429	459	490	524
Health care assistants		1,091	1,089	1,078	1,114	1,136	1,179	1,213	1,251
All other staff		39	35	25	30	48	59	133	125
Non-NHS staff		534	552	656	803	990	1,259	1,500	1,446
Chairmen		29	27	25	36	37	76	129	147
Miscellaneous	DH Wall 36, Wall 26								
Department admin (current)		[1]320	[1]311	304	297	316	332	345	329
Centrally held managed services current (excluding EEA medical costs)		[1]142	[1]161	[1]235	[1]345	340	438	321	632
Family health services gross expenditure (cash and resource) England	DR Table 6.10								
Total general medical services and personal medical services		3,402	3,488	3,540	3,760	4,052	4,150	4,192	4,623
General dental services		1,569	1,551	1,613	1,626	1,694	1,735	1,754	1,767
Personal dental services (discretionary)		—	—	4	13	23	38	42	65
General ophthalmic services		281	277	269	309	315	320	312	322
Grand total expenditure on staff and pay		24,160	24,302	25,113	26,916	29,018	31,593	33,560	36,298
Percentage of total expenditure on staff and pay		62%	61%	61%	59%	60%	57%	58%	58%

[1] Estimated.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the spending of the *(a)* Cheshire and Merseyside and *(b)* Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authorities has been in each of the last three years. [27705]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Expenditure by the relevant strategic health authorities (SHAs) for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

(£000)

SHA	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Cheshire and Merseyside	208,150	158,778	182,356
Cumbria and Lancashire	436,695	424,989	65,022

Notes

1. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. The figures have not been adjusted for inflation.
2. Figures have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning health care or other services.
3. The majority of expenditure of the SHAs is for education, training and research.
4. Reductions in expenditure between 2002–03 and 2003–04 are caused by the further transfer of commissioning from strategic health authorities to primary care trusts.
5. Cumbria and Lancashire SHA. In 2004–05, the student grants unit expenditure (£369 million in 003–04) was transferred to the NHS Pensions Agency.

Source

Audited summarisation forms of the SHAs.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the annual expenditure by her Department per capita in England relative to the figure in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Northern Ireland. [27767]

Mr. Byrne: Expenditure by per head of population in the National Health Service (strategic health authorities and primary care trusts) in England is £1,309.54. Comparable figures for Wales and Scotland are a matter for the devolved administrations. While the institutions in Northern Ireland are dissolved, responsibility for comparable figures rests with ministers in the Northern Ireland Office.

NHS Finance (Surrey and Sussex)

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many independent financial investigations have been conducted at Surrey and Sussex NHS Trust in the last five years. [28904]

Caroline Flint: Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has advised that there have been two independent financial investigations at Surrey and Sussex Healthcare National Health Service Trust in the last year.

Surrey and Sussex SHA commissioned a review from Alan Meekings, Management Consultant for Landmark Consulting, which was submitted to the SHA in December 2004 and discussed at the SHA Board meeting in February 2005.

In addition, the Audit Commission published a public interest report into the finances at Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust in March 2005.

NHS Land Sales

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* charges and *(b)* receipts from NHS land sales have been each year since 1990. [25255]

Mr. Byrne: Details of national health service land sales are not held centrally.

However the table shows, drawn from the annual accounts of the various bodies concerned, receipts from the sale of all fixed assets by family health service authorities, health authorities, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and national health service trusts in England from 1994–95 (the earliest date what information is available in this format). Details of charges relating to land sales are not held centrally.

(£000)

	Receipts from all fixed assets
1994–95	202,258
1995–96	254,493
1996–97	129,756
1997–98	252,795
1998–99	191,380
1999 2000	290,961
2000–01	390,869
2001–02	766,411
2002–03	1,078,294
2003–04	397,975
2004–05	455,625

NHS Pensions Agency

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action she is taking to ensure the NHS Pensions Agency collects comprehensive evidence on student bursary payments for the purposes of the auditing of its accounts. [27537]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Pensions Agency is currently undertaking an internal audit to check that all personal files for students in receipt of an national health service bursary contain all the necessary documentation to support payment of the bursary.

NHS Professionals

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts have joined the NHS Professionals scheme to date for the provision of *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors. [25824]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Professionals is providing services to 136 national health service trusts. Of these 64 trusts have the nurses' service only; 60 doctors service only; and 12 have both.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* shifts and *(b)* hours for (i) nurses and (ii) doctors needed cover over the past 12 months; and how many in each category were filled by NHS Professionals. [25826]

Mr. Byrne: Data on number of shifts and hours for doctors and nurses needing cover is not collected centrally.

NHS Reconfiguration

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will extend the consultation period on the proposed reconfiguration of strategic health authorities and primary care trusts. [19155]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authority proposals for reconfiguration will be assessed to see whether they meet the criteria originally stated in the "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS" document, and this process should be complete in time for the three-month public consultation to begin in December. There are no plans to change these arrangements.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many strategic health authorities have gone out to tender for private management of the proposed new primary care trusts; and if she will make a statement. [19208]

Mr. Byrne: As part of the proposals for primary care trust (PCT) reconfiguration, one strategic health authority (SHA) has proposed to procure an external management team to run one of their newly proposed PCTs. However, this proposal will not be considered during the forthcoming public consultation as it is for the new PCTs, not the current SHAs, who should decide how best to manage their responsibilities after reconfiguration.

NHS Staff

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many compulsory redundancies of NHS staff there have been in each year since 1997–98, broken down by staff group. [23107]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to mitigate stress suffered by NHS employees. [28883]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers are responsible for supporting the National Health Service to mitigate stress suffered by NHS employees in England. They are working closely with the Health and Safety Executive to provide guidance and support. This includes the development of a new campaign, "Stress. How are you doing?", which was launched on 2 November 2005.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many employees aged over 70 years are working in the national health service in West Lancashire. [27702]

Mr. Byrne: As at 30 September 2004, there were no employees aged over 70 years working in the national health service in the West Lancashire constituency area.

NHS Suppliers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 846W, on NHS suppliers, what procedures are in place to ensure her Department is informed of representations to NHS organisations from suppliers to the NHS on the issue of the payment; and if her Department will remind *(a)* NHS trusts, *(b)* primary care trusts and *(c)* NHS professionals of their requirement to pay 95 per cent. of undisputed invoices within contract terms or 30 days where no terms have been agreed. [26090]

Mr. Byrne: Current guidance is included in the manual for accounts and is available on the Department's finance manual website at www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/finman.nsf

One of the functions of strategic health authorities is to monitor the performance of individual national health service bodies, report this to the Department and work with poor performing organisations to achieve and maintain a level of payment performance consistent with Government accounting regulations and the better payment practice code.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been given to NHS trusts on priority to be attached to *(a)* balancing the budget and *(b)* achieving their waiting list targets. [18592]

Mr. Byrne: "National Standards, Local Action" was published in July 2004 and is available in the Library and on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/60/58/04086058.pdf It sets out what is expected of national health service and social care organisations for the three financial years 2005–06 to 2007–08 in terms of national priorities and health care standards. The guidance covers expectations in relation to waiting times and finance.

Overseas Doctors

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information she has issued to overseas doctors being recruited to the NHS about the effect on the number of training posts of planned changes under modernising medical careers. [28238]

Mr. Byrne: Information on working in the national health service is available at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk. Specifically, information on modernising medical careers is available at www.mmc.nhs.uk. This information is updated regularly and currently contains information on foundation programmes available across the United Kingdom in 2006.

There is no intention to reduce the number of posts as a result of the proposed modernising medical careers changes to the structure of training programmes.

Parliamentary Questions

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to Question 24618, tabled on 31 October; what the reason is for the delay in replying; and if she will make a statement. [27856]

Mr. Byrne [*holding answer 11 November 2005*]: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on Monday 21 November, *Official Report*, column 1723W.

Primary Care Trusts

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used by each strategic health authority for allocating funds to primary care trusts. [24827]

Mr. Byrne: Revenue allocations are made directly to primary care trusts (PCTs), not by strategic health authorities. These allocations are made on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each PCTs target share of available resources.

The components of the formula are used to weight each PCTs crude population according to their relative need (age, and additional need) for health care and the unavoidable geographical differences in the cost of providing health care (market forces factor).

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact the reform of primary care trusts will have on community hospitals. [26386]

Mr. Byrne: It is too early to make an assessment of the impact that changes to primary care trusts will have on community hospitals. Policy work is in progress on the range of services that a modern community hospital could offer and the outcomes of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation will influence this.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list strategic health authorities which are proposing the outsourcing of the management and delivery of the commissioning function of primary care trusts. [19489]

Mr. Byrne [*holding answer 19 October 2005*]: As part of the proposals for primary care trust (PCT) reconfiguration, one strategic health authority (SHA) has proposed to procure an external management team to run one of their newly proposed PCTs. However, this proposal will not be considered during the forthcoming public consultation as we believe it is the new PCTs, not the current SHAs, who should decide how best to manage their responsibilities after reconfiguration.

Radiographers

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, for what reason Agenda for Change arrangements place both junior radiographers and senior II radiographers in the same salary band; and what assessment she has made of the implications of this policy on recruitment and retention in the profession. [25535]

Mr. Byrne: Under Agenda for Change, the basic pay that staff receives reflects the knowledge, responsibility, skills and effort required for their job as measured by the new national health service job evaluation scheme, rather than their previous job title. Agenda for Change also has generally fewer pay bands than the Whitley system it replaces. For these reasons, there is no guarantee that staff in different Whitley grades in the past will be in different pay bands under Agenda for Change.

In the case of radiography, there have been concerns about the wording in some national job profiles which assist trusts in assimilating radiographers to the new pay system. The job evaluation group, a sub-group of the NHS Staff Council, is currently working with the Society of Radiographers to revise the band five and band six national profiles.

This work cannot guarantee that senior II radiographers will be in a higher pay band than basic grade radiographers. It will however help ensure that assimilation decisions are appropriate. In addition, where trusts consider that pay levels are insufficient to recruit or retain staff, they are allowed to pay recruitment and retention premia of up to 30 per cent. of basic pay. For these reasons, it is not anticipated that the move to the new system will result in recruitment problems in the profession.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people involved in road accidents have died before the arrival of an ambulance in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [26570]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not centrally collected.

Sexual Health

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people under 16 years attended a sexual health clinic in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [29042]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 November 2005]*: Sexual health services are provided at genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics and community contraception clinics. For community contraception clinics data is not collected by primary care trusts but is available for first contacts at clinics. The data shows that there were 5,000 first contacts by young people aged under 16 within the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in 2004-05.

For GUM clinics the number of attendances are not available by age group, but age group data are collected for a selection of diagnoses and a total of 85 diagnoses[1] were made in young people aged under 16 in 2004. The data is for diagnoses made at GUM clinics within the Cumbria and Lancashire SHA and not by the patients' area of residence. For confidentiality reasons, this data is only routinely published at SHA level.

Note:

[1]Diagnosed conditions: gonorrhoea, herpes, genital warts and chlamydia.

Smoking

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence plans to publish its public health programme guidance on smoking cessation. [23961]

Jane Kennedy: This is a matter for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Information about the current work programme of NICE is available on its website at www.nice.org.uk. I understand that NICE's public health intervention guidance on smoking cessation is scheduled to be issued for publication in March 2006 and that its broader public health programme guidance on smoking cessation is scheduled for publication in July 2007.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the financial impact of a smoking ban in public places on bingo clubs. [28287]

Caroline Flint: A regulatory impact assessment (RIA) has been published alongside the Health Bill. The RIA contains estimates of cost and benefits of legislation to end smoking in enclosed public places and work places. Economic analyses of every sub-sector of the economy that might be affected were not undertaken.

A copy is available in the Library.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis the regulatory impact assessment accompanying the Health Bill has calculated that a ban on smoking in public places will have no disproportionate impact on *(a)* smokers with mental illness, *(b)* black and ethnic minority smokers and *(c)* single mothers in deprived areas. [28288]

Caroline Flint: Calculations of impact in the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) are made on the basis of the best evidence available.

A partial RIA on smoke free proposals in the Choosing Health White paper was published in November 2004. This was updated and published as part of the consultation run by the Department in June 2005. A final version was published alongside the Health Bill in October 2005.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the smoking prevalence for *(a)* adults and *(b)* minors in England has been in each of the last 10 years, broken down by sex. [28446]

Caroline Flint: The prevalence of cigarette smoking amongst adults and minors are shown in the tables. Until 2000, questions on smoking were asked biannually in the general household survey.

For minors, we have provided data for persons aged 11 to 15, referred to as pupils in the relevant publication.

Prevalence of cigarette smoking among adults (persons aged 16 and over) by sex in England: 1992 to 2003

Percentage

	Men	Women	All persons
Unweighted data			
1992	29	27	28
1994	28	25	26
1996	28	27	28
1998	28	26	27
Weighted data			
1998	29	26	28
2000	29	25	27
2001	28	25	27
2002	27	25	26
2003	27	24	25

Source:
ONS Living in Britain: Results from the 1998 and 2003 General Household Surveys.

Prevalence of cigarette smoking among pupils (persons aged 11–15) by sex in England: 1992 to 2004

Percentage

Pupils aged 11–15	Boys	Girls	All pupils
1992	9	10	10
1993	8	11	10
1994	10	13	12
1996	11	15	13
1998	9	12	11
1999	8	10	9
2000	9	12	10
2001	8	11	10
2002	9	11	10
2003	7	11	9
2004	7	10	9

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre: Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004.

Social Care Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve access to community health and social care services for those who experience difficulty in understanding English. [23104]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service is founded on the principles of equal access and equal treatment for all. Providing communications support to service users is not an optional extra; this is driven by the requirement to comply with legislation and supporting guidance. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Human Rights Act 1998 make it imperative for public organisations, including primary care trusts, other NHS bodies and local councils, to provide language and other communications support to individuals seeking help. Various pieces of guidance and advice issued to the NHS and social care in recent years have emphasised this point. In addition, since October 2004, NHS Direct has ensured that all callers who have difficulty in speaking English, and prefer to speak in other languages, can have a telephone interpreter on the line during a consultation. The service is available 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Tobacco Advertising

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if (1) she will make a statement on the operation of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002; [28195]

(2) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under Sections (A) 2 and (B) 3 of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 in each year since 2003; [28196]

(3) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females relied on a defence under Section 5 of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 in the last year for which figures are available. [28197]

Caroline Flint: The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 has been operating very effectively in the almost three years that it has been in force. It has had a significant impact in reducing smoking. The Act is enforced by Trading Standards Officers who do regular monitoring of local businesses. According to Trading Standards Officers, compliance with the Act appears to

be very good. The Advertising Standards Authority also monitors advertisements. There have been no prosecutions and there has been only one formal caution, and no prosecutions under the Act.

Vanguard Proposals

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects her Department to reach a decision on the Vanguard proposals for additional health care provision in Plymouth. [27401]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Department is currently in the process of reviewing this case. Once this review is complete we will be in a position to make a decision and communicate this to the trust.

VAT

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether value added tax is charged on supplies to the NHS; and if she will make a statement. [27984]

Mr. Byrne: Value added tax (VAT) is chargeable on supplies to the national health service in accordance with the normal VAT regulations. Irrecoverable VAT is taken into account in NHS funding.

Waiting Times

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was in each of the last seven years for *(a)* an in-patient and *(b)* an out-patient admission in (i) Horsham and (ii) England. [25718]

Mr. Byrne: The median waiting times for in-patient and out-patient admission for each of the last seven years at Horsham Chanctonbury primary care trust, previously West Sussex health authority and England are shown in the following table.

Estimated average time patients have been waiting for elective admission, March 1998 to March 2005. Commissioner based.

	Median waiting time (weeks)		
March	*Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT*	*West Sussex HA*	*England*
1998	—	23.0	14.9
1999	—	19.5	12.9
2000	—	18.7	12.9
2001	—	18.8	12.6
2002	—	16.6	12.7
2003	12.94	—	11.9
2004	11.39	—	10.2
2005	10.42	—	8.5

Source:
Department of Health form QF01

Estimated average waiting time for first outpatient appointment following GP written referral, March 1998 to March 2005. Commissioner based.

	Median waiting time (weeks)		
March	*Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT*	*West Sussex HA*	*England*
1998	—	7.0	6.4
1999	—	8.0	7.0
2000	—	9.0	7.7
2001	—	8.4	7.5
2002	—	9.3	7.6
2003	9.53	—	7.4

Estimated average waiting time for first outpatient appointment following GP written referral, March 1998 to March 2005. Commissioner based.

	Median waiting time (weeks)		
March	*Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT*	*West Sussex HA*	*England*
2004	8.90	—	7.1
2005	8.05	—	7.0

Notes:
1. Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT established in April 2002.
2. Figures before then are shown for West Sussex health authority.

Source:
Department of Health form QM08R

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time in accident and emergency departments is for each NHS trust in each year since 1997. [25908]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not collected on the average waiting time in accident and emergency (A and E) departments. Since quarter two, 2002–03 information on the number and percentage of all attenders who were admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours of arrival at A and E has been collected and published quarterly. This information is shown in the table and is also available on the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/index.htm.

Average waiting times in A and E

	Quarter	*Percentage of patients who spent less than four hours in A and E*
2002–03	2	77
2002–03	3	78
2002–03	4	82
2003–04	1	90
2003–04	2	91
2003–04	3	91
2003–04	4	93
2004–05	1	95
2004–05	2	96
2004–05	3	97
2004–05	4	97
2005–06	1	98

Your Health, Your Care, Your Say

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation meetings were organised by each strategic health authority; and if she will make a statement. [26383]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally. Some strategic health authorities coordinated and others left this to primary care trusts.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Under-age Drinking

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to reduce the number of youths *(a)* drinking and *(b)* buying alcohol. [25147]

Paul Goggins: The Government take underage drinking extremely seriously. That is why we are taking forward work through the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme to tackle it. Recent activities in the Programme have included the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns in which the police have clamped down on underage drinking—through fixed penalty notices for both buying alcohol while underage and those who buy alcohol on behalf of children, test-purchase operations on licensed premises and confiscating alcohol from young people.

We have also been working closely with the alcohol industry to develop a Principles and Standards document which includes a commitment to prevent sales to under-18s through a "Challenge 21" approach and better staff training. The Licensing Act 2003, which comes into force on 24 November 2005, will make it an offence to sell alcohol to minors anywhere in England and Wales, and introduces tougher penalties for those who do. The Violent Crime Reduction Bill builds on this through new powers for the police to close premises for up to 48-hours where alcohol is persistently sold to under-18s.

Alcohol-related Offences

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people under the age of 30 years in the area corresponding most closely to Lancaster and Wyre constituency *(a)* were subject to alcohol treatment orders and *(b)* were convicted of alcohol-related offences (i) in the last 12 months and (ii) in each year since 1997. [20515]

Paul Goggins: The number of offenders under the age of 30 who were proceeded against or committed from Lancaster and Wyre magistrates courts and given a community rehabilitation order with drug/alcohol treatment is provided in the following table. It is not possible to identify the number of persons under the age of 30 who were found guilty of alcohol-related offences, as the individual circumstances of the offence are not collected. Statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Number of offenders under the age of 30 proceeded against or committed from Lancaster and Wyre magistrates courts and given a community rehabilitation order with drug/alcohol treatment, 1997–2003

	Number issued
1997	6
1998	11
1999	5
2000	1
2001	-
2002	1
2003	-

Note:
These data are on the principal offence basis.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Algerian Nationals

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Algerian nationals have been granted *(a)* indefinite leave to remain and *(b)* British nationality in each of the last eight years. [18989]

Mr. McNulty: Statistics on settlement (indefinite leave to enter and remain) by nationality and British nationality are published annually. The latest published information on settlement is in the annual Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom, 2003". The 2004 edition is due to be published in November.

Information on British nationality is published in annual statistical bulletins entitled "Persons Granted British Citizenship". The latest edition is that for 2004. Copies are available from the Library and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Asylum/Immigration

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy on the payment of benefits to asylum seekers following the ruling of the Law Lords on 3 November. [26773]

Mr. McNulty: The House of Lords ruling in Limbuela and Others leaves intact a fundamental principle within our approach to asylum which is that people should claim as soon as they arrive in the country. The Law Lords have recognised that there are difficult decisions to be made and each case has to be judged on its individual merits. We are studying very carefully their judgment and considering whether we need to make any adjustments to our existing procedures and processes.

We are adopting tough new means to crack down on opportunistic behaviour. In particular, we are setting up tightly managed new processes for handling late and opportunistic claims as part of the new asylum model announced in the Government's Five-Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration. The impact of this will be that those who seek to play the system will receive a very quick asylum decision and so will, in reality, have very limited access to benefit—should they qualify for this while that decision is being taken.

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the implications of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 on the responsibilities of local authorities under the Children Act 1989; [25972]

(2) what representations he has received from directors of social services in England about the impact of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 on the welfare of children; [26510]

(3) what assessment he has made of the compatibility of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; [26511]

(4) how the experience of children of failed asylum seekers will be assessed in the evaluation of the piloting of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 in London, Manchester and Yorkshire; and whether the resource implications of the pilots for local authorities will be taken into account in the evaluation. [26512]

Mr. McNulty: It was always clear that there would be risks and challenges for both local authorities and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office in implementing section nine. The section nine pilot was set up to provide a controlled environment in which these problems could be explored. A detailed evaluation of the pilot is planned over the next few weeks. Officials will be contacting social services departments and other key stakeholders in the areas covered by the pilot.

They will be asked for their views to enable quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered on the process and the effect the provision has had on families and local and central Government. This evaluation will take into consideration the impact upon social services, and this will include any resource implications.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child contains a reservation in favour of the United Kingdom enabling it to apply such legislation as it deems necessary in the interests of the United Kingdom immigration control. Two letters have been received from Directors of Social Services.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has evaluated on the implications of setting a limit on immigration to the United kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [24123]

Mr. McNulty: As set out in the Home Office Five Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration, the Government encourages migration for work through a flexible system that is principally employer-led and responsive to market needs. In a flexible and dynamic labour market such as that of the UK, it is considered to be impractical and counter-productive to try and set limits in a rigid and arbitrary way. Such limits could prevent the UK bringing in the skilled workers we need.

Detailed work is being progressed on the development of the proposals for a new points based migration system contained in the consultation document: Selective Admission: Making migration work for Britain. The Government intends to publish a formal response to the consultation next year.

Mr. Mancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many calls have been made to *(a)* the MPs hotline and *(b)* each other section of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate in each quarter of each of the last three years; what the average time taken to answer each call was in each section; and if he will make a statement. [26886]

Mr. McNulty: The following tables provide the information requested on the performance of the MPs hotline and on the other call centres in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The MPs hotline receives between 2,500 to 3,500 calls per month of which the majority are answered in three to four seconds.

The other call centres in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Directorate receive substantially more calls than the MPs hotline and their time taken to answer ranges from less than one minute to over four minutes for the Nationality Helpdesk in Liverpool. The Nationality Helpdesk was created on 31 January 2005.

MPs hotline

	Number of calls made	*Average time taken to answer*
July to September 2003	6,530	[1]
October to December 2003	6,627	[1]
January to March 2004	7,076	[1]
April to June 2004	7,633	[1]
July to September 2004	8,592	[1]
October to December 2004	8,092	[1]
January to March 2005	8,701	[1]
April to June 2005	6,466	[1]
July to September 2005	9,955	[1]
October to 4 November	3,929	[1]

[1] Information not available currently but 79 per cent. of calls answered in 3 to 4 seconds.

Evidence and enquiries including employers helpline

	Number of calls made	*Average time taken to answer*
January to March 2004	35,057	[1]
April to June 2004	47,665	[1]
July to September 2004	37,859	[1]
October to December 2004	36,778	[1]
January to March 2005	36,459	[1]
April to June 2005	40,019	[1]
July to September 2005	37,334	[1]
October to 4 November	11,620	[1]

[1] Information not available but 95 per cent. of calls answered in 15 seconds.

Work permits UK contact centre, Sheffield

	Number of calls made	*Average time taken to answer*
January to March 2003	n/a	n/a
April to June 2003	n/a	n/a
July to September 2003	n/a	n/a
October to December 2003	n/a	n/a
January to March 2004	n/a	n/a
April to June 2004	n/a	n/a
July to September 2004	n/a	n/a
October to December 2004	n/a	n/a
January to March 2005	n/a	n/a
April to June 2005	116,576	3:14
July to September 2005	61,576	1:43
October to 4 November	24,480	2:16

n/a = Information not available.

Nationality helpdesk, Liverpool

	Number of calls made	*Average time taken to answer*
January to March 2005	n/a	9:40
April to June 2005	455,747	6:23
July to September 2005	378,186	5:26
October to 4 November	189,993	4:44

n/a = Information not available.

Immigration and Nationality Enquiry Bureau, Croydon

	Number of calls made	*Number of calls handled*	*Average time taken to answer*
October to December 2003	n/a	347,343	2:15
January to March 2004	n/a	397,909	1:33
April to June 2004	n/a	379,062	2:05
July to September 2004	n/a	386,900	2:38
October to December 2004	n/a	393,090	1:44
January to March 2005	n/a	394,363	2:01
April to June 2005	1,196,005	373,441	1:34
July to September 2005	1,300,247	391,954	1:22
October to 9 November	[1]459,224	[1]155,052	[1]0:55

n/a = Information not available.
[1] YTD.

Biometrics Trials

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the volunteers in the UKPS Biometrics Enrolment Trial failed to enrol successfully in one or more biometric. [20077]

Andy Burnham: The UKPS biometric enrolment trial was designed to demonstrate the feasibility of large-scale biometric enrolment and provide data on perceptions and attitudes, and on the timing of enrolment processes. It was not a trial of technology and the technical solution used was not optimised to give maximum enrolment performance. Failure to enrol in the UKPS trial should not be taken as an absolute indication that a participant is unable to enrol a specific biometric rather that enrolment was not successful using the range of equipment available during the trial, in the limited time available and within the context of the trial. The trial report, with this data can be found at http://www.identitycards.gov.uk/publications.html

Border Police

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with *(a)* police chief constables and *(b)* the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis about the introduction of a British border police force; and if he will make a statement. [29378]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have had a number of discussions with the Chief Constable Chair of ACPO and the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis on the management of United Kingdom borders.

The Government have no plans at present to create a single border control police force or agency. The White Paper "One Step Ahead—A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organised Crime" tasked Customs, IND and the police to work together to develop options for providing more effective border controls through enhanced inter-agency co-operation. With this in view, the Border Management Programme was established to take this forward. The programme reports to Home Office and Treasury Ministers.

It is establishing more effective collaborative working between the border agencies to better target threats to UK security and to ensure that legitimate traffic can pass smoothly across our borders.

Child Safety

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to improve child safety on the streets. [25267]

Paul Goggins: The Street Crime Initiative, launched in 2002, was aimed at improving the safety of individuals on the streets. The initiative succeeded in reversing the sharp upward trend in robbery levels and, over three years, reduced robbery by 32 per cent. in the ten street crime areas. The lessons learned from the initiative form the basis of good practice guidance which has been disseminated to all police forces by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Throughout the course of the initiative, a range of preventative and intervention schemes aimed at young people were introduced, for example "Positive Activities for Young People and Safer School Partnerships", which now play a key part in the delivery of the cross departmental programme to tackle youth crime.

Another example is the "SAFE" campaign. In January 2005, in conjunction with Crimestoppers, we ran "SAFE"-a national anti-robbery week in schools. The campaign, which included assembly and lesson plans, provided young people with the knowledge and skills to avoid situations that increase their vulnerability to street crime. It supported and reinforced messages and information provided by local schemes, such as the "Street Wise" project in Havering, which raises young people's awareness and assists in increasing their personal safety. The campaign was delivered to 11–14 year olds in secondary schools throughout England and Wales. We are currently updating the materials with a view to running the campaign again in January 2006.

Child Trafficking

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many child traffickers have been convicted of offences and deported back to their country of origin in each of the last five years. [26268]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* It is not possible to provide this information as there is no specific offence of "child trafficking".

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 18 July, acknowledgement reference B16627/5, Home Office reference S1296860. [29699]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 17 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 22 August, acknowledgement reference B19909/5, Home Office reference S1193198. [29700]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 10 November 2005.

Crack Houses

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crack houses have been *(a)* identified and *(b)* closed in each (i) police authority and (ii) London borough since 2001. [24223]

Paul Goggins: Data is not routinely collected centrally on the number of crack houses identified or closed in England and Wales. A one off survey by Government office regions revealed that in the period 20 January to the end of September 2004 158 "crack houses" were closed. The following table sets out the detail. During Operation Crackdown, the intensive police operation that took place between 12 January and 31 March 2005 the 33 participating police forces reported closing 175 "crack houses."

Government office region	*"Crack houses" closed*
South East	23
South West	24
East Midlands	10
West Midlands	3
North West	13
North East	7
Yorkshire and Humber	4
Wales	5
London	64
East of England	5

Crime (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of drug-related crime has been in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25581]

Paul Goggins: Recorded crime figures are used to measure trends in crime in local areas. These statistics include information on drugs offences, such as possession and supply, and acquisitive crimes which may be drug-related, such as burglary and shoplifting, at the police force area level. They do not contain information on the offender's drug habits or motivation for offending.

It is therefore not possible to provide reliable estimates from these statistics of the numbers of crimes that are drug-related from year to year for Hemel Hempstead constituency.

Criminal Records Checks

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time for enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks for health professionals to be processed and approved was in the most recent period for which figures are available. [25534]

Andy Burnham: The information requested by the hon. Member for Northavon is not available. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is unable to provide information on Disclosure applications based on specific employment sectors. The CRB aims to complete Disclosure applications across all sectors within the shortest time possible. Its published service standards are to issue 93 per cent. of Standard Disclosures within two weeks and 90 per cent. of Enhanced Disclosures within four weeks for all employment sectors.

Departmental Staff (Sikh Dress)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in defining a code of practice concerning the wearing of Kirpans by Sikh employees of his Department and its agencies; and if he will make a statement. [28923]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office generally allows the wearing of the Kirpan by Sikh employees and this practice is not covered by any formal Code of Practice.

In operational areas of the department, for example the Prison Service and the Immigration Service there will be occasions where, for reasons of security, it is not permitted for either staff or visitors to wear the Kirpan. In these circumstances arrangements are in place to ensure that particular care is taken to respect their religious significance.

Having reviewed existing arrangements we do not consider that there is currently a need to formalise them by drawing up a specific code of practice.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to the Passport Agency on the wearing of Kirpans by Sikhs visiting the agency to obtain passports. [28924]

Andy Burnham: To ensure particular issues relevant to Sikh customers are handled sensitively, the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) has provided briefing and guidance on diversity issues to its frontline staff; and where Sikh customers feel unable to remove the Kirpan, alternative arrangements are made for their application to be examined, and their passport collected which allows Sikh customers to keep the Kirpan with them at all times.

These measures have been introduced following consultation with the Home Office and other organisations. They are based on risk assessments which are kept under regular review. The UKPS is satisfied they fulfil its duty of care to its customers and staff, while ensuring no discrimination against any section of society.

Deportations

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are awaiting deportation from the UK due to failed asylum and immigration applications. [27297]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not available. Published statistics on immigration and asylum issues are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Drugs Offences

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests, *(b)* convictions and *(c)* cautions there were in each police authority area for offences relating to (i) the possession and (ii) dealing in class (A) A, (B) B and (C) C drugs in each year since 1997. [25040]

Paul Goggins: Data from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on the number of cautions and convictions for possession of and dealing in drugs, broken down by class of drug, is provided in the following table. Data for 2004 will be available at the end of November. The information requested on arrests is not collected centrally.

Number of offenders found guilty for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 1997 to 2003

Offence	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Possession of a class A drug							
Avon and Somerset	205	183	239	219	209	192	182
Bedfordshire	30	57	82	79	112	62	25
Cambridgeshire	48	76	97	86	119	100	77
Cheshire	180	221	238	209	200	161	134
Cleveland	41	94	135	196	195	267	257
Cumbria	62	78	68	69	68	101	104
Derbyshire	64	76	106	149	167	166	160
Devon and Cornwall	170	141	182	206	257	361	469
Dorset	67	102	141	178	173	195	186
Durham	24	30	27	67	126	123	123
Essex	117	163	198	193	198	167	164
Gloucestershire	54	88	100	141	149	128	107
Greater Manchester	316	324	277	346	361	381	425
Hampshire	117	158	217	291	308	285	283
Hertfordshire	60	57	78	85	97	84	110
Humberside	83	84	100	113	125	98	124
Kent	75	112	199	236	242	289	218
Lancashire	262	319	288	326	357	391	339
Leicestershire	63	80	122	170	250	221	175
Lincolnshire	64	63	50	53	183	154	151
London	1,503	2,089	2,557	2,376	2,434	2,384	2,158
Merseyside	270	314	319	305	284	288	355
Norfolk	76	92	113	117	131	150	162
North Yorkshire	116	114	138	121	77	77	79
Northamptonshire	31	76	84	76	91	60	46
Northumbria	90	123	193	285	478	461	505
Nottinghamshire	67	127	194	260	286	275	279
South Yorkshire	261	384	470	513	489	376	379
Staffordshire	183	192	181	140	155	194	211
Suffolk	59	45	61	72	79	98	105
Surrey	58	46	64	82	118	103	87
Sussex	123	116	128	130	163	177	168
Thames Valley	156	238	297	285	293	334	273
Warwickshire	28	30	54	50	58	55	41
West Mercia	82	109	171	195	245	141	163
West Midlands	189	272	409	637	875	861	794
West Yorkshire	734	798	772	692	519	583	542
Wiltshire	47	55	67	118	153	104	80
Dyfed-Powys	59	99	101	137	135	168	137
Gwent	100	185	204	168	154	147	105
North Wales	73	74	79	103	111	119	144
South Wales	80	83	120	165	324	336	359
Possession of a class B drug							
Avon and Somerset	175	238	300	352	307	306	313
Bedfordshire	240	335	318	230	237	80	75
Cambridgeshire	182	190	172	113	127	108	140
Cheshire	442	590	596	452	397	518	477
Cleveland	105	149	249	261	288	434	472
Cumbria	268	280	243	184	150	205	235
Derbyshire	215	262	315	235	262	252	286
Devon and Cornwall	680	803	712	623	493	596	598
Dorset	133	272	342	304	308	319	369
Durham	140	148	177	255	341	316	323
Essex	566	645	646	619	605	598	549
Gloucestershire	160	210	220	181	236	239	212
Greater Manchester	741	919	969	974	999	1,245	1,452
Hampshire	665	945	1,074	803	530	315	485
Hertfordshire	299	277	266	248	254	287	329
Humberside	196	275	296	270	233	320	339
Kent	700	1,060	1,056	875	815	905	726
Lancashire	799	1,101	981	790	749	874	891
Leicestershire	312	391	307	249	305	380	415
Lincolnshire	381	408	210	180	290	261	297
London	4,184	5,659	5,403	4,802	4,571	5,850	6,346
Merseyside	1,275	1,567	1,403	1,070	1,005	1,377	1,572

Number of offenders found guilty for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 1997 to 2003

Offence	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Norfolk	367	438	385	269	249	278	356
North Yorkshire	272	428	385	176	119	155	175
Northamptonshire	86	178	150	139	87	73	70
Northumbria	433	896	1,129	1,067	1,174	1,315	1,332
Nottinghamshire	306	327	360	321	327	351	420
South Yorkshire	520	610	692	699	640	672	807
Staffordshire	308	343	305	170	170	258	303
Suffolk	263	284	276	229	183	230	256
Surrey	235	281	337	372	345	330	295
Sussex	396	408	344	297	413	441	419
Thames Valley	637	781	732	607	651	712	625
Warwickshire	85	101	104	106	73	80	101
West Mercia	313	374	345	244	230	211	224
West Midlands	900	1,354	1,275	1,402	1,572	1,794	1,989
West Yorkshire	1,141	1,396	1,209	971	905	956	1,104
Wiltshire	140	202	243	186	226	181	181
Dyfed-Powys	350	566	528	400	497	514	528
Gwent	258	331	339	375	317	272	321
North Wales	293	437	430	316	280	308	389
South Wales	750	900	864	795	1,000	1,223	1,297
Possession of a class C drug							
Avon and Somerset	1	1	2	6	5	4	8
Bedfordshire	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Cambridgeshire	1	2	0	0	0	3	0
Cheshire	5	8	4	5	2	1	1
Cleveland	4	4	0	0	0	1	3
Cumbria	1	1	0	0	1	2	4
Derbyshire	4	5	6	5	5	5	4
Devon and Cornwall	4	6	8	0	4	2	6
Dorset	1	2	3	1	1	2	6
Durham	2	1	3	4	3	6	2
Essex	4	2	5	1	0	1	0
Gloucestershire	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Greater Manchester	12	16	3	9	10	7	11
Hampshire	6	6	5	2	241	371	324
Hertfordshire	1	0	0	0	3	0	1
Humberside	15	17	12	10	8	13	11
Kent	1	9	4	4	6	6	2
Lancashire	10	5	9	7	6	4	8
Leicestershire	2	1	3	5	2	6	6
Lincolnshire	3	1	1	2	1	2	2
London	13	11	12	10	5	9	24
Merseyside	5	11	10	3	3	1	6
Norfolk	1	4	2	2	0	1	0
North Yorkshire	4	4	4	1	1	2	5
Northamptonshire	3	0	0	1	3	3	4
Northumbria	8	19	17	11	18	20	24
Nottinghamshire	1	5	2	1	1	2	6
South Yorkshire	3	9	3	5	4	5	2
Staffordshire	2	6	5	0	2	2	4
Suffolk	0	0	0	2	1	1	2
Surrey	2	1	4	0	0	0	1
Sussex	4	3	2	4	4	3	6
Thames Valley	1	0	3	2	1	3	2
Warwickshire	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
West Mercia	1	1	4	0	3	1	1
West Midlands	1	2	4	2	4	8	5
West Yorkshire	2	6	4	2	2	2	5
Wiltshire	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
Dyfed-Powys	4	5	2	2	7	11	4
Gwent	2	3	2	1	3	3	2
North Wales	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
South Wales	7	9	8	5	6	17	7
Dealing class A							
Avon and Somerset	103	126	123	115	105	122	157
Bedfordshire	33	37	33	30	47	55	58
Cambridgeshire	16	42	34	46	62	63	146
Cheshire	80	77	94	87	78	102	82
Cleveland	51	40	55	67	115	126	141
Cumbria	54	33	94	37	62	56	65
Derbyshire	62	49	53	71	95	136	107

Number of offenders found guilty for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 1997 to 2003

Offence	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Devon and Cornwall	78	51	110	83	137	137	158
Dorset	33	52	46	51	60	55	41
Durham	27	32	47	65	81	66	64
Essex	77	85	69	88	69	96	80
Gloucestershire	17	26	26	33	33	36	49
Greater Manchester	329	360	386	351	289	316	363
Hampshire	60	57	112	105	138	117	145
Hertfordshire	26	29	32	29	57	61	51
Humberside	86	68	105	73	73	115	110
Kent	64	123	121	187	131	123	152
Lancashire	177	103	154	154	189	254	322
Leicestershire	21	40	23	51	61	71	90
Lincolnshire	11	13	28	20	41	40	54
London	676	946	1,086	1,056	1,474	1,433	1,253
Merseyside	157	155	137	232	214	241	332
Norfolk	38	49	57	71	48	60	47
North Yorkshire	27	37	30	42	52	52	51
Northamptonshire	33	35	44	57	51	37	36
Northumbria	89	95	80	170	210	193	223
Nottinghamshire	61	48	112	124	134	130	137
South Yorkshire	103	164	118	147	197	145	203
Staffordshire	116	109	99	111	75	123	92
Suffolk	39	54	33	39	33	35	50
Surrey	22	11	28	45	47	55	50
Sussex	62	204	219	243	334	379	289
Thames Valley	119	120	115	95	137	129	134
Warwickshire	25	31	26	35	29	27	21
West Mercia	72	85	80	111	137	100	104
West Midlands	129	159	146	247	305	301	385
West Yorkshire	340	322	468	504	468	333	265
Wiltshire	33	19	26	46	60	55	48
Dyfed-Powys	40	27	55	52	73	63	60
Gwent	39	53	48	56	79	61	36
North Wales	47	45	31	45	56	45	44
South Wales	54	63	81	113	189	177	183
Dealing class B							
Avon and Somerset	113	127	112	99	76	75	92
Bedfordshire	59	50	49	39	24	23	32
Cambridgeshire	94	66	86	40	20	41	30
Cheshire	133	122	65	69	41	43	50
Cleveland	82	62	50	46	39	50	54
Cumbria	91	81	51	42	19	37	43
Derbyshire	108	107	87	90	80	57	57
Devon and Cornwall	277	245	199	138	96	126	102
Dorset	58	87	81	55	33	37	44
Durham	102	122	86	65	57	56	67
Essex	172	203	166	88	83	91	81
Gloucestershire	46	51	39	33	11	17	24
Greater Manchester	389	370	427	392	248	254	283
Hampshire	273	329	231	160	84	108	177
Hertfordshire	78	66	68	51	47	42	44
Humberside	141	148	128	82	46	60	71
Kent	197	378	228	150	108	106	119
Lancashire	194	233	151	105	65	115	116
Leicestershire	140	135	107	92	55	68	99
Lincolnshire	90	78	58	34	33	36	29
London	923	997	862	558	607	725	621
Merseyside	193	186	134	121	85	64	85
Norfolk	155	96	119	66	38	54	61
North Yorkshire	78	83	85	53	35	52	49
Northamptonshire	87	88	68	54	19	27	17
Northumbria	252	306	214	171	155	136	156
Nottinghamshire	195	166	148	133	101	84	121
South Yorkshire	224	255	189	129	114	94	142
Staffordshire	127	128	91	105	61	74	88
Suffolk	93	107	91	78	46	42	61
Surrey	66	67	59	45	40	32	40
Sussex	129	183	124	129	149	154	154
Thames Valley	216	215	171	117	118	104	118
Warwickshire	61	49	29	25	15	20	39
West Mercia	147	144	97	98	74	56	60
West Midlands	367	350	347	290	232	237	276

Number of offenders found guilty for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 1997 to 2003

Offence	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
West Yorkshire	407	421	304	232	123	113	156
Wiltshire	51	86	61	53	28	30	49
Dyfed-Powys	160	169	120	102	60	71	72
Gwent	114	126	119	82	75	42	58
North Wales	88	127	69	50	38	46	33
South Wales	261	297	297	187	131	146	165
Dealing class C							
Avon and Somerset	0	2	1	0	0	0	1
Bedfordshire	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Cheshire	1	2	1	0	0	1	2
Cleveland	2	3	5	1	4	2	5
Cumbria	2	1	1	0	1	0	2
Derbyshire	0	1	0	0	3	0	1
Devon and Cornwall	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Dorset	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
Durham	5	2	3	1	1	3	5
Essex	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Gloucestershire	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Greater Manchester	7	8	3	5	3	4	5
Hampshire	1	1	0	2	0	2	1
Humberside	1	2	1	0	2	4	4
Kent	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
Lancashire	3	2	5	2	0	0	0
Leicestershire	1	2	0	0	0	1	0
Lincolnshire	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
London	4	5	2	3	2	4	4
Merseyside	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Norfolk	1	2	2	0	1	1	0
North Yorkshire	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	0	2	0	0	1	0	1
Northumbria	9	12	7	5	9	10	4
Nottinghamshire	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
South Yorkshire	3	1	0	2	0	2	2
Staffordshire	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
Suffolk	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Surrey	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Sussex	2	3	0	1	0	0	0
Thames Valley	0	1	2	1	0	0	1
Warwickshire	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
West Mercia	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
West Midlands	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
West Yorkshire	4	4	1	15	19	22	10
Wiltshire	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Dyfed-Powys	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Gwent	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
North Wales	0	4	1	2	0	0	0
South Wales	6	1	6	3	2	5	5

Note:
These data are on a principal offence basis.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Forensic Science Service

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect of the redistribution of London work of the Forensic Science Service to the provincial laboratories on the efficiency of the organisation; and if he will make a statement. [26676]

Andy Burnham: The Forensic Science Service (FSS) transferred approximately 1700 cases from the London site to its regional laboratories during the first six months of the financial year 2005–06. This resulted in a reduction of the London laboratory's caseload by 10 per cent. during this period. It has led to an improved performance in the London laboratory's delivery of the overall FSS target to turnaround 95 per cent. of cases in less than 33 days, which has assisted in improving organisational efficiency.

Freedom of Information

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to his Department passed to the FOI clearing house for evaluation, broken down by *(a)* subject and *(b)* date of request. [28946]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Information about the handling of Freedom of Information requests is published in Freedom of Information Statistics on Implementation in central Government.

The most recently published report was 30 September 2005 and copies are in the Libraries of both Houses. Additional information about the role of the Clearing House can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/guidance/index.htm#2. Departments do not release information about the internal handling of requests, such as details of which requests were referred to the Clearing House for guidance.

Heroin

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much heroin thought to have originated in Afghanistan has been seized in the UK since 2001. [19383]

Paul Goggins: It is estimated that approximately 95 per cent. of the heroin bound for the UK originates from opium grown in Afghanistan. Statistics on the numbers and quantities of drugs seized within England and Wales by UK law enforcement can be found in the Drugs Seizure and Offender Statistics Reports published annually by the Home Office. The most recent data available covers 2003.

Immigration Checks

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department during which hours each day *(a)* passport control and *(b)* customs and immigration checks are operated at (i) Newhaven Port and (ii) Eurotunnel. [25140]

Andy Burnham: At Newhaven, the immigration control is usually operated between 0500 hours to 2300 hours seven days a week. The operating hours are dependent on the number, and times, of the ferry arrivals at Newhaven. For operational reasons it is not HMRC policy to disclose particular deployment patterns to specific ports or airports. The immigration controls operating on the Eurotunnel site in France are staffed by immigration officers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Leave to Remain

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the target processing time is for an application for leave to remain under the provisions of the European Community Association Agreement; and what the average processing time achieved for such applications was in the most recent period for which figures are available. [30941]

Mr. McNulty: Applications under the provisions of the European Community Association Agreements (ECAA) fall in to the category of non-charged casework. The published service standards for this category are 25 per cent. of postal applications to be processed in 20 working days and 30 per cent. in 70 working days.

The average time taken from the date of receipt until the date of decision for European Community Association Agreement (ECAA) applications during the period 1 August to 31 October 2005 was 331 days.

This information has not been quality assured, and is not a National Statistic. It should be treated as provisional management information and may be subject to change.

Major General Almog

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what investigations his Department has carried out into the reasons why Israeli Major General Almog has not been arrested following the issue of the warrant against him in London in September. [30668]

Andy Burnham: Any investigation into the reasons why Major General Almog was not arrested, including how he may have become aware that a warrant had been issued, would be a matter for the Metropolitan Police.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of how Israeli Major General Almog became aware of the issuing of an arrest warrant against him by Bow Street magistrates court. [30669]

Andy Burnham: The arrest warrant, which was issued by Bow Street magistrates court on 10 September 2005 in response to a private application, was withdrawn by the judge who issued it on 15 September 2005.

Non-asylum Immigration Services

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the revised charges for foreign nationals using non-asylum immigration services from April. [26667]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. member to the statement made by the then Minister for Citizenship and Immigration, my right hon. friend, the member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. Browne) on 7 February 2005.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those of his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish their response to advice received from such bodies. [20096]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following are the Home Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) which the Government are required to consult prior to legislative proposals but not required to publish their response to advice from those NDPBs:

1. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.

2. The Police Negotiation Board (PNB). Under section 62 of the Police Act 1996 before making any regulations under section 50 or 52 of that Act the Secretary of State shall take into consideration any recommendation made by the PNB.

3. The Police Advisory Board (PAB). Under section 63 of the Police Act 1996 before making regulations under section 50 or 52 of that Act the Secretary of State shall supply a draft of those regulations and take into consideration any representations made by the PAB. The Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) is a bit different to the above NDPBs. The Government is not required to consult it prior to legislative proposals. However, during the passage of the 2002 Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act and the 2003 debates on

affirmative orders made under that Act to add countries to the Non Suspensive Appeals list, Ministers gave some clear assurances. These were that the APCI would be consulted on the country of origin information being used by the Government before making an Order to designate a country. It is not within the remit of the APCI to comment on the decision to designate nor is there a requirement for the Government to publish its response to advice from the APCI.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Milton Keynes South West relating to General Almog tabled for answer on *(a)* 11 October, reference 17028 and *(b)* 19 October, reference 19756 and *(c)* 7 November, reference 25695. [31401]

Mr. McNulty: I replied to my hon. Friend on 21 November 2005 (PQs 17028 and 19756) and on 22 November 2005 (PQ 25695).

Passports

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for passports have been rejected when received by post since the new categories of rejection came into operation, broken down by *(a)* category and *(b)* passport office. [26433]

Andy Burnham: Since the implementation by the UK Passport Service (UKPS) of new photo standards from 12 September 2005, 597,863 passport applications have been received. For a variety of reasons, UKPS has had to contact the applicant for further information on 119,339 applications. Of these queries, 81,927 applications, that is, 13.7 per cent. of total intake have required new photographs to be submitted.

A breakdown of this information by passport office is shown in the table.

The three main categories of photograph rejection are incorrect paper quality, facial expression and eyes obscured. The UKPS are currently unable to provide a breakdown of these categories by office. The UKPS will shortly be issuing revised guidance to its customers clarifying how the standards should be met to ensure fuller compliance.

	Number
Passport application intake	597,863
Queries	
London	1,225
Liverpool	21,291
Peterborough	17,729
Newport	22,568
Glasgow	9,679
Belfast	8,882
Durham	37,965
Total queries	119,339
Total photo rejections	81,927
Photo queries as percentage of intake	13.7%

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate *(a)* how the passport of Mrs. Valerie Beale of Winchester (Royal Mail ref 1-1601472618) was lost in the post, *(b)* why it was sent to the South Kensington sorting office and *(c)* why it was delivered to the Natural History Museum. [29736]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service (UKPS) understand that Mrs. Beale's passport was lost by Royal Mail en route to a visa application service. The UKPS no longer uses Royal Mail for the despatch of new UK passports. Since 9 February 2004 we have been employing a secure delivery courier service provided by Special Mail Services (SMS). This secure delivery service is also used to return any valid UK passports that are submitted in support of a passport application. UKPS involvement with Mrs. Beale has been limited to providing her with a replacement passport, which was despatched and securely delivered in August 2005.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what safeguards he has put in place to prevent the theft of UK passports in the post. [29737]

Andy Burnham: Since 9 February 2004 the UK Passport Service has been employing a secure delivery courier service provided by Special Mail Services (SMS) for the despatch and delivery of new UK passports. This secure delivery service is also used to return any valid UK passports that are submitted in support of a passport application.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK passports were recorded as lost by Royal Mail in the last 12 months, broken down by sorting office. [29738]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service does not hold this information.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment Royal Mail has made of the security of UK passports in the postal system; and if he will make a statement. [29739]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service assessed the security of the standard Royal Mail delivery service in 2003 and as a consequence moved to the current secure delivery arrangements on 9 February 2004.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK passports were lost in the post in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of them were sent in with new passport applications; and how many of them were en route to a foreign embassy as part of a visa application. [29740]

Andy Burnham: In the last full year that Royal Mail delivered passports (2003), 3,593 passports were reported as lost in post. Secure Delivery commenced on 9 February 2004, and up until 31 March 2005, 683 passports have been reported as lost whilst in the delivery process. It is not possible to provide details of passports reported lost by customers where the loss took place within the Royal Mail whilst passports were en route to UK Passport Service for replacement or to embassies for a visa.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the loss of UK passports by the Royal Mail. [29742]

Andy Burnham: Such discussions have not been appropriate, as since 9 February 2004 the UK Passport Service has been employing a secure delivery courier service provided by Special Mail Services (SMS) for the despatch and delivery of new UK passports.

Police and Probation Officers

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many assaults there have been on *(a)* police officers and *(b)* probation officers in each year since 1997. [30794]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics on recorded offences of assaults on a constable are available from one April 1998 and are provided in the following tables.

Figures on the number of assaults on probation officers are not collected centrally.

Recorded offences of assault on a constable in England and Wales—1998–99 to 2001–02

Period	*Number*
1998–99	21,510
1999–2000	26,115
2000–01	28,000
2001–02	30,095

Note:
The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Recorded offences of assault on a constable in England and Wales 2002–03 to 2004–05

Period	*Number*
2002–03	33,743
2003–04	21,927
2004–05	23,267

Note:
The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Police Reform Act (Schedule 4)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been detained by a community support officer for up to 30 minutes under paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29366]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is not collected centrally.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many names and addresses of people acting in an antisocial manner have been taken by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers under paragraph 3 of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority; [29367]

(2) how many people under the age of 18 have been required to surrender alcohol by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers under paragraph 5 of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority; [29360]

(3) how many people under the age of 16 have been required to surrender tobacco by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers under paragraph 7 of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29359]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not collected centrally. Police officers cannot be designated with any power under Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002. They do have equivalent powers.

Politically Exposed Persons

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suspicious activity reports relating to foreign politically exposed persons received by the National Criminal Intelligence Service referred to persons from *(a)* Africa, *(b)* the Middle East, *(c)* Russia, *(d)* Europe, *(e)* Asia, *(f)* North America and *(g)* Central and South America in the last five years for which figures are available. [29694]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of suspicious activity reports (SARs) received by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) which refer to politically exposed persons (PEPs) from the specified areas since 1 February 2005 is as follows:

SARs

	Number
Africa	64
Middle East	45
Russia	24
Europe	19
Asia	34
North America	4
Central and South America (including the Caribbean)	13

A database to register SARs referring specifically to PEPs was established by NCIS on 1 February 2005. The figures given here only reflect SARs recorded there since that date, and may involve single cases where activity is suspected in more than one jurisdiction.

Proceeds of Crime Act

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to bring forward the secondary legislation granting respondents to civil proceedings under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 access to retained assets to fund their legal representation; and if he will make a statement. [28319]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The relevant legislation was commenced in The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (Commencement No.3) Order 2005 (SI 2005 No: 3136) and will come into force on 1 January 2006.

Public Appointments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the public appointments he has made since 1 July 2005. [18950]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The public appointments, including re-appointments, made since 1 July are as follows:

Name of NDPB	*Title*	*Number*
Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs	Members	4
Independent Monitoring Boards of Penal Establishments and Immigration Centres	Members	116
Investigatory Powers Tribunal	President	1
	Vice-President	1
	Members	5
National Probation Service: Bedfordshire Dorset South Yorkshire	Member	1
	Member	1
	Chairman	1
Office of the Immigration Services Commission	Immigration Services Commissioner	1
Police Appeal Tribunal (consisting of Chair, second and third members)	Second Members	2
Police Authority-Nottinghamshire	Home Secretary's appointee on the selection panel for the appointment of independent members and lay justices to police authorities	1
Police Information Technology Organisation	Independent Board member	1

Security Industry

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many meetings his Department has held with the Security Industry Authority to discuss an Approved Contractor Scheme for the private security industry; [26551]

(2) whether it is his intention that an Approved Contractor Scheme for the private security industry will be voluntary; [26552]

(3) what assurances he has received from the Security Industry Authority that an Approved Contractor Scheme for the private security industry will not adversely affect existing standards. [26553]

Paul Goggins: There have been a large number of meetings between the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and Home Office officials to discuss the Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS). It is the intention of the Home Office that the ACS will be a voluntary scheme. The SIA is committed to the aims of the ACS, as set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment, to maintain and improve standards in the delivery of security services.

Shrewsbury Prison

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to tackle the overcrowding in Shrewsbury prison. [25330]

Fiona Mactaggart: Operational capacity at HMP Shrewsbury was reduced from 350 in October 2004 to 300 for essential building work. Further reductions took place operational capacity was over the following months before returned to the previous level of 300 in June 2005. It is planned to increase operational capacity by up to 40 places in the near future.

Timber

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to fund the maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [16317]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 160W by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Climate Change and Environment to the hon. member for Lewes (Norman Baker).

UK Borders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the UK's borders as defined by the Immigration Act 1971 are manned 24 hours a day. [21848]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Statutory Instrument (SI) 1987/177 designated 35 ports of entry for the purposes of the 1971 Immigration Act. This order consolidates with amendments previous orders designating ports of entry for the purposes of the 1971 Immigration Act.

Of these, 16 are staffed 24 hours per day and the remaining 19 are staffed in order to ensure that staff meet all services that require immigration control.

Small ports are staffed in a targeted way based on risk and supported by reliable intelligence.

Yarl's Wood

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many detainees at Yarl's Wood Detention Centre, Bedfordshire, on 8 November had been living in the UK before being detained at Yarl's Wood *(a)* for less than one month, *(b)* for more than one month but less than three months, *(c)* for more than three months but less than six months, *(d)* for more than six months but less than one year, *(e)* for more than one year but less than two years, *(f)* for more than two years but less than three years and *(g)* for more than three years; and if he will make a statement. [28348]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Youth Justice

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many youths under the age of 18 years were convicted of *(a)* drug offences, *(b)* fraud and forgery, *(c)* theft of or from vehicles and *(d)* criminal damage in 2004–05; and how many received a custodial sentence. [26501]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is shown in the following table for 2004. Data for 2005 is not yet available.

Persons aged under 18 sentenced and given immediate custody for specific offences in England and Wales (2004)

Offences	*Defendants sentenced*	*Immediate custody*
Drug offences	4,479	181
Fraud and forgery	762	38
Theft from vehicle	1,061	86
Criminal damage endangering life (excluding arson)	2,495	43
Total	8,797	348

Source:
RDS-NOMS 9 November 2005

Youth Justice Board

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the national juvenile resettlement action plan developed by the Youth Justice Board. [26673]

Fiona Mactaggart: The effective resettlement of juveniles remains the cornerstone of much of the work taken forward by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales to reduce reoffending by children and young people. A National Youth Resettlement Framework for Action is in the final stages of drafting and will be ready for wider consultation with stakeholders in the next few weeks. I will ensure the hon. member receives a printed copy and will arrange for copies to be placed in the Library.